

Call for proposals for applied policy research:

Towards a sustainable and inclusive future of work in Asia

Round 2 | 9 June 2025

This call is issued by



the Asian Administrative Partner of the

FutureWORKS | **ASIA**
COLLECTIVE

An initiative funded by



Canada

Key dates

Application deadline:

9 July 2025

Information session:

Week of 16 June 2025 (or as notified)

Presentations by pre-selected applicants:

11-18 August 2025

Deadline for submission of institutional documents for pre-selected applicants:

1 September 2025

Key links

Information session registration

<https://forms.office.com/r/5aJUybV7tr?origin=lprLink>

Online application form

<https://forms.gle/s73KWTYcThVCktZo6>

Budget template

<https://idrc-crdi.ca/en/proposal-budget>

Institutional profile questionnaire

<https://tinyurl.com/4khkn66v>

Table of contents

1	<i>Introduction</i>	5
1.1	About FutureWORKS Asia	5
1.2	FutureWORKS Asia hub objectives	5
1.3	Call for proposals	6
2	<i>Background and context</i>	6
2.1	Technological advancement	8
2.2	Climate change and the energy transition	11
2.3	Demographic changes	12
3	<i>Call priorities</i>	15
4	<i>Expectations of projects</i>	16
4.1	High quality research	16
4.2	Ethical conduct	17
4.3	Commitment to policy-relevant research and influencing policy	17
4.4	Gender, equity and inclusion	17
4.5	Commitment to engagement with other grant recipients in the network	17
4.6	Open Access and data management plan	18
4.7	Knowledge sharing	18
5	<i>Technical and methodological support for network members</i>	19
6	<i>Grant details</i>	20
6.1	Eligibility criteria	20
6.1.1	Legal identity	20
6.1.2	Eligible organizations	20
6.1.3	Country presence in an Asian L-LMIC	21
6.1.4	Expertise/experience requirement	22
6.2	Funding available and grant size	22
7	<i>Proposal guidelines</i>	23
8	<i>Proposal evaluation criteria</i>	26
9	<i>Budget guidelines</i>	27
10	<i>Application process</i>	28
10.1	Deadline for submission	28
10.2	Submission instructions	28
10.3	Clarifications, information session, and FAQs	28

11	<i>Selection process</i>	29
11.1	Post selection requirements	29
11.1.1	Proposal and budget finalization	29
11.1.2	Country clearance requirements	29
11.1.3	Institutional assessment	30
11.1.4	Final selection	30
11.1.5	Grant agreement	30
11.1.6	Currency and exchange rate policy	30
12	<i>Call timeline</i>	30
13	<i>Submission checklist</i>	31

1 Introduction

LIRNEasia, invites proposals for a second round of gender-responsive, policy-relevant, applied research projects that contribute to a Sustainable and Inclusive Future of Work under the FutureWORKS Asia initiative. This call is supported with funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

1.1 About FutureWORKS Asia

The [International Development Research Centre](#) (IDRC) of Canada is a Crown Corporation that supports and strengthens the capacity of people and institutions in developing countries to undertake the research that they identify as most urgent. It works with researchers and research users as they confront contemporary challenges within their own countries and contributes to global advances in their fields. IDRC recently launched the FutureWORKS initiative.

Through the FutureWORKS initiative, a Southern-led multidisciplinary research network is being built, dedicated to researching and addressing the policy challenges posed by the changing landscape of work across the Global South. Through shared research, network consolidation, knowledge sharing, and collaboration in public policy processes, FutureWORKS seeks to foster innovation that advances skills for the future of work and promotes decent work globally.

LIRNEasia was selected in 2023 as the Asian hub (the Hub) for the FutureWORKS Asia research network, leading in the establishment of the network over a period of five years. Similar networks will be built in Africa by the *University of the Witwatersrand* and the *University of Ghana*; in the MENA region by the *American University of Beirut*; and in Latin America and the Caribbean by *Red Sudamericana de Economía Aplicada*. Together, these regional networks will form the FutureWORKS Collective.

[LIRNEasia](#) is a regional policy and regulation think tank, working primarily in the digital space, and on topics which intersect with the digital sector, including [future of work](#). Our mission is *Catalyzing policy change and solutions through research to improve the lives of people in the Asia and Pacific using knowledge, information, and technology*.

In 2024, through a competitive call for a first round of research, LIRNEasia selected five research projects to form the first cohort of Asian network partners. The five projects commenced in 2025 and will run through 2027. This call for proposals for a second round or cohort will seek to address similar challenges to the first call, however will favor proposals that make a **concerted effort towards understanding what solutions work (or not, and why), in terms of policy approaches where they have been applied, rather than understanding of the challenges and inequities that need to be solved (of which there is already a fair understanding of)**.

1.2 FutureWORKS Asia hub objectives

The work of the FutureWORKS Asia hub centers around creating new, actionable knowledge that contributes to changing policies and practices that help the workforce in low and lower-middle income (L-LMIC) Asian countries, as they transition towards just and equitable work in light of the changes and disruptions to work ecosystems. These changes include increasing digitization (especially the rapid advancement of AI), climate change and energy transition to low-carbon economies, and demographic changes (declining birth rates, aging, and migration), and more recently disruptions to the global order of trade; all through the lens of gender, equity and inclusion. An important dimension of this work will be that it does not seek to address each of these challenges in isolation, but it will explore their implications where the forces intersect. For example, how the adoption of AI-based green technologies might affect job displacement, job augmentation, skills requirements, etc., particularly among marginalized groups. The core focus of the second cohort of projects will be on identifying and understanding solutions that work, rather than diagnosing and describing the problems that we already know a fair amount about.

As the Asia Hub, LIRNEasia aims to achieve the following over the five years, in order to achieve the global network objectives:

1. Build and nurture an Asian research network focused on the future of work, which will together with similar networks in the other regions form a global research network.
2. Facilitate high-quality, policy relevant, and gender-responsive research from the region, by establishing a regional research agenda and implementing it through the award and management of over 12 research grants through two or more competitive selection cycles.
3. Build and enhance research and policy engagement capacity of research grant recipients (i.e., the network members), through:
 - a. Group capacity building/enhancing activities within the research network to enhance their work, share expertise and develop synergies between network members and their research.
 - b. Provide tailored support to network members where needed¹ based on capacity assessments conducted at early stages of the grant.
4. Facilitate inter- as well as intra-network knowledge-sharing and peer learning opportunities among network members.
5. Disseminate research to identified stakeholders to facilitate the translation of research to policy impact.

1.3 Call for proposals

LIRNEasia, invites proposals for gender-responsive, policy-relevant applied research projects that contribute to a sustainable and inclusive future of work in the Asian region.

The objectives of this call are to:

- 1.1. Design and produce high quality, innovative, gender responsive and policy relevant research to address future work and skill challenges and opportunities to advance skills, strengthen social protection and promote decent work in light of the combined forces of mega changes that are disrupting work ecosystems across the globe, specifically: digital technology adoption, climate change and the transition to low-carbon economies (including its intersection with digital technology changes), and demographic changes.
- 1.2. Contribute to the on-going policy dialogues, within the above-identified domain at national, regional and international level, with relevant stakeholders inside national innovation systems, education systems (state run and other), government policy makers, technology platforms, multi/bi-lateral agencies and funders.
- 1.3. Enable LIRNEasia (through 1.1 and 1.2) to establish and develop a network of research partners that work collaboratively on policies and skills required for a future of work in light of the above-identified challenges facing low- and lower middle income (L-LMIC) Asian nations .

2 Background and context

The Asia Pacific region is home to 60% of the world's population and an estimated 57% of the world's labor force. However, there is great heterogeneity across the region between the countries and their labor market contexts, differing in their stages of structural and demographic transformation, as well as their socio-economic compositions, level of formality in their economies, as well as the level of policy capacity. While global, regional and local changes and disruptions to social and economic systems pervade, this heterogeneity affects how their impacts manifest –particularly on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups.

¹ Grant recipients are expected to participate in the activities of the FutureWORKS Asia network activities organized by the Asia hub (i.e., LIRNEasia), as well as some of the Global Hub activities, as advised by the Asia hub. Thus 'network members' refers to all grant recipients under FutureWORKS Asia; the two terms ('grant recipients' and 'network members') are used interchangeably in this document.

Notwithstanding the vast sub-regional differences, on average the region's largest employers are the agriculture sector (30% of the workforce in 2021), manufacturing (16%), and wholesale/retail trade (15%). The agriculture sector is often characterized by high levels of informality; low, if not zero wage levels; low productivity; poor working conditions; but it is a significant employer of women across the region. The manufacturing sector grapples with the dual challenge of ensuring decent work conditions and mitigating the risks posed by automation, as well as the more recent disruptions to the global order of trade, as well as global supply chain reorganization;² gender disparities in the higher growth sectors (which tend to employ more men than women) are a concern. The service sector, also a significant employer across the region, is dominated by the wholesale/retail trade and construction sectors. Heavily hit by the COVID 19 pandemic, the sector has seen varying levels of recovery; high-skilled occupations have recovered much faster than low-skilled occupations. Altogether these sectors which account for over 60% of the region's employment are characterized by low productivity, low wages, poor working conditions, a lack of job and income security, and little access to social protection. The lack of decent work therefore is a major challenge across the region. Despite substantial economic growth before the COVID-19 crisis, there were shrinking labor income shares and only limited improvements in decent work outcomes. Economic growth in the region has led to the creation of formal jobs and wage employment, but it has not effectively transformed informal employment into formal employment or significantly improved decent work conditions for the majority of workers.³ As such, informality pervades labor markets across the region (amplified by the platform economy), encompassing 68% of workers as of 2018, with particularly acute instances in South and Southeast Asia. Levels of informality are generally higher among women, the less educated, and rural populations.⁴ The COVID-19 pandemic pushed many workers into informal and more vulnerable jobs, leading to the deepening of existing divides.⁵ Ensuring greater public investment in labor market institutions is a challenge for countries.

