



PONLOK CHOMNES: DATA AND DIALOGUE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN CAMBODIA

Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI)

Emerging Research Fund (Round Three) for Local Organizations/Research Institutes to Conduct Action Research on Cambodia's post-COVID-19 Recovery; Cambodia's Foreign Policy and/or International Relations; ASEAN and Regional Issues; Social Protection Challenges; and other emerging issues

This call is open to any organizations that meet the criteria laid out in this document.

1. ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and The Asia Foundation (TAF) are collaborating on a four-year program, Ponlok Chomnes: Data and Dialogue for Development in Cambodia, to strengthen the capacity of the Cambodian knowledge sector institutions to undertake quality research that informs public policy analysis and dialogue in Cambodia.

The goal of the current Ponlok Chomnes program is to strengthen the capacity of knowledge sector institutions to broaden their networks and undertake quality research that informs public policy analysis and dialogue in Cambodia. This goal will be realized through four mutually reinforcing program objectives:

- Objective 1: Increase understanding of Cambodia's knowledge sector;
- Objective 2: Strengthen the capacity and networking of established knowledge sector institutions;
- Objective 3: Support diverse emerging knowledge sector actors to promote inclusive policymaking; and
- Objective 4: Promote thoughtful and inclusive policy dialogue and analysis.

1. WHY YOU SHOULD BE PART OF THIS INITIATIVE

The Ponlok Chomnes program aims to support Cambodia's knowledge sector by providing not only financial assistance, but also capacity development assistance. The program's "Emerging Research Fund" grants will support pieces of research that are aligned with the applicant's own research agenda, but also relates to DFAT and TAF's prioritized topics relating to vulnerable and marginalized groups; development challenges in Cambodia outside of Phnom Penh at the sub-national level; social protection issues; post-COVID-19 recovery; and foreign policy or international relations. Finally, a key priority area for Ponlok Chomnes is to encourage research on topics which are of particular relevance to Cambodian policymakers and society. With

Cambodia assuming chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) next year, this is an opportune time for research originating out of Cambodia to outline domestic issues and challenges that Cambodia could raise as being of regional importance at the ASEAN level.

In addition, partners will have access to a wider network of knowledge ecosystem in Cambodia. Partners will be able to strengthen their existing networks and build new networks through Ponlok Chomnes' convening mechanisms, including National Policy Forums and Policy Dialogues. Through these mechanisms, partners will be able to increase their opportunities to interact with fellow researchers and policy makers at both the national and sub-national level.

2. THE CALL: EMERGING RESEARCH FUND (ROUND THREE) FOR LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS/ RESEARCH INSTITUTES TO CONDUCT ACTION RESEARCH ON CAMBODIA'S POST-COVID-19 RECOVERY; CAMBODIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND/OR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS; ASEAN AND REGIONAL ISSUES; SOCIAL PROTECTION CHALLENGES; AND OTHER EMERGING ISSUES

To achieve **objective 3** of the initiative, local organizations will be selected to receive a grant through the Emerging Research Fund to conduct discrete pieces of quality policy-relevant research focused at either the national or subnational level.

The third round of the Emerging Research Fund competition aims at supporting organizations conducting action research or working on specific policy issues focused on the impact of the *Cambodia's post-COVID-19 recovery; Cambodia's foreign policy and/or international relations; issues which are of domestic importance and can be raised at the regional level through ASEAN;; and social protection challenges; among other emerging issues*. This impact could range from economic issues, to human rights, social issues, and health¹. **Research topics can focus on a broad range of subject areas and are not limited to the illustrative topics shared above, and TAF is willing to engage with potential applicants on whether the research topic suggested is acceptable or not before developing a full concept note.** We encourage nascent, traditionally under-represented, and/or smaller organizations in particular to apply. This effort will give visibility and voice to a broad and diverse pool of potential recipients who can propose and produce innovative research, particularly on issues that may not be areas of focus for larger, more established organizations.

*** Note:**

- Ponlok Chomnes Core Partners are not eligible for this research grant.
- The funding support for each research project is between USD15,000 and USD18,000.

