

Information Session for FutureWORKS Asia Call for Proposals

5 July 2024

On the 1st of July, an information session was organized for interested parties to clarify any questions regarding the [Call for Proposals for the FutureWORKS Asia project](#), ahead of the submission deadline on July 19th. The session aimed to provide detailed insights and address concerns about the application process, eligibility criteria, and other relevant aspects of the project.

The following are questions asked and answers given during the question and answer segment of the Information Session for the FutureWORKS Asia Call for Proposals. **Please also refer to the additional note at the end of the document.**

Q: Can institutions from Indonesia apply, given that it only recently graduated from the World Bank's list of lower-middle-income countries?

A: Institutions from Indonesia are not eligible as the country is not on the World Bank's list of low and lower-middle-income countries at the time of the issue of the CFP. Institutions need to be based in an eligible country to apply. However, if another institution outside Indonesia is applying for a multi-country grant, Indonesian institutions may be part of that bid. The leading institution must be based in a low or lower-middle-income country. Noting that income status of countries may change between the current grant cycle and the second grant cycle (2026/27), we request applicants to keep an eye on their country income status; the list of eligible countries will be based on the then-current list of low and lower-middle income countries at the time of the second call.

Q: Can someone from Myanmar, currently in Hong Kong, apply through their Hong Kong institution?

A: No, the institution must be based in a low or lower-middle-income country to ensure the impact is rooted within that country. It is recommended to find a partner within Myanmar to submit the proposal through. The institution should be based in a low and lower-middle-income country because we want to see pathways to impact. It will be very difficult unless you have a strong partner and they can receive the funding to influence without being institutionally grounded and having connections within the country, whether to civil society, private sector, or government, to make impact based on the knowledge you create. We recognize the military coup and the situation in Myanmar, where it is very difficult to find institutions or banks that are not blacklisted. However there are some institutions in Myanmar receiving funding and developing capacity. The biggest challenge will be implementing change without institutional infrastructure, networks, and connections.

Q: Can Indian organizations apply?

A: Yes, Indian organizations can apply. However, there might be issues with receiving funds in India due to government regulations. Ensure you have the necessary permissions and documents ready to avoid delays in the approval process. Even organizations with foreign currency clearance from the government may need to obtain permission on a case-by-case basis. The network in this cycle of grants = aims to have a cohort of researchers starting work together and attending international meetings together (starting off in October 2024). If approvals are not obtained by the time we are ready to sign and move on with others, we will unfortunately have to drop you because we need to start at the same time. Indian teams should start getting all those documents ready early on because the timeline will move according to the timeline we have for everyone else.

Q: Is it possible to apply from Sri Lanka?

A: Yes, Sri Lanka is on the list of eligible countries.

Q: If based in Mauritius but working in eligible countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, or India, can we apply?

A: Mauritius is not on the eligible list. You would need to partner with an institution(s) in one (or more) of the eligible countries to submit your proposal (assuming the focus of the proposed research and activities are on one of the eligible countries) Although you are based in Mauritius and working with countries in the eligible list, you need to have researchers and an institutions in countries from the eligible list like Bangladesh or Nepal.

Q: Can an international NGO (based in Bangladesh) be the lead in a partnership with an institution in an eligible country?

A: The lead institution should be based in an eligible country to ensure local capacity building and impact. The international NGO can be a partner, but the primary applicant should be from the eligible country. The proportion of where the funds are spent, where the expertise is being built, and where the INGOs are based would be the deciding factors. For example, an INGO based in Sweden working in Sri Lanka and Pakistan may not be acceptable. The Sri Lankan or Pakistani institutions should lead in the partnership. However if the INGO is based in Bangladesh, and proposes work in Bangladesh and/or other eligible countries, this is acceptable.

Q: Is it preferred to address all the perspectives and entry points in section three?

A: Not all, but at least two verticals, and one or more entry points (horizontal). However, the more perspectives and entry points that you address, the better, as long as it makes sense and has policy relevance.

Q: I am not currently attached internally to an aforementioned organization. How can I join as someone with a law and Gender Studies background?

A: Individuals cannot apply; you need to apply through an organization that fits the eligibility criteria. Reach out to an institution that can submit a proposal and support you, or connect with others in this call or through your contacts.