Gender disparities in the workforce also prevail, with female labor force participation considerably low (even declining) in certain countries, compounded by limited access to STEM fields and digital skills training, perpetuating socio-economic disparities. Sectors which are seeing stronger growth in jobs post-COVID are those where men dominate (also high-skilled, high paid), which limits opportunities for women's participation and economic gain. Women tend to remain in low skill, low pay sectors which are also characterized by high levels of informality; women therefore tend to lack access to social protection. Women also tend to be found in sectors which are more vulnerable to job loss/displacement due to technological change and climate change and transition. These inequities have huge implications for labor market policies, as well as skills policies and systems. These systems need to be responsive to the needs of women, but also able to adapt to the rapidly changing ecosystem.

The region also faces divergent demographic trends, with some areas experiencing rapid aging populations (e.g., China, Sri Lanka, Thailand) juxtaposed with youthful demographics in others (e.g., Pakistan, Philippines). While youthful populations may be more adept to quickly learn and meet the rapidly changing skills requirements, whether skills and education systems can adapt quickly enough to provide those skills is an important question. Furthermore, whether governments can support increasing old age pension and other related social protection expenses with a narrower base of contributions is a concern. The global pandemic led to an overall decline in working conditions for

² <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/apr/06/trumps-tariffs-may-be-perilous-for-small-heavily-indebted-countries-in-global-south>

³ ILO. (2022). Asia-Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2022: Rethinking sectoral strategies for a human-centred future of work International Labor Office – Geneva: ILO, 2022.

⁴ <https://theaseanmagazine.asean.org/article/informal-workers-why-their-inclusion-and-protection-are-crucial-to-the-future-of-work/>

⁵ ILO. (2022). Asia-Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2022: Rethinking sectoral strategies for a human-centred future of work International Labor Office – Geneva: ILO, 2022.

⁵ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/endpointvertyinsouthasia/emerging-labor-market-trends-post-covid-south-asia>

many young people, forcing them into agricultural and other precarious jobs. The post-COVID recovery of jobs and decent work among youth segments has been slower in low-income countries compared to high income countries, deepening global inequalities. These inequalities will have possible implications for labor migration and social cohesion.⁶

Amidst these dynamics, ‘megatrends’ such as technological advancements, climate change and the energy transition, demographic shifts, and globalization are reshaping job markets, ushering in new paradigms while displacing traditional employment patterns, and creating new forms of inequality while exacerbating existing ones. Three such megatrends are explored in the following sections. The combined impacts of these disruptions still being understood, and there is a real danger of these disruptions leading to worsening labor market outcomes, especially for the vulnerable segments of Global South countries which may be ill-prepared to deal with the challenges and make use of the opportunities that simultaneously emerge – in terms of education/skills, social protection, and care sector policy ecosystems. It is clear that already- vulnerable groups are at risk of disproportionate negative effects of these changes, widening existing disparities.

There is an urgent need to strengthen labor market institutions and empower workers’ and employers’ groups, especially in key sectors. The region is held back by a lack of decent work, gender disparities, outdated and inept skills ecosystems, insufficient protections for the most vulnerable workers, high levels of informality and weak labor relations. Strengthening labor market institutions can have wide-reaching impacts on living standards for the region. There is consensus on the need for proactive strategies. Policymakers are called to modernize labor policies and skills and education systems, promote job creation in emerging sectors (digital, green economy), and strengthen institutions for social dialogue so that workers, employers, and governments can jointly navigate the transition. International organizations stress a human-centered approach to the future of work agenda – focusing on decent work, inclusive growth, and social justice as guiding principles .

2.1 Technological advancement

Technological changes that are affecting work ecosystems include automation, artificial intelligence (AI), the platformisation of work, inter alia. These changes are leading to both job displacement and creation, as well as the augmentation of jobs while altering and shifting skills demands.⁷ These changes are also leading to a change in the mix of formal versus informal jobs, having a knock-on effect on the level of coverage of social protection as well as labor rights and protections, working conditions, wage inequality, potential for career progression, etc. Evidence broadly suggests that the impacts of these changes are uneven, with women, low-skilled workers, young workers, informal workers and other marginalized groups set to face disproportionate negative effects of these changes (although *some* high-skilled occupations are seen to face negative impacts).⁸

⁶ ILO. (2023). Has youth employment recovered? ILO Brief.

https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_885192.pdf

⁷ ILO. (2019) Preparing for the future of work: National policy responses in ASEAN +6

https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@asia/@ro-bangkok/@sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_717736.pdf ; AfDB, ADB, EBRD, IDB (African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Inter-American Development Bank).

2018. The Future of Work: Regional Perspectives. Washington, DC. ; ADB. (2019). The Digital Revolution in Asia and Its Macroeconomic Effects - <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/535846/adbi-wp1029.pdf>

³ AfDB, ADB, EBRD, IDB (African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Inter-American Development Bank). 2018. The Future of Work: Regional Perspectives. Washington, DC; JIN. (2022). Technology and the Future of Work: Artificial Intelligence.

https://justjobsnetwork.org/files/technology-and-the-future-of-work_oct_2022.pdf ; Hegewisch, Ariane &

Platformisation of work has been seen to reinforce existing ('offline') gender norms that limit women's participation in the labor market, reinforce the precarity that women and other informal sector workers already face, and lead to women being stuck in low-paying roles, overall leading to poorer labor market outcomes for women.⁹ The pandemic accelerated platformisation and more broadly digitization: businesses and governments adopted remote work, e-commerce, and digital services out of necessity, changes that are now becoming permanent features of the work landscape. Indeed, the future of work in Asia is trending toward greater flexibility and digital integration. This means more hybrid work arrangements, gig and freelance work facilitated by online platforms, and cross-border remote collaboration. Such flexibility can improve efficiency and work-life balance but also raises challenges around job security and benefits. Worker well-being has accordingly become a focal point, with employers and policymakers increasingly aware of the need to support mental health, work-life balance, and fair labor practices in the face of rapid change.¹⁰

Technological advancements leading to the comparative costs of labor versus robots changing, also brings about concerns of reshoring/near-shoring of certain industries such as manufacturing and business process outsourcing; some of these segments are more or less feminized than others, and involve lower levels of skill, therefore potentially leading to uneven effects. While a little more is known about the deployment of AI tools for routine task (including robotics), less is known about the deployment of generative AI in less routine tasks, especially in creative occupations. The ILO's recent estimation of the impact of generative AI on jobs in high-income countries, suggests that the technology will overall have an augmenting effect, at least in the short run, particularly for knowledge workers, although certain occupations (such as clerical and administrative roles) face higher automation risk.¹¹ Less is understood about how these impacts are manifesting in lower income countries, where labor markets already face high levels of inequality, costly infrastructure, relatively lower skill and wage levels to adapt, low levels of digital skills, inter alia. If the augmenting effects are similarly applicable to lower income countries, this could potentially exacerbate inequalities between higher socio-economic groups (i.e., knowledge workers), versus lower groups.

With the growing importance of AI workers in the AI and data 'value chain', a number of concerns exist. AI data work can involve anything from data labelling or enrichment to writing code to train algorithms on large datasets. Most often, it is outsourced to workers in the Global South. Work arrangements can vary from freelancer platform-based gigs to contract work arrangements at formal BPO-type operations.¹² There are direct parallels with the well documented challenges faced by platform workers broadly: precarity of work, low bargaining power and agency of workers, risks of exploitation--particularly for women and migrant

Bendick, Marc & Gault, Barbara & Hartmann, Heidi. (2016). Pathways to Equity: Narrowing the Wage Gap by Improving Women's Access to Good Middle-Skill Jobs. ; Hegewisch, Ariane & Childers, Chandra & Hartmann, Heidi. (2019). Women, Automation, and the Future of Work;) Brussevich, M., Dabla-Norris, E., and Khalid, S. (2019). Is Technology Widening the Gender Gap? Automation and the Future of Female Employment. IMF Working Paper; Gmyrek, P., Berg, J., Bescond, D. Generative AI and jobs: A global analysis of potential effects on job quantity and quality. ILO Working Paper 96. Geneva: International Labor Office, 2023

⁹ JustJobs Network. (2023). Empowerment or Exploitation: Global Perspectives on Women's Work in the Platform Economy; Ecosystems of Engagement: Digital Platforms and Women's Work in Sri Lanka and India https://justjobsnetwork.org/files/empowerment-or-exploitation-global-perspectives-on-womens-work-in-the-platform-economy_may-2023.pdf

¹⁰ International Labour Organization (ILO). (2022). Working time and work-life balance around the world. ILO. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/working-time-and-work-life-balance-around-world>

¹¹ Gmyrek, P., Berg, J., Bescond, D. Generative AI and jobs: A global analysis of potential effects on job quantity and quality. ILO Working Paper 96. Geneva: International Labor Office, 2023.

