

Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI)

To conduct baseline research on information, knowledge and communications technology needs and uses in Myanmar

30 September 2014

LIRNEasia (www.lirneasia.net) is a pro-poor, pro-market regional think tank. Its mission is to *Catalyze policy change through research to improve people's lives in the emerging Asia Pacific by facilitating their use of hard and soft infrastructures through the use of knowledge, information and technology.* LIRNEasia's research is primarily funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada (www.idrc.ca) and UKaid from the Department for International Development of the UK (www.dfid.gov.uk).

One of LIRNEasia's core areas of research over the past decade has been representative demand-side surveys of ICT, information and knowledge needs and use among the lower economic strata, or 'bottom of the pyramid' (BOP) in multiple Asian markets.¹ The purpose of this research has been to inform policy.

LIRNEasia plans to expand this research to Myanmar through a research project which involves two related and overlapping baseline surveys.

The first component comprises a baseline survey of information, knowledge and communications technology needs and (current) usage patterns of people at a nationally² representative level. The second component of this study is a baseline survey for a socioeconomic impact evaluation of mobile phones in Myanmar using quasi-experimental methods (i.e., by establishing 'treatment' and 'control', where the 'treatment' is mobile coverage). An endline (and possible midline) survey will be conducted at a later time period through a separate funding and tender process.

It is envisaged that the two components which this EOI includes will be conducted simultaneously in order to maximize on economies of scope, i.e., the national baseline survey and the impact evaluation baseline. The survey instrument will consist of a common set of theme-based modules, and 2-3 additional ones to be used for the national baseline and 2-3 separate additional ones to be used for the impact evaluation baseline. **The project should be completed by 28 February 2015.**

Background

The recent introduction of mobile communication in Myanmar presents a life-changing prospect for the country which is one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia. A quarter of its population is estimated to live in poverty, while the country as a whole performs poorly on most socio-economic indicators.³ There is much potential for mobile phones to play a role in socio-economic development, be it through access to specific services such as mobile money or simply through the access to information afforded by the mobile phone.

The Ministry of Posts and Telecom (MPT) commenced offering mobile services in 2013; its coverage has thus far been largely limited to the metro centers. In January 2014 Ooredoo and Telenor were granted licenses to provide mobile services with commitments to provide 85% voice coverage within 5 years. Commencing in August and

¹ <http://www.lirneasia.net/projects/icts-the-bottom-of-the-pyramid/>

² While LIRNEasia has generally targeted the BOP segment in past studies, this study will consider all income segments given the dearth of nationally representative data on Myanmar.

³ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/myanmar/overview>

September 2014, respectively, it is expected that the networks will first cover the urban, densely populated urban centers, moving outwards gradually to the currently uncovered rural areas.

The staggered expansion of mobile coverage in this manner, presents an opportunity to evaluate the socioeconomic impacts of mobile phones. Using quasi experimental methods, ‘treatment’ and ‘control’ regions (i.e., those with mobile coverage and those without) can be identified and their socio-economic outcomes can be compared against each other as well as over time.⁴ A variety of approaches can be taken (e.g., propensity score matching, instrumental variable approach) to isolate and estimate the true impact of the ‘treatment’ in this case mobile phone coverage.

The study

The proposed research project involves *two* related and overlapping baseline surveys:

1. A nationally representative quantitative survey of information, knowledge and communications technology needs and (current) usage in Myanmar
 - a. This survey shall cover all accessible regions of Myanmar, both urban and rural
 - b. The survey shall be conducted among males and females aged 15-60 from all income groups including users *and* non-users of telecom services
 - c. Sampling should ensure that the resulting data can be disaggregated by gender, region and urban vs rural location with a margin of error of no more than $\pm 2.5\%$
 - d. Interviews with respondents shall be conducted in person (face-to-face) in Myanmar language or other language relevant in region, and are expected to last approximately 60 minutes
 - e. The survey is expected to cover a range of areas relating to ICT use (with a focus on mobile), both current (e.g., what people use now) and future (e.g., what current unmet needs can be met with ICTs).
2. The baseline data gathering for an impact evaluation of mobile phones in Myanmar, consisting of the conduct of detailed surveys in regions which currently have mobile service (‘treatment’ regions) and those which do not have mobile service (‘Control regions’).
 - a. ‘Treatment’ and ‘control’ regions will be randomly selected from regions, ensuring inclusion of the following categories (as determined in consultation with LIRNEasia) of regions in the sample:
 - i. Where service is available at the time of survey
 - ii. Where service is not available at the time of survey but is likely to become available within 12 months from the date of survey
 - iii. Where service is unlikely to become available within 12 months from the date of survey
 - b. Random sampling will be maintained within these locations.
 - c. Interviews with respondents shall be conducted in person (face-to-face) in relevant local language, and is expected to last approximately 60 minutes
 - d. This survey will cover a range of topics from demographics, to ICT (with a focus on mobile) use, to socio-economic indicators; this may consist of the survey used in the national baseline with an additional module of questions (10-12) relating to socioeconomic variables.