Q: Can a network of organizations submit several proposals? For example, if an organization has offices based in different countries, can the separate country offices of the same entity each submit an application?

A: Yes, separate country offices of the same entity can each submit an application, provided each proposal stands on its own merit and demonstrates quality research and policy influence potential. If the proposals stand on their own, even if others fail, the quality and potential for policy influence will be evaluated. A strong network and comparable research across countries could be a bonus.

Q: Can we include experts and academics in our team, both in the advisory team and the research team?

A: Yes, you can include both local and international experts in your advisory and research teams.

Q: Is it possible to work with US and Bangladeshi partners if the research focus is on Bangladesh?

A: Yes, the research focus must be on Bangladesh (or other eligible country), and the majority of the funds must be spent in Bangladesh. The aim is to build capacity within the eligible countries. Having a US partner is acceptable as long as the focus and majority of the funds are spent in Bangladesh, and the lead organisation is based in the eligible country.

Q: Should the main proposal PDF include annexes or should they be submitted separately?

A: The annexes, such as budget files and Gantt charts, should be submitted separately from the main proposal document. Each should be a separate PDF.

Q: Do the proposal documents need to be added to any online portal?

A: We apologize for the error in the guidelines mentioning online submission in Section 7. The submission is through email, with details and instructions provided in the Call for Proposals. **Please follow the email directions mentioned in Section 10** and disregard the online submission language (Section 7).

Q: Would a for-profit private entity in the category of think tank be eligible to apply?

A: For-profit private sector entities are not eligible to apply for funds; not-for-profit private organisations (e.g., think tanks, etc.) are eligible.

Q: We would like to submit a single-country proposal. Is it possible?

A: Yes, as long as the candidate is from one of the eligible countries. If it is a single country, the grant amount would be less than USD 40,000 unless it is a very large project that can justify a higher amount.

Q: A potential organization is working with LIRNEasia on some agritech work. Is that a conflict?

A: The project advisory board will be involved in the final selection of proposals, therefore any pre-existing lines of work with LIRNEasia need to be disclosed to the board.

Q: Can a for-profit entity be a partner if an NGO is the lead?

A: In theory, yes, if the NGO is presumably located in a lower and lower-middle-income country. The proposal would have to demonstrate that the private sector/for-profit partner is an essential part of the implementation of the solution or the creation of the new research knowledge., and their involvement should generate public good, rather than private good alone. Furthermore they should be committed to implementation of the recommendations for example. The research should contribute broadly, and the open data and open access requirements must still apply. Therefore proposals should make very clear, what the role of the private sector/for-profit partner is, and its justification.

Q: Can foreign corporate and private entities be engaged for specific services?

A: Yes, recognizing that services may be required from private sector/for-profit entities for e.g., for market research, PR, or surveys. Funds can be used for these services , but procurement guidelines must be adhered to, whereby –for goods/services of value over CAD 5,000, a competitive procurement is required. For amounts below CAD 5,000, no tender is needed.

Q: Can we directly send in a proposal and then finalize a potential organization outside India for fiscal support?

A: It is important to have a partner by the deadline to avoid postponing the timeline. The relationship between your organisation and any partners should be clearly indicated in the proposal. The organization will also go through due diligence.

Q: I am a faculty at a public university in Bangladesh and a PhD candidate at a Canadian university. Can I submit a proposal as the lead of a research team comprising several faculties of the same university?

A: The institutional supporter is the main question. Assuming your research is on Bangladesh and your institution is in Bangladesh, that institution will be where funds are sent. We do not see a problem in this case.

Additional note on eligible countries:

The larger objective of the FutureWORKS Asia network is to conduct relevant *in-context* research, build *local* capacity and have policy impact within those eligible (low and lower-middle income) countries in Asia. Therefore proposals (even if they meet other technical criteria) will not be considered where large proportions of the funds go to institutions and/or researchers who are not based in the countries themselves, or there is little evidence of capability to translate research to policy in the *local* policy ecosystem, or project team members are not situated in the local research-policy ecosystem.

Therefore, in selection, we will consider where the geographic focus of the research is, where the majority of funds will be spent, where the research/policy influence capacity will be built and where the most potential for policy impact is. This is in addition to the factors mentioned in the evaluation criteria.

For further questions, please direct them to the official FutureWORKS Asia email: futureworks@lirneasia.net