¹² Muldoon, J., Cant, C., Wu, B., & Graham, M. (2024). A typology of artificial intelligence data work. *Big Data & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517241232632>

workers, challenges to organizing, and more. Where the work happens across borders,¹³ enforcement of labor standards is poor, organizing is hard; origin countries tend to overlook these ‘invisible’ workers. There are other concerns that are more specific to online content moderation, particularly mental health impacts. Some models of social impact operations have emerged in India and the Philippines, however evidence on how the positive elements can be scaled is lacking, as is evidence of success of workers in organizing. There is a case to be made for the displacement of some of these jobs by AI with the addition of synthetic data to train models; there is considerable potential particularly with respect to the traumatic content moderation roles.¹⁴ But this too comes with potential costs and risks; a wider evidence base is needed to understand if AI can play a role in improving outcomes.

WEF argues that AI can help informal workers by making their skills more visible, improving how they find and secure jobs, and supporting communication in local languages. By building on familiar digital tools (digital identification for example), it argues that AI offers pathways to more stable and dignified work without forcing formal employment structures.¹⁵ The enabling role of digital public infrastructure (DPI) is something of note and interest here, particularly when it comes to identity verification, digital payments, and other elements. The role of DPI in facilitating portability of social benefits has been explored in India – highlighting its potential for vulnerable income groups including migrant workers which make up a large share of the informal economy.¹⁶ While there may be potential to improve the outcomes of informal workers—especially migrant workers—this is an evolving area and needs further exploration, also taking into account the extent of the digital divide in the contexts being studied.

While much research has focused on the disproportionate *negative* impacts of AI-led automation on women workers, some attention is due to the potential for improving gender equity in previously male-dominated sectors. An example is the AI-led automation of in the ports and logistics industries, where physically demanding outdoor mechanical jobs (e.g., crane operation) are now turned into indoor computer-based jobs, reducing barriers to women’s (and even persons with disabilities) participation, and improving working conditions.¹⁷ Research is required on how such examples can be scaled, and what are the other prerequisites that are also needed to support more diverse participation.

The rapid digitization of economies over the past decade --especially during the Covid-19 pandemic— has also created a constant supply of large amounts of transaction and other data being generated every minute. This gives rise to opportunities for using big data to better understand the labor market in near-real time for labor market policy, though data limitations

¹³ CEPR. (2019). Working conditions on digital labor platforms: Opportunities, challenges, and the quest for decent work. <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/working-conditions-digital-labor-platforms-opportunities-challenges-and-quest-decent>

¹⁴ https://www.turing.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-01/exploring_responsible_applications_report_november_2023_-_final_report.pdf

Wullach, T., Adler, A., & Minkov, E. (2021). Towards Hate Speech Detection at Large via Deep Generative Modeling. *IEEE Internet Computing*, 25(2), 48–57. <https://doi.org/10.1109/MIC.2020.3033161>

¹⁵ World Economic Forum. (2025, May 22). *How AI is reshaping the future of informal work in the Global South*. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2025/05/ai-reshaping-informal-work-global-south/>

¹⁶ Vedavalli, P., Kwatra, N., Srinivasan, S., & Sinha, V. (2024). *Leveraging digital public infrastructure for building inclusive social protection systems* (Version 2.1). Artha Global. <https://artha.global/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Leveraging-Digital-Public-Infrastructure-V2-1.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://www.dpworld.com/insights/how-technology-is-reshaping-the-workforce-in-our-ports-and-terminals>; <https://archives1.dailynews.lk/2019/06/18/finance/188644/%E2%80%98port-automation-will-attract-more-women%E2%80%99>

must be well understood and taken into consideration before conclusions are drawn based on this data.¹⁸

2.2 Climate change and the energy transition

Climate change impacts labor markets across a majority of economic sectors, both in quantity *and* quality of jobs.¹⁹ Some sectors such as agriculture may be more vulnerable, and therefore, the impact on L-LMIC countries could be more because more people work in agriculture in L-LMIC Asia; these jobs are already more likely to lack decent conditions. On the one hand, the direct impact of climate change which manifests as global warming, ecological disasters, natural disasters, and extinction of species will have consequences on job markets, such as deteriorating working conditions, reduced working hours, reduced labor productivity, displacement of jobs, etc.

On the other hand, the solution to climate change and progress towards sustainability by transitioning to a low carbon economy (or the greening of economies) will have an impact on the job market through the structural changes it entails, with job creation, new skills coming into demand, changes in work practice, and so on.²⁰ The effects of these changes will in conjunction with those happening in other realms are only beginning to be understood.

For example, AI/technology revolutions could mean not just new jobs and skills but also a change in the number of jobs that can be created. Which sectors will be the net gainers vs the net losers are yet to be understood, moreover knowledge on exactly how jobs and tasks within jobs are changing is even less understood. Difficulties are more pronounced for developing countries which may be majorly driven by carbon intensive sectors which employ large numbers of low skilled workers.²¹ Moreover, the effects within Global South job markets may be divergent. For example, workers in certain sectors such as agriculture and construction are more exposed to heat stress; workers in these sectors are low skilled, and often not formal and thus outside of the ambit of social protection; given the high proportion of women employed in agriculture, they are thus also more likely to be impacted by effects of heat stress than men. Evidence suggests that women have a harder time reskilling to fit into these new roles than men. Therefore, there are clear equity challenges to be addressed in this area. With these kinds of inequalities arising, it is critical that policies and institutions are prepared and able to adapt in a way that ensures marginalized groups are not disproportionately affected, and that not excluded from the new opportunities arising through these structural changes. It is crucial to ensure that everyone – women, youth, rural populations, low-skilled workers, persons with disabilities, gender and sexual minorities, ethnic minorities, inter alia -- has the ability to adapt and reskill as easily as each other to fit into these new roles.

¹⁸ <https://lirneasia.net/2022/02/exploring-the-use-of-online-job-portals-for-labor-market-analysis/>

¹⁹ Harris, J. M., & Roach, B. (2017). Environmental and natural resource economics: A contemporary approach. Routledge.

http://students.aiu.edu/submissions/profiles/resources/onlineBook/H9K3x5_Environmental%20and%20Natural%20Resource%20Economics%202017.pdf

²⁰ Bowen, A., & Kuralbayeva, K. (2015). Looking for green jobs: the impact of green growth on employment. Grantham Research Institute Working Policy Report. London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1-28. http://portal.gms-meoc.org/uploads/resources/3382/attachment/Looking_for_green_jobs_the_impact_of_green_growth_on_employment_GGRI_Grantham_Research_Institute_on_Climate_Change_on_the_Environment_0.pdf

²¹ Van der Ree, K. (2019). Promoting green jobs: Decent work in the transition to low-carbon, green economies. In The ILO@ 100 (pp. 248-272). Brill Nijhoff. https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/37968/9789004399013_webready_content_text.pdf#page=269

An important part of the skills discourse is the future of green skills. While there is consensus that there is a need for greater focus on green skills, as well as green technology skills, there is also a reasonable level of understanding of the barriers to these skills systems (outdated programs, lack of adaptability, inability to deal with cross-sectoral needs). There is also some understanding that what is required are context-specific green skill strategies, particularly toward key green sectors (agriculture, energy, waste management) and potential ones (sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, renewables); further, alignment of education, environment, industrial policies are required. Less understood are the effectiveness of various training approaches in key green sectors for the informal and rural sectors, and the long-term impacts of green skills investments impact employment and social inclusion.²²

On the positive side, energy transition also presents opportunities for improving labor markets towards a *just* transition for workers, though how far these will materialize depends on implementation, context, capacity, and other factors. Financing of the just transition for workers is one such opportunity. Various models are evolving, recognizing the instrumental role that the finance sector can play in facilitating access to capital and efficient risk sharing mechanisms for the transition to a low carbon economy, in such a way that decent worker outcomes can be prioritized.²³ This can include various forms of financing, incentives, insurance, impact investing, and so on. But how do we know what works, and under what conditions they work better or worse?²⁴

2.3 Demographic changes

The three key demographic trends that are affecting various labor markets in the region are ageing populations in some countries (e.g., Sri Lanka, Thailand), more youthful populations in others (e.g., Pakistan, Philippines), and high levels of migration in others (e.g., Afghanistan, India).

