

Call for Expression of Interest (EOI)

Ponlok Chomnes Collaborative Research Fund for think tanks/research institutions to conduct a joint rapid action-research in consultation and collaboration with various government ministries in Cambodia

The Asia Foundation (the Foundation) is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Working through our offices in 18 countries and informed by deep local expertise and six decades of experience, we address the critical issues affecting Asia in the 21st century by: strengthening governance, expanding economic opportunity, increasing environmental resilience, empowering women, and promoting international cooperation.

1. ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

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

2. 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 Collaborative Research Fund will support pieces of research that are aligned with the applicant's own research agenda, but also relates to DFAT and the Foundation's prioritized topics relating to vulnerable and marginalized groups; development challenges in Cambodia; 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 relevance to Cambodian policymakers and society. With Cambodia assuming chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) this year, it 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.

3. THE CALL: PONLOK CHOMNES COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH FUND

The Ponlok Chomnes program will pilot the Ponlok Chomnes Collaborative Research Fund, a competitive process for think tanks/research institutions to propose a joint rapid action-research in consultation and collaboration with various government ministries in Cambodia. **This pilot is expected to support up to four research studies.** This would be an eight-month grant, with six months allocated for performance. Unfortunately, the Foundation is not able to be flexible on longer performance periods, and therefore, no extensions will be permitted. The research findings will be presented as part of the upcoming Ponlok Chomnes National Policy Forum to be held around October 2022.

*** Note:**

- Current Ponlok Chomnes partners may apply; however, preference will be given to applicants who are not currently receiving support from the Ponlok Chomnes program.
- The funding support for each research project is between USD15,000 and USD17,000.

4. DECIDING WHETHER TO APPLY

To apply, applicants must meet all the following basic eligibility criteria. Applications that do not meet ALL 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	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;
3	Entities that are registered with the Royal Government of Cambodia;
4	The lead institution in the application must collaborate with at least one government ministry/institution to jointly conduct the proposed research.

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

No	Additional Criteria
1	Organization is very experienced in conducting action research
2	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) concept is strongly incorporated into the proposed research
3	Organization has leadership and/or staff from traditionally under-represented groups (e.g. women, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI, marginalized communities, etc.)

5. 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	7 February 2022
	EoI with concept note submitted	28 February 2022
Stage 2: Shortlisting Process	Five applicants shortlisted	1-4 March 2022
	Nomination of five shortlisted applicants to DFAT for final confirmation	7-11 March 2022
	Conditionally approved finalists notified	11 March 2022
Stage 3: Due diligence	Due diligence process	14-18 March 2022
Stage 4: Notification of selected grantees and funding release	Grantee finalizes research content, budget, and grant period	21-25 March 2022
	Approximate date for grant agreement	28-31 March 2022
Stage 5: Research	Research begins	1 April 2022

Stage 1: Expression of Interest

Applicant organizations will submit a short Expression of Interest by 28 February 2022 which provides an 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

The Foundation will appraise the applications based on the eligibility criteria outlined above. The Foundation 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 11 March 2022.

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, LBGQI, marginalized communities, etc.)
Extent to which Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is incorporated into the proposed research.

Stage 3: Due Diligence

Following shortlisting, the Foundation will notify the shortlisted finalists to confirm their willingness to undergo due diligence checks by the Foundation for final confirmation of their selection status between 14 and 18 March 2022. The Foundation 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

The Foundation will commence fund disbursement after grantee selection has been finalized and the research content, budget, and grant period has been established for each grantee. The Foundation will then issue a Letter of Grant (LG) to each grantee. Each letter will be a contract between the Foundation 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 the Foundation has signed off on the agreement and their research budget. It is anticipated that funding will be released to successful applicants in mid-April 2022.

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

PONLOK CHOMNES: DATA AND DIALOGUE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN CAMBODIA

Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI)

**Ponlok Chomnes Collaborative Research Fund
for think tanks/research institutions to conduct a joint rapid action-research in
consultation and collaboration with various government ministries in Cambodia**

DUE 28 FEBRUARY 2022

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 policymakers and other decision makers and stakeholders at national and/or local levels? Please list up to five 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 the Ponlok Chomnes Collaborative Research Fund, which government institution will you collaborate with? How will you ensure this collaboration is successful? Please describe the roles and responsibilities of your and government institutions.
19. Under Ponlok Chomnes Collaborative Research Fund, what action research topic are you proposing? How does the research contribute to the policymaking at the respective government institution, and at what level? Please describe your research concept note (2 to 3 pages and submit it as attachment).
20. Please list down research team members for the proposed research and their CVs from your and government institutions.
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 28 February 2022 to ponlokchomnes@asiafoundation.org with the subject line: Ponlok Chomnes Collaborative Research Fund.

For more information, please contact:

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*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 engagement¹ plan (pre-research, during-research, and post-research)
 - **Research Timeline**
 - **Description of Research Team (name/position/degree)**
 - **Description of Roles and Responsibilities of your and government institutions**
 - **Proposed Budget**
 - **References**
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¹ 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.