¹ For example, as the current chair of ASEAN, Brunei has prioritized mental health as one of its 2021 Chairmanship deliverables. Though this is not a conventional foreign policy topic, given the COVID-19 pandemic, Brunei considers it a traditionally-domestic issue that is also of regional importance. Please see: [ASEAN Summit 2021 - About ASEAN ASEAN Charter \(asean2021.bn\)](https://asean2021.bn)

3. DECIDING WHETHER TO APPLY

To apply, organizations must meet **ALL** of the following basic eligibility criteria. Applications by organizations that do not meet **ALL** of these criteria **WILL NOT** be considered.

No	Basic Eligibility Criteria
1	Your organization must be a Cambodian, non-partisan, non-profit organization or public university-based research institution;
2	Research focuses on policy issues related to Cambodia's post-COVID-19 recovery; Cambodia's foreign policy and/or international relations; domestic issues and challenges that Cambodia could raise as being of regional importance during its chairpersonship of ASEAN; and social protection challenges; among other emerging issues;
3	Entities that are registered with the Royal Government of Cambodia.

Organizations that meet at least one of these additional criteria will be highly considered.

No	Additional Criteria
1	Community Based Organizations, grassroots organizations, indigenous organizations, or traditionally under-represented and non-profit organizations, etc.;
2	Organization that has experience in doing action research;
3	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) concept is incorporated into the proposed research;
4	Organizations that have leadership and/or staff from traditionally under-represented groups (e.g. women, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ, marginalized communities, etc.);

4. APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for funding, interested organizations will need to first assess their eligibility. Organizations will then submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) should they meet the abovementioned basic criteria. Please see indicative timeline below.

Stage	Stages	Timeframe
Stage 1: Expression of Interest (Khmer/English)	EoI publicized	15 July 2021
	EoI with concept note submitted	15 August 2021
Stage 2: Shortlisting Process	Five applicants shortlisted	16-20 August 2021
	Nomination of five shortlisted applicants to DFAT for final confirmation	23-27 August 2021
	Conditionally approved finalists notified	31 August 2021
Stage 3: Due diligence	Due diligence process	1-3 September 2021
Stage 4: Notification of selected grantees and funding release	Grantee finalizes research content, budget, and grant period	6-10 September 2021
	Approximate date for grant agreement	13-15 September 2021

Stage 1: Expression of Interest

Applicant organizations will submit a short Expression of Interest by 15 August 2021 which provides and overview of their organization’s goals, mandate and research interest.

The Expression of Interest will be a **maximum of six pages** either in Khmer or English language and includes:

- Description of the mission and goals of the organisation
- Organizational mandate
- Research experience and interest
- Areas of focus
- Proposed research concept note (2-3 pages)
- Research team members and their CVs

Please refer to and use the more detailed guidance provided in [Application Form](#).

Stage 2: Shortlisting

TAF will appraise the applications based on the eligibility criteria outlined above. TAF may provide feedback to applicants where additional information or clarification are needed and allow them to re-submit their applications.

It is anticipated that the results of the third round of grants from the Emerging Research Fund will be announced by 31 August 2021.

The following criteria will be used to rate proposals and short-list organizations:

Selection Criteria
Prior experience producing policy (action) research
Concept note quality
The proposed research focuses on policy issues related to Cambodia’s post-COVID-19 recovery; Cambodia’s foreign policy and/or international relations; domestic issues and challenges that Cambodia could raise as being of regional importance during its chairpersonship of ASEAN; and social protection challenges; among other emerging issues
Organizations that have leadership and/or staff from traditionally under-represented groups (e.g. women, persons with disabilities, LBGQ, marginalized communities, etc.)
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is incorporated into the proposed research.
Organization outside of Phnom Penh, Community Based Organizations, grassroots organizations, indigenous organizations, or traditionally under-represented and non-profit organizations etc.

Stage 3: Due Diligence

Following shortlisting, TAF will notify the shortlisted finalists to confirm their willingness to undergo due diligence checks by TAF for final confirmation of their selection status between 1

and 3 September 2021. TAF will apply minimum standard of due diligence to provide the opportunity for community-based organizations and other actors to be able to participate.

Stage 4: Notification of Selected Grantees and Funding Release

TAF will commence fund disbursement after grantee selection has been finalized and the research content, budget, and grant period has been established for each grantee. TAF will then issue a Letter of Grant (LG) to each grantee. Each letter will be a contract between TAF and the grantee and will include a detailed scope of work based on the grantee's application, a reporting and payment schedule, and an implementation schedule. Grantees will initiate their research only after TAF has signed off on the agreement and their research budget. It is anticipated that funding will be released to successful grantees for ROUND THREE in Mid-September 2021.