Increasing aging populations combined with lower fertility rates place a strain on the ability of middle-income countries to provide old-age pension and provide universal healthcare. This is exacerbated by the size of informal economies as informal workers make minimal contributions to social security provisions.²⁵ The impacts of increased (unpaid) care burden falls disproportionately on women, and puts women more at risk of falling into poverty in old age.²⁶ Further, it limits their ability to work and earn in their working years (providing for their retirement/future needs), given the pressure of both childcare and elder care, plus other household duties. The estimated lifetime employment-related costs to women of providing unpaid care have been estimated in the US, taking into account not just the loss of lifetime earnings (due to curtailment of employment, reduced working hours, etc.), but also their subsequent retirement income, amounting to the equivalent of 15% of what women could earn over a lifetime.²⁷ Similar estimates for the Asia Pacific could help to better prepare countries to

²² International Labour Organization. (2019). Skills for a greener future: A global view based on 32 country studies. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_709121.pdf

²³ International Labor Organization. (2021). *Climate change and financing a just transition*. <https://www.ilo.org/resource/other/climate-change-and-financing-just-transition>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ International Labor Organization. (2019) Preparing for the future of work: National policy responses in ASEAN +6 https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@asia/@ro-bangkok/@sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_717736.pdf

²⁶ International Labor Organization. (2018). Game Changers: Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific. <https://www.ilo.org/media/414776/download>

²⁷ Johnson, R.W., Smith, K.E., and Butrica, B.A. (2023). Lifetime Employment-Related Costs to Women of Providing Family Care. https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WB/Mothers-Families-Work/Lifetime-caregiving-costs_508.pdf

prepare for these shifts. Increasing trends towards migration (especially of care workers, seeking better pay and better working conditions abroad) exacerbate the problems. There are therefore significant opportunities in the care economy in these countries, in terms of job creation; however many of these jobs remain unpaid and informal, with poor working conditions unless governments take efforts to reform their care sector and change some of the core perceptions on care work; while some countries are in the process of doing just that, lessons from successful examples and case studies could help in the redesign and rethink of the care sector. Though technological solutions to assist in care work are technically feasible,²⁸ economic feasibility in L-LMIC settings is a question.

Many nations across Asia are experiencing a demographic dividend where the working age population is greater than dependent population (elderly and child populations). This youth bulge represents an opportunity for economic growth through an increased labor force participation rate but simultaneously creates economic and social challenges related to unemployment if they are not absorbed by the labor force. A key driver of unemployment is the gap between skills and education and the demands of the labor market,²⁹ pointing towards the need for education and skills policies to be rethought. Given the rapid pace of technological change, and constantly evolving skills demands, governments and businesses are responding with initiatives for continuous learning and reskilling. Lifelong learning systems – including e-learning platforms, vocational training, and on-the-job upskilling – are expanding to help workers adapt to new demands.³⁰ Nevertheless, ensuring “trainability” – that workers have strong foundational skills and digital literacy to learn new competencies – remains an urgent challenge. Without concerted investment in human capital, the promise of technological innovation could be undermined by structural unemployment or widening inequality.

The Covid-19 pandemic worsened youth unemployment in the Asia Pacific as nearly half of all youth workers in the region (47%) are employed in the four sectors that were hit hardest by the crisis (wholesale/retail trade, manufacturing, business services, and accommodation/food services).³¹ It also worsened working conditions for young workers, as they shifted to agriculture in large numbers.³² This makes them more vulnerable to job losses than older workers. The impact of generative AI on sectors such as the business process outsourcing sector, and other sectors which have previously provided relatively decent work opportunities for young workers, is also an area that requires exploration; on the one hand, such developments could lead to job displacement among some kinds of workers, while on the other hand, certain kinds of jobs could be augmented. How this manifests among vulnerable workers versus less vulnerable workers’ is yet to be seen.

²⁸ ILO. (2019) Preparing for the future of work: National policy responses in ASEAN +6 https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@asia/@ro-bangkok/@sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_717736.pdf

²⁹ JustJobs Network. (2022). Reimagining Employability for the 21st-century: 10 Million Apprentices in 10 Years. https://justjobsnetwork.org/files/reimagining-employability-for-the-21st-century-10-million-apprentices-in-10-years_aug_2022.pdf

³⁰ Asian Development Bank. (2024). The future of work, artificial intelligence, and digital government: Policy perspectives from Asia. ADB. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/995866/adbi-future-work-artificial-intelligence-and-digital-government-policy-perspectives-asia.pdf>

³¹ International Labor Organization, Bangkok (Thailand), and Asian Development Bank, Manila (Philippines). (2020). https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_753369.pdf

³² International Labor Organization. (2023). ILO Brief: Has youth employment recovered? https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_88519_2.pdf

It is expected that low-skilled labor migration will prevail in Asia in the coming decade. Major source countries include Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Vietnam. These countries have relatively lower per capita incomes, abundant labor supply, and lower human development indicators. Major destinations include Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong. These countries have higher per capita incomes, face labor shortages, and have higher human development.³³ Migration is driven by income considerations, but also the lack of quality jobs and high unemployment, and increasingly climate-induced factors from origin countries. Increasing demands for care workers due to aging populations in the destination countries, as well as economic transformation of middle-income countries creating infrastructure jobs relying on migrants.³⁴ While automation is unlikely to change migration trends of low-skilled workers within the region, they are at the risk of job loss unless provided access to skills development opportunities.³⁵ Intra-country migration --driven by economic needs as well as increasing frequency and intensity of climate shocks-- also presents major challenges. Often this migration is from rural to urban causing cities to expand (Asian cities are growing at alarming rates), and impacts the demographic mix of labor in both the origin and destination. At the same time, the transition to greener economies could create new job opportunities (e.g., in renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable construction), for those with the right skills.³⁶ It is thus important that migrant workers are not excluded from skills initiatives (especially green skills) and social protection schemes which can both increase their resilience in the face of the disruptions and risks that they are vulnerable to. The rise of digitally-enabled risks and harms that migrant workers often are affected by is of concern. This includes online recruitment scams, unregulated remittance and finances apps, identity theft, forced labor, and other forms of exploitation.³⁷ Ensuring that appropriate policies, domestic as well as cross-border, are in place to a balance in terms of minimizing the harm --both due to the risk as well as the policy response-- is key; how effective these are in practice needs to be understood.

Women being employed more often in vulnerable sectors (e.g., those where they face disproportionate risk of automation, or climate-induced job loss) and informal jobs lacking labor rights and protections, as well as income disparities within origin countries pushes women to migrate in search of higher pay. The rising care sector in ageing economies presents opportunities for employment for women migrant workers. However, as this sector mostly falls under the informal economy, women migrant workers lack protection from existing labor laws and protections.

Given the disruptions caused by these mega changes (as well as the recent disruptions in the global order of trade), and the opportunities and challenges that are manifesting, how do we ensure that the most vulnerable workers in developing Asia are taken care of? That they are sufficiently equipped with access to the right skills and education, to labor rights and protections, and to affordable, quality care services, as well as other facilitators of work to ensure decent work outcomes and greater resiliency for the workforce.

³³ ILO. (2023). Labor Migration in Asia: What Does the Future Hold?
https://roasiapacific.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl671/files/documents/2023-07/iom_labor-migration-in-asia_what-does-the-future-hold.pdf

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ ADBI-OECD-ILO. (2024). *Labor Migration in Asia: Trends, Skills Certification and Seasonal Work*.

³⁷ Ibid.

There is a need for high quality South-centric knowledge that takes a holistic view of these challenges (as opposed to a siloed approach), and is able to provide solutions to ensure a sustainable and inclusive future of work for the Global South.

There is a key need to move beyond describing the challenges that are already known, to focus on what is and can be done to address these challenges, in terms of policy and solutions; there is a need to understand what works, what doesn't, what factors contribute to this, and how can best/good practices be adapted to other contexts. Three key policy areas have been identified:

- Education and skills gaps, needs, and policy
- Inclusive access to labor protections and rights (including access to social insurance for those in non-standard forms of employment/ those informally employed)
- An inclusive Care economy challenges and opportunities which supports the workforce.

3 Call priorities

Given the trends and patterns shaping labor markets, and given that there is already a great deal of emphasis on diagnosing the problems hitherto, this call will try to orient projects to be more solution-oriented. This is not to say that research projects that seek to understand the effects of changes and disruptions to labor markets will not be funded, but these projects should fill specific knowledge gaps, with strong policy relevance and justification. A heavier weight will be placed on projects which try to understand better what solutions and policies exist, what has been tried and tested (or failed), what are the lessons that can be transplanted elsewhere.

To this end, successful grants will **address research questions that are relevant to making changes in policy and practice**, that support decision-making across government, industry, and other sectors. This may include identifying and analyzing best or good practices, synthesizing existing evidence on what has or hasn't worked, conducting impact assessments, identifying how to scale up successful solutions, or undertaking comparative analyses of strategies and approaches. Specifically, this can include:

- **Case studies and comparative analyses of emerging best-fit practices and policy solutions** — including both successes and instances where policies, programs, or corporate initiatives have not achieved desired outcomes — to generate actionable learnings that can inform future efforts across the region and beyond; understanding of under what conditions certain policies will work versus not; understanding the conditions for scale up of pilot solutions
- **Exploration of emerging trends and uncertainties related to the future of work** — including new patterns, risks, concerns, or opportunities that remain underexplored or poorly understood, however the proposal should be solution focused.
- **Quantification of impacts** — assessing the effects of new or evolving policies, business practices, technological disruptions, or socio-economic shifts on workers, firms, and economies (to the extent that sufficient time has elapsed for impacts to be visible; this could include follow-up studies to recently completed rigorous baseline studies)
- **Contextualizing and replicating studies from the Global North (or other parts of the Global South)** — testing whether trends and outcomes observed in the Global North (via previous studies) are mirrored in the Global South. Where differences arise, research should identify underlying contextual factors and implications for policy and practice adaptation. Comparisons could also be made with pre-existing studies from other parts of the Global South also.³⁸
- **Solution-oriented, evidence-based approaches** — emphasizing practical insights with clear strategies for dissemination, uptake, and engagement with relevant stakeholders.