It is envisaged that the two components are conducted simultaneously in order to maximize on economies of scope.

Scope of work

LIRNEasia invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) from eligible market research firms to conduct the study detailed in this document in Myanmar. The role of the Firm will be the following: to advise on study design; advise on the survey instruments developed by LIRNEasia and put them into a final field-ready format inclusive of translations; pilot/field test the questionnaire and provide feedback to LIRNEasia for further improvement and finalization;

⁴ To account for any time-variant factors which may affect impact outcome variables.

determine appropriate samples to be able to make population estimates with a margin of error no higher than $\pm 2.5\%$; administer the questionnaire and collect data; enter and clean the data and perform an initial data analysis (only) to be presented to LIRNEasia at a workshop in January/early-February 2015. The finalized dataset (in agreed format) will be handed over to LIRNEasia for subsequent analysis. This must be complete by 28 February 2015.

The detailed role of the selected Firm will be clearly indicated in the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the assignment, which will be sent to short-listed candidates. Thereafter candidates will have two weeks to prepare a full project proposal, providing full details on methodology and costs according to guidelines set out in the RFP.

Joint proposals

Joint proposals are welcome. However, the point of contact for LIRNEasia should be a *single* firm throughout the project, and LIRNEasia will contract with a single entity (i.e. the 'lead partner' in a joint bid). As such, the firm that will be leading the bid should be clearly indicated in the EOI. Relevant credentials and registration details of each party should be provided in the EOI. LIRNEasia will consider these in the evaluation (e.g., fieldwork credentials of fieldwork partner, etc).

Expressions of interest

Interested parties should submit an EOI of **less than 10 pages** to LIRNEasia, giving details of the following:

- a) Relevant previous experience of the firm in conducting representative sample surveys, with specific examples (no more than 250 words each) of instances where nationally representative surveys and or impact evaluations were carried out, and specific examples working in Myanmar recently.
- b) Brief profiles of the key persons (100-150 words each) who will work on the project, listing all relevant experience in conducting all aspects of work required for the project
- c) A brief overview of how the firm proposes to conduct the study. This should include how the sample will be selected, proposing methodologies that will achieve representativeness most efficiently, indicate what the proposed sample sizes are, provide an indicative timeline and indicative costs⁵ (Annex 1 provides structure for provision of indicative costs). Firms should indicate if they have the capability to implement surveys using computer assisted personal interviewing, i.e., CAPI, and should indicate any past experience with these methods, as well as the time and monetary savings that can be expected, if any, if CAPI vs PAPI (paper-based) methods are used. Separate costing should be provided for CAPI and PAPI options as per the structure stipulated in Annex 1.

Deadline for submission

Interested applicants are requested to submit their EOIs on or **before 0800hrs (Sri Lanka time) on 10 October 2014**. EOIs should be submitted electronically in PDF or MS Word format to procurement@lirneasia.net. Requests for clarifications of specific items of the EOI should also be directed **by e-mail to the above email address**. LIRNEasia will respond to all such requests by e-mail.

⁵ LIRNEasia will use the indicative budget for planning purposes. The firms invited to submit a full proposal will be able to revise/fine-tune these at the Proposal stage.

ANNEX 1: INDICATIVE COST STRUCTURE TEMPLATE

<u>INDICATIVE COST STRUCTURE</u>				
	Total Sample Size	Confidence interval (if known) at proposed sample size	Indicative Cost in USD	
			PAPI	CAPI (if applicable)
1. National baseline survey				
2. Impact evaluation baseline				
Total		N/A		
Any assumptions used in arriving at above costs:				
<p><i>Note 1: This information will only be used by LIRNEasia for planning purposes. The firms invited to submit an RFP will be able to revise/fine-tune these at the RFP stage.</i></p> <p><i>Note 2: Details of each sampling methodology should be explained, in detail, separately in the EOI.</i></p>				