For more information, please contact:

The Asia Foundation

#59, Oknha Peich (Street 242)

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Email: ponlokchomnes@asiafoundation.org

Tel: +855 (0)23 210 431



The Asia Foundation

**PONLOK CHOMNES: DATA AND DIALOGUE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN
CAMBODIA**

**Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI)
Emerging Research Fund (ROUND THREE)**

for

**for Local Organizations/Research Institutes to Conduct Action Research on Cambodia’s
post-COVID-19 Recovery; Cambodia’s Foreign Policy and/or International Relations;
ASEAN and Regional Issues; and other emerging issues**

DUE 15 August 2021

Name of Institution	
Name of Director/Officer in Charge	
Address, phone, email for your organization	

Please answer a few questions about your organization.

1. What is your organizational mission statement? What is your organization’s goals?
2. What areas/topics does your organization work focus on?
3. What year was your organization founded? _____
4. Is your organization a legal entity registered with the Royal Government of Cambodia? YES / NO
5. Please attach a copy of your organizational structure, which shows your organization’s operations and governance (board, etc.) as annex.
6. Please provide a numeric overview of your organization’s staffing composition:

Type of staff	Status	Number
Management	Full-time	
	Part-time	
Researchers	Full-time	
	Part-time	
Other / support staff	Full-time	
	Part-time	

What is the gender composition of your staff?

	Status	Number
All staff	Female	
	Male	
Researchers	Female	
	Male	
	Persons identified with disabilities.	
All staff	Cambodian citizens	
	Non-Cambodian citizens	

7. Has your organization produced (action) research products? Yes/No
8. If yes, has your organization conducted (action) research on your own? Yes/No
9. If yes, please provide us with a brief description of the role of researchers appearing on your organizational chart, such as senior researcher, researcher, research assistant, etc. (You do not need to provide position descriptions for staff who are not employed as researchers).
10. Has your organization published (policy) research or (policy) commentary based on research in the public domain (including on a website) or produced research reports for internal use? Please give three examples or more, citing the author, title and place of publication. If published online, please provide the URL.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

11. Please list the donors and (action) research project your organization has received funding from in the past three years or in other previous years:

Year	Donor	Project name

12. Please list other sources of funding/income that your organization currently has: _____

13. Does your organization have in place systems to review your (action) research?

YES / NO

14. If yes, could you please briefly explain the review process?

15. Does your organization regularly engage with policy makers and other decision makers and stakeholders at national and/or local levels? Please list up to 5 key government and civil society stakeholders your organization regularly consults with about your research.

16. Is your organization actively involved in any established research or policy networks to share knowledge and best practices? Please list up to five.
17. Do you have current partnerships with other Cambodian or international (policy) research institutes to jointly conduct research and/or undertake policy advocacy? Please list up to five.
18. Under this Emerging Research Fund, what action research topic are you proposing? Please describe your research concept note and explain how your research will influence policy-making and/or public-policy dialogue in Cambodia and at what level (2 to 3 pages).
19. Please list down research team members for the proposed research and their CVs.
20. How do you hear about this Call for Expression of Interest/ Program?

Submission:

Please submit this completed form and attach your organizational chart by 15 August 2021 to ponlokchomnes@asiafoundation.org with the subject line: Ponlok Chomnes Emerging Research Fund EoI.

For more information, please contact:

The Asia Foundation
#59, Oknha Peich (Street 242)
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Email: ponlokchomnes@asiafoundation.org
Tel: +855 (0)23 210 431

*Only conditionally-approved finalists will be notified.

Suggested Template for Concept Note

- **Research Content**
 - Title
 - Rationale
 - Research objectives and questions
 - Research contributions
 - Research methodology (methods, sampling and sample sizes, data analysis, ethical consideration)
 - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Lens in Research
 - Limitations
 - Stakeholder engagement² plan (pre-research, during-research and post-research)
 - **Research Timeline**
 - **Proposed Budget**
 - **References**
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² Stakeholder engagement refers to, but not limited to, formal/informal discussion, asking for advice/feedback or consultation workshop with groups who will influence or be influenced by policies.