³⁸ Note, the grants may not be used to fund research in the Global North, or Global South countries outside of Asia; this category of studies should make comparisons with findings and outcome of *existing* work conducted in the relevant regions/countries.

- **Potential for influence and convening** — research that can shape discourse, guide strategy, and foster collaboration among policymakers, industry leaders, worker organizations, and other key actors. Innovative methods to answer these questions are encouraged, such as use of novel data sources and methods, etc.; bringing in together stakeholders that can impact change, develop solutions, develop new policies, develop ways to scale up a existing solution etc., particularly for marginalized groups.
- **Implementation processes** – projects that support and study the process of implementing a solution (including research, capacity building and convening activities toward this end); these projects should also seek to document the implementation process and have an MEL component to facilitate learnings of what worked versus not, for other countries/domains.

Proposed research **must**:

- Be relevant to an **L-LMIC country in Asia** as defined by the World Bank as at 1 July 2025³⁹; to the extent where concrete policy lessons can be drawn from the experience of **recently transitioned** or other relevant countries (with similar contextual features), such countries could be included within the scope of this call, but with strong justification (e.g., experience with an innovative skills policy, or social protection scheme, etc.).
- Have **gender, equity and inclusion** considerations as the central priority of the research.
- Take into consideration, and connect to the impacts on workers of the aforementioned mega changes, connecting with **at least two (if not all) of the three mega changes** that are described in Section 2.
- Broadly address one or more of the key policy areas identified in Section 3.
 - Applicants are free to broaden or narrow down the scope as appropriate (e.g. take a regional view or a national view; to explore the gig economy only instead of all jobs, focus on one sector of the economy etc.), add or modify the research questions within the broad thematic, to add sub-questions under each, and to add new questions that are relevant to the thematic focus of this call for proposals. Proponents should identify context-relevant priorities in their proposal.
- Ideally lead to the development, replication, or scaling up of solutions (policy or practice).

4 Expectations of projects

4.1 High quality research

The Asia Hub expects network research partners to uphold rigorous and high-quality standards in their work, ensuring that the policy insights they generate are based on sound evidence. We strongly encourage the adoption of **multi-method and multi-disciplinary** approaches whenever possible, enabling a comprehensive and diverse understanding of the issues under study. Research methods can include *but are not limited to*:

- Surveys, qualitative research, case studies, data analytics, policy analyses, literature reviews, systematic reviews, impact assessments, pilot implementation of solutions.

Furthermore, we encourage partners to make meaningful contributions to the advancement of knowledge in the field. This can involve employing novel methods, exploring innovative approaches, or adapting and testing existing frameworks in different contexts. **Projects that will be prioritized in selection will include those that are policy-relevant and solution-oriented, rather than simply descriptive or diagnosing problems that knowledge already exists on.**

³⁹ i.e., Low or lower middle-income country in Asia as per the latest World Bank classification as at 1 July 2025 (<https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/opendata/world-bank-country-classifications-by-income-level-for-2024-2025>); Democratic People's Republic of Korea excluded.

4.2 Ethical conduct

Ethical conduct in research is also paramount, and we expect network research partners to surpass regulatory requirements, upholding the highest ethical standards throughout their activities. Projects must adhere to high ethical standards in line with [IDRC's Principles of Institutional Research Ethics](#). The [IDRC standard grant agreement](#) further outlines applicable ethics standards. Ideally, projects should include an institutional ethics review board before data collection begins; details of such should be provided in proposals, and this should be factored into the project timeline.

4.3 Commitment to policy-relevant research and influencing policy

The objective of the network is to bring about changes in policy and practice based on rigorous evidence. As such, all applicants must have a genuine commitment to going beyond production of research outputs. Applicants should have a **demonstrated ability (capabilities and networks) to effectively translate research to policy**. Proposals that demonstrate an understanding of policy priorities and a plan for engaging with national, sub-regional and regional decision makers and stakeholders will be favored over those that do not.

Network research partners are encouraged to use opportunities that arise as they carry out work in their other capacities (e.g., advisory boards, curriculum design consultants) disseminate this work. The Hub will also facilitate policy engagement at regional and international level where necessary as opportunities arise.

4.4 Gender, equity and inclusion

A key requirement of the funding is that projects incorporate gender, equity and inclusion considerations into their research questions, study design and intended outcomes, to ensure positive outcomes for excluded or marginalized groups. Inequalities exist across multiple and intersecting categories of identity, including, but not limited to, the following: gender, sexuality, age, class, race, caste, ethnicity, citizenship status, religion, and ability. Taking an intersectional approach to gender equality recognizes these differences and understands diversity as central to advancing equality. Given that gender inequality is a significant barrier across all dimensions of diversity, successful projects should place gender, equity and inclusion considerations at the center of all activities and approaches. This includes, but is not limited to, the research questions prioritized, all aspects of research design, evaluation and roll out, team composition, and activities related to positioning for uptake, including strategic engagement and synthesis work. Having a gender/equity/inclusion expert as an integral part of the team is mandatory (rather than simple gender representation in team composition).

For additional background, please see [IDRC's Equality Statement](#). Additional resources are available in [Annex 1](#).

Accordingly, proposals should demonstrate how gender, equity and inclusion will be promoted and adopted using an intersectional approach, both with respect to the following: (i) team composition (not simply gender representation, but presence of concrete expertise in gender, equity and inclusion) and organizations comprising the research team; and (ii) the design and implementation of the proposed project (not limited to the research questions, methodology, dissemination strategies, etc.).

4.5 Commitment to engagement with other grant recipients in the network

A research network is being set up instead of individual/standalone research projects being funded because the sum is expected to be bigger than the parts. The network design includes ample opportunity for peer learning through exchange of learnings, challenges, expertise, etc.

The research network was initiated through the first Call for Proposals, under which five grants were awarded to five organizations across Asia. These organizations now form the initial cohort

of the FutureWORKS Asia research network. With this second Call for Proposals, another cohort of grantees will join and contribute to this growing network, further enriching the collaborative knowledge base and regional diversity. In the early stages, the hub will facilitate connections between research teams engaged in similar research. But over time, it is expected that organic relationships will form. Long term success could include research partners joining together to apply for further funding from other funders, or engaging in policy engagement using learnings from each other's research and so on. The Hub will facilitate policy engagement at regional and international level where possible, and where necessary. The Hub will also facilitate periodic feedback from an Advisory Board, comprising of experts in fields relevant to the network, for the larger project, as needed.

On a practical level, the Hub will organize regular convenings (including a monthly convening for all network members (i.e., grant recipients)), an in person research partner network meeting, capacity building workshops where required, dissemination events inter alia. The network members are expected to participate in these activities and therefore account for this in personnel costs. While many of these convenings will be online, it is expected that the Hub (LIRNEasia) will organize two in-person meetings and one to two representatives from each network member (grant recipient) will be expected to participate in it. Furthermore, members of the grant recipient teams may be called upon to provide expert talks, moderate sessions, or lead a capacity building session based on their ongoing or past work, on occasion.

4.6 Open Access and data management plan

Applicants funded through this program will be expected to comply with IDRCs Open Access Policy and IDRC Open Data Statement of Principles. Applicants are to submit a Stage 1 Data Management Plan, and to apply ensure network members have data management plans in place.

The DMP templates can be found at: <http://www.idrc.ca/en/developing-data-management-plan-guidance-applicants-and-grantees>.

Applicants must publish research findings in the public domain in accordance with IDRC's Open Access Policy, available at <https://idrc-crdi.ca/en/open-access-policy-idrc-funded-project-outputs>. Any associated costs of ensuring open access may be included in the budget.

Any computer programs or software developed using grant funds shall be made available to the public in accordance with the Creative Commons Attribution License (described at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> as updated from time to time).

4.7 Knowledge sharing

A key objective of IDRC's Strategy 2030 is to share knowledge for greater uptake and use – increasing the reach and impact that IDRC-supported research has in driving solutions, and in influencing national, regional, and global development agendas, including through synthesizing, and communicating results.

Applicants must explain how their proposal responds to an emerging need, knowledge gap or demand, **and they must demonstrate intentionality and identify opportunities to move knowledge (research evidence) into action (policy, social and behavioral change, etc.)**. As such successful applicants will be expected to develop policy uptake plans with support from the Hub.

Applications must include a knowledge sharing strategy that identifies key knowledge users (audiences), and that describes the anticipated approach to engage these strategic

stakeholders (ideally throughout the research process) to support research uptake and use and/or to scale impact (by optimizing beyond original project boundaries). Knowledge sharing plans should be integrated into project proposals – provided the resources required are clearly described, appropriate, and incorporated as part of the overall project budget.

5 Technical and methodological support for network members

Support in the following areas both in the form of in-person and virtual workshops as well as on an on-going basis will be made available to the grantees as needed. A capacity assessment will be performed at the time of contracting to identify the on-going support needs for the grant recipients. Grantee team members may also be drawn upon as resource persons where possible to foster peer knowledge sharing. The Hub will also organize fire-side chats with policy makers and practitioners to give the research partners greater insights on the use of evidence in the policy process. The Hub will also organize opportunities for interacting with scale up partners such as multi-lateral organizations that will provide the research partners the opportunity to take their research findings into the policy process. Academics/researchers partners will support the research partners and the Hub by providing input on research design and reviewing research outputs.

- a. **Research design and methods:** Quantitative methods including representative sample design, survey instrument design and execution; qualitative research design and implementation; data analytics using large sets of secondary data. In particular, if researchers wish to obtain larger data sets (i.e. big data) from sources (e.g. large job platforms), LIRNEasia data scientists can assist or train the research team, or work with the research team to analyze data.
- b. **Research ethics:** Research project risk assessment, measures to mitigate risks associated with data collection and storing, enumerator/moderator training on risk mitigation.
- c. **Intersectional analysis:** To ensure research design, research tools and analysis plans of projects incorporate an intersectional approach to inclusion. Projects will be reviewed with grant recipients at an early stage to identify potential vulnerable groups which need to be accounted for in project design and execution.
- d. **Research synthesis:** Where multiple research methods have been used, how best to combine the results to bring about greater generalizability and applicability.
- e. **Technological transformation and climate change:** Projects may be reviewed through the lens of climate change and related transitions, to identify or adapt research questions and other activities as appropriate to foster work-related outcomes that enable rather than hinder transitions to low carbon/sustainable economies.
- f. **Communicating research to policy:** Help position results for local and regional uptake by policy makers and practitioners: identifying and engaging with stakeholders; data visualization, story telling, understanding the audience and preparing policy outputs; identifying and preparing for policy windows; rapid response interventions; providing comments during public consultancy process etc.

- g. **Monitoring, evaluation, and learning:** Defining monitoring and evaluation objectives of the research project, developing customized monitoring and evaluation plan, building internal capacity, facilitating data collection and analysis, research communication, fostering culture of learning.
- h. **Technical and financial reporting:** Introducing the technical and financial reporting parameters specified by principal funder, IDRC.
- i. **Data acquisition and wrangling:** Private sector companies often possess large amounts of transactional generated data which, if analyzed can bring about insights relevant to public policy and social good. However, obtaining this data can be a challenge. If the applicant has a data provider that is willing to discuss the use of its data, then LIRNEasia can provide support during the negotiation stage.

6 Grant details

6.1 Eligibility criteria

Only full proposals that meet the eligibility criteria will be considered.

6.1.1 Legal identity

Applicants must have independent legal identity (or “legal personality”), be able to enter into a contract in their own right and name, have a bank account in their own name where they can receive funds from the Asia Hub (LIRNEasia), and administer funds from, and have the authority and ability to carry out the proposed project activities. If selected after the technical review process, applicants must be able to demonstrate their legal status through written documentation. In the case of consortia, the organization leading the application must have a legal identity as described above, with consortium member organizations also having a legal personality in any of the eligible countries of focus (See 6.1.4).

6.1.2 Eligible organizations

Eligible applicants may include, **research institutions, universities, think tanks, associations, civil society organizations, and non-profit organizations**. The core criteria which will determine eligibility are:

1. The project will result in **public interest** research (which aligns with the overall FutureWORKS Asia objectives of a sustainable and inclusive future of work), which is made available freely in the public domain as per IDRC open access guidelines. You can review the guidelines here: IDRC Open Access Policy.
2. The organization has a firm and **demonstrated** commitment to making policy impact through the project. This should be demonstrated through the planned activities of the project, as well as through past activities/successful policy influence.

The following are **not** eligible to apply:

1. Individuals
2. Private organizations whose business is a product or service targeted at workers as their customers (e.g., online job portal, recruitment agencies, etc.)
3. Government organizations and institutions (with the exception of public research and educational institutions)
4. UN agencies

Eligible applicants may bring in *partners* that fit into the above 3 categories above, however, funds from successful projects may not flow to the following:

1. Individuals who are part- or full-time employees of the public sector/government, with the exception of state-owned universities or public research institutions.⁴⁰
2. Government organizations and institutions (with the exception of public research and educational institutions)
3. UN agencies
4. **Organizations** based in India or Myanmar (refer Section 6.1.3 (ii))

6.1.3 Country presence in an Asian L-LMIC

The applicant (organization that will enter a contract with the Asia Hub, i.e., LIRNEasia as per 6.1.1.) must be an organization headquartered in an Asian L-LMIC.⁴¹ The proposed work must be conducted in one or more of the countries listed below (i.e., these countries/their populations should be the subject of the proposed research).

The applicant may have partners and/or experts based in countries outside of the eligible country list, however, majority of the funding must be spent in the eligible country/countries. Comparator countries from those recently transitioned to upper middle-income status (i.e., within the last three years) may be included, where concrete policy lessons can be drawn from their experiences. For example, where lessons can be drawn from experiences with innovative skills policy, or social protection schemes, etc. A strong justification must be included for this, however.

Eligible countries (as at 1 June 2025) include:

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Uzbekistan, and Viet Nam.

Notes:

- i. **Afghanistan:** Applicants based in Afghanistan or proposing research on Afghanistan may apply for funds from *either* the Asia hub (i.e., through this call) *or* from *South West Asian and Northern African* (i.e., MENA) hub based in the American University of Beirut. Applicants may not apply to both hubs.
- ii. **India and Myanmar:** Given current challenges that restrict the ability of research institutions based in these two countries to receive foreign funds, the Asia hub is only able to support India-focused or Myanmar-focused research through:
 - a. Institutions based outside of the country (who are based in another Asian L-LMIC);
or
 - b. Multi-country projects run by institutions based in another Asian L-LMIC, with a local country expert (i.e., for India or Myanmar) on the **project team** contracted by the grantee.
- iii. **Iran:** Applicants based in/proposing research in Iran should apply to the FutureWORKS regional hub for the *South West and Northern Africa* (i.e., MENA) region, led by the American University of Beirut.
- iv. Proposals where funds are to be spent in countries classified as 'high risk' in IDRC's categorization at the time application will be subject to additional levels of screening. Regional balance will be considered in the selection of proposals, to enable the

⁴⁰ As such, all project CVS should include a signed declaration that the individual is not employed (on any basis, part- or full-time) by government (with the exception of state-owned universities or public research institutions), and is legally and contractually allowed to receive payments for work on research or other work outside of their current employment.

⁴¹ i.e., Low or lower middle-income country in Asia as per the latest World Bank classification as at 1 July 2025 (<https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/opendata/world-bank-country-classifications-by-income-level-for-2024-2025>); Democratic People's Republic of Korea excluded.

development of a regional narrative at the end of the five year period of the Hub's activities.

6.1.4 Expertise/experience requirement

Proposals should ideally be submitted by an eligible organization, that has a demonstrated track record of producing rigorous research related to at least two of the following:

- **Labor force skills, technology adoption in labor, climate change, just transition, gender responsive climate policies, technology policy, skills development, and innovation systems.**
- A demonstrated ability (capabilities and networks) to effectively translate research to policy.

6.2 Funding available and grant size

We hope to fund a minimum of 6 grants for this second round. The following kinds of grants will be funded:

1. Single or multi-country research grants (USD50,000-100,000)

Applicants can either apply for single country projects or multi-country projects. The grant period will be for 12-18 months. It is expected that grants over USD40,000 should have a multi-country or multi-sectoral dimension. Grants below USD40,000 may be used for research projects with a smaller scope (e.g., single country, single sector, etc.).

2. Large dataset acquisition/data wrangling grants (USD10,000 (part 1) + up to USD 40,000 (part 2, conditional on successful outcome of part 1))

Applicants can apply for two-part grants to enable them to negotiate and access large datasets which can help them to answer a research question which addresses a research priority detailed in this call for proposals. Subject to the data being successfully obtained, *and* the data being useable to answer the proposed research question within the project timeframe, a second part of the grant may be obtained to fulfil the proposed research.

- a. The total grant size (i.e., including both parts) is a maximum of USD50,000, which will be issued in two stages: (1) USD10,000 to negotiate and verify dataset(s); (2), subject to data being successfully obtained and the proposed research question being approved, a second stage of up to USD40,000. The suggested grant period is 12 months for the first stage and a further 6 months for the second stage or as proposed/TBD, not to exceed 18 months. Applicants should submit grants for the full proposal (two-parts) in response to this call. The kinds of datasets are eligible for this kind of grant are those that have previously not been in the public domain (from the public or private sector), and will ideally be the type of data that has to be analyzed through machine learning or other innovative techniques and can be combined with other datasets to yield new insights.

All grants are subject to sufficient funds being made available to LIRNEasia via IDRC by the Parliament of Canada.

7 Proposal guidelines

All proposals must be submitted in English via the online application form, in accordance with the submission instructions provided in **Section 10**, adhering to the character limits specified below.

The following requested information must be included in the relevant sections of the online form. All categories listed below are mandatory, unless otherwise stated as “if applicable.”

MAIN PROPOSAL

Section A: Project details

- *Title of project*
- *Countries of focus*
- *Project duration (in months)*
- *Lead organization details:*
 - *Legal name of organization*
 - *Principal investigator (PI; PI must be from the lead organization)*
 - *Co-principal investigator(s) if any*
 - *Country in which the organization is physically present/operational*
 - *Legally registered address of the organization*
 - *Mailing address (if different from above)*
 - *Type of organization (e.g., think tank; research center; NGO, etc.; include details such as whether the organization is located within a university, part of another organization, etc.).*
 - *Contact information of the project leader (email, phone number)*
 - *Website*
- *Details of other organizations that are part of the proposal (in case of consortium)*
 - *Legal name of organization*
 - *Country in which the organization is physically present/operational*
 - *Legally registered address of the organization*
 - *Type of organization (e.g., think tank; research center; NGO, etc.; include details such as whether the organization is located within a university, part of another organization, etc.).*
 - *Website*

Section B: Abstract (max 1,200 characters)

Please provide a short abstract of the project, encompassing the vision and objectives of the proposed research and activities. It should be written clearly for a non-technical audience. Avoid acronyms and technical jargon. Describe the development problem, the purpose/objective of the project and expected results in the form of project outputs and outcomes.

Section C: Problem identification and rationale (max 3,000 characters)

- *Describe the problem/s you would like to address through the proposed project*
- *Provide the context and background to the problem/s you have identified, with a brief review of relevant literature in relation to the proposed project*
- *Describe how the identified problem/s are aligned with the objectives noted in the Call for Proposals*

Section D: Objectives and research questions (max 1,500 characters)

- *Clearly state the main objective of the research, and any sub-objectives*

- *Clearly state the research questions that will be addressed*

Section E: Methodology (max 12,000 characters)

- *Outline the project design, the planned activities and how they will help you to achieve the objectives given in Section D*
- *Outline the research/data collection methods that you will use, including any conceptual frameworks, data collection methods (including sample sizes where relevant), and type of analysis, with justifications*
- *List and briefly describe your planned outputs (including events if any) stating who they will be targeted at (audience) and what purpose they will serve*
- *Briefly describe what success would look like for this project (e.g., policy changes envisioned, worker outcomes changed, etc.)*
- *Briefly describe the research ethics and safety protocols that will be deployed in the project, outlining the potential ethical issues, the steps that will be taken to ensure the highest ethical standards are maintained while ensuring the greatest protection of research participants. **This (research ethics and safety protocols) may be submitted in a tabular format if needed.***

Section F: Research dissemination/knowledge sharing plan (max 2,400 characters)

- *Indicate (in % of total budget) the amount of the budget that will be used toward research dissemination, knowledge sharing and communications activities (including events, meetings, development of knowledge transfer outputs, etc.)*
- *Describe the identified policy impact pathways to ensure the uptake of the findings of your proposed research, including the specific stakeholders and audiences you want to reach*
- *Specific activities and outputs that are planned should be listed out, indicating numbers where possible*
- *Identify the intended beneficiaries and stakeholders of the proposed project*
- *Outline how relevant stakeholders will be involved at various stages of the proposed project and how the proposed activities will ensure their engagement with the findings*

Section G: Risks and mitigation strategies (submitted in a matrix form, see [Annex 3](#) for template)

- *Identify any potential political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal or operational risks that may impede the execution of the proposed project*
- *Describe the project's adaptive management approach, and how it will manage and address the identified risks*

Section H: Gender, equity, and inclusion (GEI) (max 1,500 characters)

- *Applicants should demonstrate a contextual understanding of the need for GEI considerations in the proposed project – e.g., why and how vulnerable groups are affected/at risk, how and where power imbalances contribute to inequities and compound vulnerabilities, where the intersectionalities lie, what are the knowns versus unknowns, etc.*
- *Describe how gender, equity and inclusion considerations have been incorporated in the proposed project at each stage as appropriate (including MEL); this may be for example through research questions which examine disparities/ gaps, or targets marginalized groups, research designs and methodologies which incorporate gender equity and inclusion as well as dissemination strategies which target and include diverse sets of stakeholders, inter alia.*

Section I: Theory of change (submitted in a tabular form on a single page in PDF)

- Provide an outline of the theory of change (including objectives, activities, outputs, as well as expected outcomes and impacts). This should be presented in a clear, legible table using a minimum font size of 10 points, and submitted as a single-page PDF. You may use either a single A4-sized page or a single PowerPoint (or similar) slide to create the table, but it must be submitted in PDF format.
- This will form the start of a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) plan for the project, therefore where possible list out key indicators that will be captured to measure outputs and outcomes and how they will be captured.

Section J: Organization Capabilities (max 4,500 characters)

- Provide a description of your organization including its research capacity and its capacity (including access to relevant stakeholders) for policy influence
- Provide details (Project title, funder, grant amount, project description, project duration) of a minimum of two past/on-going projects that best describe your ability to carry out the proposed research
- Provide examples of taking research to policymakers, describing the strategy(ies) employed and the outcome.

Section K: Team structure (max 1,500 characters)

- List key personnel and for each, specify (i) their roles in the project; and (ii) the specific tasks that they will be assigned.

ANNEXURES TO THE PROPOSAL

Annex 1: CVs of key personnel

- Add CVs of the key project personnel (including PI), highlighting relevant expertise and experience
 - CVs to be provided in **World Bank format**
 - Up to five (5) CVs may be included, each no more than five (5) pages
 - CVs to include a signed declaration that the individual is not employed (on any basis, part- or full-time) by government (with the exception of state-owned universities or public research institutions), and is legally and contractually allowed to receive payments for work on research or other work outside of their current employment.

Annex 2: Budget

- Include completed budget as a PDF, include notes and assumptions in IDRC's budget format available at: <https://idrc-crdd.ca/en/proposal-budget>.
- See [Section 9](#) for detailed instructions on preparing the budget.

Annex 3: Workplan

- Include completed workplan along with Gantt Chart

Annex 4: Data Management Plan

- Include Stage 1 Data Management Plan, as per IDRC's guidelines available at: <http://www.idrc.ca/en/developing-data-management-plan-guidance-applicants-and-grantees>.

Annex 5: Current/valid business registration certificate

Annex 6: Tax registration certificate from government authority

Annex 7: Institutional profile questionnaire (available [here](#))

Annex 8: Audited financial statements⁴² for the last three years

- As additional annexures,
 - Any letters of commitment/agreement from the leading and collaborating institutions, and a description on how the different partners, key stakeholders and institutions will collaborate in the initiative.
 - Any letters of other institutions willing to collaborate or support the study in various ways should be attached. Letters should indicate the organization's interest in the hub's creation and proposed research theme. It should indicate the potential ways the organization might assist or cooperate with the hub's management or research teams. It should identify relationships, past and current, with individuals involved in submitting the proposals.

8 Proposal evaluation criteria

Evaluation of proposals and final selection proposals will be based on the LIRNEasia's assessment of the submitted proposal and budget. LIRNEasia will also consider regional (geographical) as well as thematic balance of the proposals, as well as focus on gender in the selection of proposals. The following table provides an *indicative* marking scheme for the evaluation of proposals, however may be subject to minor modifications.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria	% allocated
Alignment with objectives and likelihood of/potential for policy impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal has clearly demonstrated that the applicant has understood the objectives specified in the call for proposals. • The proposal clearly identifies the relevance of the proposed research to the current policy debates. • The proposal demonstrates an understanding of the policy context and shows capability, as well as a clear strategy to take research to policy, access to key stakeholders including policymakers, to enable policy impact. 	30%
Project design and research methodology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal presents an appropriate project design to best achieve the intended results within the funding period. • The proposal has an appropriate methodology to address research question/s and clearly states why the study design, conceptual framework, research methods are best suited to answer the research question/s identified • The proposal includes clear strategies for adaptive management and mitigation of risks. • The proposal identifies key ethical issues with regards to the research and ways of addressing them. 	40%
Gender, Equity, and Inclusion and MEL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal clearly states how Gender, Equity, and Inclusion will be incorporated into the project during the research design, data collection, 	15%

⁴² Including but not limited to: Balance Sheet, Statement of Income and Expenses or Profit and Loss, and Statement of Cash Flow; Notes to the Financial Statements; Audit Report; Any Management or Internal Control Letters, and related follow-up response. If the audited statements are not available, the latest financial statements duly authorized by a financial officer should be provided.

<p>analysis, interpretation, capacity building, MEL, and research communication processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal has a theory of change and has clearly identified the means for monitoring the progress, evaluating the outputs and outcomes, learning from the results and adapting accordingly 	
<p>Organizational experience and key personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant has demonstrated that it has a strong track record in undertaking projects similar to the activities proposed. The proposed team has the relevant expertise and capacity to carry out the activities outlined in the proposal, including a gender expert 	15%
<p>Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and coherent plans for the use of available funding, appropriate for the proposed activities 	5%

9 Budget guidelines

- Applicants must complete and submit an estimated budget in USD using the budget template provided (<https://idrc-crdd.ca/en/proposal-budget>). Complete all tabs in the budget template except the summary tab which will be generated automatically.
- Applicants must allocate funds for airfare to attend in-person Hub convenings (2 meetings over 2 years) conducted by LIRNEasia in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Accommodation, meals and airport transfers *in Sri Lanka* will be provided by LIRNEasia.
- Please add any in-kind contributions or matching funds in the appropriate tabs. Once completed, please sign where appropriate, save as a PDF and submit the file along with your application. Please also share an editable (MS Excel) version without any e-signature for commenting purposes. In the event of any discrepancies between the two versions, the signed PDF version will be considered as the final budget.
- All budgets must be in USD.
- As principal funding for this Call for Proposals comes from IDRC, Canada, please refer to the IDRC [Guidelines for Acceptable Project Expenditures](#) for a list of eligible expenses, as well as the guidelines for *specific to FutureWORKS Asia* ([Annex 2](#)). For general information on budgeting please refer to [the General IDRC Funding Guidelines](#).
- Additional guidelines are provided below:
 - Personnel costs:** Any project team member who is on the applicant's payroll should be included in the personnel category. Personnel costs can only include monthly salary costs (including all remuneration, allowances, statutory contributions, and benefits). It is expected that personnel costs do not exceed 20-22% of the total budget.
 - Consultants:** It is expected that the ratio of expenditure on consultants to personnel should not exceed that of personnel costs. If this is not the case, a strong justification is required.
 - Research costs:** Research costs should exclude salaries of staff on payroll and are involved in conducting research (e.g., a researcher's time to moderate an FGD or write a report). The time cost of researchers on payroll should be included under personnel. Country specific costs should be provided separately (e.g., data collection cost for country 1; data collection cost for country 2; etc.). It is expected that research costs be a minimum of 45% of the total budget.
 - International travel:** Travel costs relating to the hub meetings (in Sri Lanka) should be

clearly indicated in the budget, indicating the number of persons attending. There will be two hub meetings over two years. LIRNEasia expects 1-2 persons per project team to attend for the first meeting and 1 person to attend for the second meeting. LIRNEasia will cover their cost of accommodation, meals, and airport transfers in Sri Lanka. Additional team member⁴³ costs if any should be borne through the project budget. Project budgets should include under the international travel tab, clearly indicating the costs are relating to the hub meetings:

- a. Airfare cost (most direct, lowest cost return economy class airfare)
- b. All inclusive per diem to cover costs (accommodation, airport transfers, visa) of any additional attendees – based on IDRC’s most recent published per diem rates.

It is expected that international travel costs do not exceed 10% of the total budget.

- e. **Dissemination, knowledge transfer, communications costs:** Wherever possible, please indicate separately costs that are specific to dissemination, knowledge transfer or communication activities, within categories (personnel, consultants, international travel etc.).
- f. **Notes and explanations:** Please provide all necessary budget notes and explanations, **in the format provided in the examples in the instruction section of each sheet** (e.g., RA salary cost @ USD350 per month for 6 months; gender specialist fees @400USD/day x 50 days/year; air tickets for 3 trips/year x 2 persons @ 1,000 USD each in Latin America = 6,000 /year, etc.).
- g. **Indirect costs:** Should constitute no more than 13% of the total budget.

10 Application process

10.1 Deadline for submission

Proposals must be *received* by LIRNEasia by **1800 hrs** Indian Standard Time (IST) on 9 July 2025.

10.2 Submission instructions

Applicants must submit their proposals through the online submission form, which can be accessed here: <https://forms.gle/s73KWTYcThVCKtZo6>. All required sections of the form must be completed, and all supporting documents must be uploaded in the specified formats.

Proposals should be submitted in **English**.

The applicant shall bear all costs associated with preparation and submission of the application as specified in this call for proposals, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the proposal evaluation. LIRNEasia shall have no obligation to any applicant to reimburse any costs incurred in preparing the proposals, whatever the result. Submission of a proposal in response to this call by an applicant will be interpreted by as the applicant’s acceptance of this condition.

10.3 Clarifications, information session, and FAQs

Inquiries related to the call and application process should be sent by e-mail to futureworks@lirneasia.net with the subject header “<ORGANIZATION NAME> CLARIFICATION FUTUREWORKS ASIA.”

⁴³ Should the grantee wish to have additional team members participate at the in-person meeting, LIRNEasia can consider requests for additional participants based on availability of meeting space and accommodation.

LIRNEasia will respond to all such clarifications through an **information session** to be held in the week of 16 June 2025. Exact date and time of the information session will be published on www.lirneasia.net/futureworks-asia. **Only registered participants will be allowed to join therefore applicants are encouraged to register through the following form: <https://forms.office.com/r/5aJUybV7tr?origin=lpLink>.**

Clarifications received via email before the 14th June will be addressed in the information session.

11 Selection process

Responding to this call is the first step in the application process for potentially securing funding for your proposal.

Applications will first be screened for eligibility and relevance to the call.

The screened proposals are then assessed by the internal review committee. This committee is comprised of LIRNEasia staff from different related disciplines, including those with expertise in gender/diversity/inclusion, and knowledge translation, who will assess the applications according to the evaluation criteria outlined above.

Pre-selected applicants will be asked to make a 20-30 minute presentation of their proposal and respond to questions from the review committee during between August 11-18 (dates will be confirmed in consultation with applicants, but applicants should ensure the relevant team members are available in this period should they be pre-selected).

Proposals will receive specific comments from the reviewers to be addressed, including suggested changes to the budget. The applicant will have a period of one week to resubmit the proposal with the required changes addressed. Subject to satisfactorily addressing of reviewer concerns on the proposal and budget, the proposal will be recommended for funding and therefore pass to the next stage.

Upon notification of pre-selection, applicants will also be asked to submit documents pertaining to the institutional assessment (see Section 11. 1.3). Given the time it might take to prepare some of the documents, applicants are advised to ensure these documents are ready for submission by 1 September 2025, should they be pre-selected.

LIRNEasia's evaluation of the proposals, and the resulting decision shall be final and will not be subject to appeal.

LIRNEasia will have no obligation to issue any funds prior to the applicant returning an executed Grant Agreement issued to them by LIRNEasia.

11.1 Post selection requirements

11.1.1 Proposal and budget finalization

As noted, prior to finalizing a Grant Agreement, LIRNEasia reserves the right to request any revisions to the submitted proposal and budget. A revised proposal with the necessary revisions must be returned in a timely manner to LIRNEasia.

11.1.2 Country clearance requirements

In some cases, LIRNEasia's funder, IDRC may require additional or alternative country approval processes to be followed (e.g., if the country is considered high risk, or where IDRC has existing

scientific and technical cooperation agreements, or other practical or legal restrictions). LIRNEasia will advise the applicants of such instances if their proposal is selected on the technical basis.

A grant agreement will only be issued if and once country clearance(s) is/are obtained according to the IDRC guidelines, to be provided on a case-by-case basis. LIRNEasia reserves the right to not pursue the funding of a selected project if the country approval is not secured within a reasonable amount of time, as delays would jeopardize the timely start and completion of the research hub activities.

11.1.3 Institutional assessment

Any pre-selected applicants must undergo an institutional assessment prior to final selection. This will include the review of documents including but not limited to the below-listed items, which the applicant will be advised on at an appropriate point in the process:

- i) Current organizational chart
- ii) Operational and human resources manuals
- iii) Finance and administration manuals
- iv) Policy/procedure for procurement
- v) List of active external donors and their current contributions
- vi) Latest annual report

After an institutional assessment of an applicant's organization is performed, LIRNEasia may identify operational or financial weaknesses that could pose some administrative risks to the proposed project. In such cases, LIRNEasia reserves the right to request the applicant's organization to partner with another institution as a condition of receiving the grant. If the applicant's organization does not meet the criteria required to pass the institutional assessment satisfactorily, it will not be possible to sign the Grant Agreement.

11.1.4 Final selection

Subject to the required amendments to the proposal and budget, LIRNEasia will make the final decision based on recommendations of the review committee, the evaluation criteria, and consideration of the institutional assessment.

11.1.5 Grant agreement

Any selected proponents must sign LIRNEasia's Grant Agreement to receive funds. The grant agreement will provide a schedule for submitting interim and final technical and financial reports. Although there is no limit on the number of co-applicants in one application, LIRNEasia will only negotiate grant agreements with the organization of the lead applicant.

11.1.6 Currency and exchange rate policy

The contract will be dominated in US Dollars (USD) and Grants will be disbursed in USD.

As LIRNEasia receives grant funds from IDRC in Canadian dollars, grantees will be exposed to the exchange rate losses that are incurred when the grant funds are converted from CAD to USD. LIRNEasia will advise grantees regularly of current exchange rate losses; Grantee budgets will be expected to factor this in. In extreme cases, should exchange losses escalate to a level where the planned work is disrupted, the grantee and LIRNEasia may negotiate adjustments to the scope of work.

12 Call timeline

- Launch of call: 9 June 2025

- Online meeting for clarifications: Week of 16 June 2025
- Deadline for submitting proposals: 9 July 2025
- Proposal presentations by applicants: 11-18 August 2025
- Submission of revised proposals: 1 week following presentation
- Institutional assessments: September 2025 (all documents to be submitted by 1 September 2025)
- Announcement of selections and drafting of grant agreements: October 2025
- Grant commencement: November 2025

13 Submission checklist

See also Section 7 for preparation instructions

- Proposal form: Sections A-K including as separate uploads: (1) risk matrix; and (2) theory of change
- Annex 1: CVs (up to 5, maximum of 5 pages each)
- Annex 2: Budget
- Annex 3: Workplan
- Annex 4: Data Management Plan
- Annex 5: Current/valid business registration certificate
- Annex 6: Tax registration certificate from government authority
- Annex 7: Institutional profile questionnaire
- Annex 8: Audited financial statements for the last three years
- Any additional annexures (refer Section 7)