

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Expression of Interest for the Ponlok Chomnes Innovation Fund

for Cambodian organisations to conduct joint activity with relevant government agencies (activities include research; communication¹, and/or dialogue) by using inclusive approaches to address inclusive climate resilience; digital transformation; situation, needs, and access of GEDSI² accessing public services; women, peace, and security; and other policy-relevant topics.

The Asia Foundation (the Foundation) is a nonprofit international development organisation committed to improving lives and expanding opportunities across Asia and the Pacific. Informed by decades of experience and deep local expertise, our work across the region is focused on good governance, women's empowerment and gender equality, inclusive economic growth, environment and climate action, and regional and international relations.

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

1. ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

The Asia Foundation is implementing the *Ponlok Chomnes: Data and Dialogue for Development in Cambodia* Program (the Program) between July 2023 and June 2027 with support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The goal of Ponlok Chomnes II is that public policy decisions, based on evidence and informed by inclusive dialogue, are operationalised and become the norm in Cambodia.

2. WHY YOU SHOULD BE PART OF THIS INITIATIVE

The Ponlok Chomnes Innovation Fund will support **innovative ideas that use inclusive approaches** to address one of the following policy issues but not limited to:

- Inclusive climate resilience
- Digital transformation
- Situation, needs, and access of GEDSI accessing public services
- Women, peace, and security
- Other policy-relevant topics not listed above.

This Innovation Fund encourages organisations to **trial or test different models** of:

- Data and evidence (e.g., in terms of methodology, research topics and groups undertaking research);

¹ Communication refers to *communication of research findings* meaning that packaging policy research (existing or new) into different formats to communicate to a diverse audience, for example, translating policy research into policy briefs for policymakers, utilising infographics for media dissemination, and simplifying language to enhance understanding amongst the general public or target community and accessible to women, members of the LGBTIQ and indigenous communities, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.

² GEDSI – Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion

- Models of communication (using existing research materials, test inclusive and effective communication channels and materials aimed at diverse stakeholders or specific under-represented groups such as people with disabilities); and/or
- Inclusive policy dialogues (dialogue at any levels and inviting a range of stakeholders, innovative dialogue models and concepts can be tested).

Innovation Partners can propose to undertake only one of the above three activities, two or all three activities within the available timeframe and budget. The focus is on trialling innovative models.

In addition, selected 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 policy dialogues. Through these mechanisms, partners will be able to increase their opportunities to interact with other partners and policymakers at both the national and sub-national levels.

3. THE CALL: PONLOK CHOMNES INNOVATION FUND

The Ponlok Chomnes Innovation Fund is a competitive process for Cambodian organisations to propose and test their innovative ideas in response to emerging policy opportunities/issues either at the national or subnational level. **This Innovation Fund is expected to support up to four Cambodian organisations.** This would be an eight-month to twelve-month grant.

*** 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 project is between USD 20,000 and USD 25,000.

4. DECIDING WHETHER TO APPLY

To apply, the applicants must meet all the following basic eligibility criteria. Applications that do not meet BOTH of the basic eligibility criteria WILL NOT be considered.

No	Basic Eligibility Criteria
1	Applicants must be Cambodian entities, specifically non-partisan, non-profit organisations, or public university-based research institutions
3	All applicants must be officially registered with the Royal Government of Cambodia

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

No	Additional Criteria
1	We encourage applications from community-based organisations, grassroots organisations, indigenous organizations, or traditionally under-represented and non-profit organisations;
2	Applicants should have proven experience in conducting action research; communicating research results; or organising the dialogue

3	Applications must integrate the concept of gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) into the proposed research, communication and/or dialogue activities
4	Organisations with inclusive leadership or staffing, particularly from traditionally under-represented groups (e.g., women, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ, indigenous communities.)

Proposed topics or ideas that meet the following approaches will be highly considered.

No	Approaches
1	Policy-relevance: Topics should directly pertain to current policy priorities and considerations.
2	Inclusion: Initiatives must actively involve and reflect a diverse range of groups and perspectives. For example, initiatives implemented by under-represented groups, and initiatives implemented in remote provinces are highly considered.
3	Innovation: Proposals should present novel approaches and models to trial action research, effective communication and inclusive dialogues.
4	Collaboration: Innovation Partners should partner with pertinent government agencies.

5. APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for the Ponlok Chomnes Innovation Fund, interested organisations will need to first assess their eligibility. Organisations will then submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) should they meet the abovementioned Basic Eligibility Criteria. Please see the indicative timeline below.

Stage	Stages	Timeframe
Stage 1: Expression of Interest	EoI publicised	15 November 2023
	EoI Online Question and Answer Session	1:30 to 2:30 pm on 22 November 2023 through Zoom (Cambodia Time)
	EoI with concept note submitted	15 December 2023
Stage 2: Shortlisting Process	Five applicants shortlisted	18-29 December 2023
	Nomination of six shortlisted applicants to DFAT for final confirmation	2-10 January 2024
	Conditionally approved finalists notified	15 January 2024
Stage 3: Due diligence	Due diligence process	22-31 January 2024
Stage 4: Notification of selected grantees and funding release	Grantee finalises proposal content, budget, and grant period	5-16 February 2024
	Approximate date for grant agreement	19-29 February 2024
Stage 5: Grant activities	Grant implementation begins	1 March 2024

Stage 1: Expression of Interest

Interested organisations shall submit a short Expression of Interest by the close of business 15 December 2023. The Expression of Interest will be a **maximum of six pages** excluding annexes either in Khmer or English language and include:

- Description of organisation (e.g., mission and goals of the organisation and organisational mandate, year established, organisational structure)
- Areas of focus and geographic location
- Proposed concept note (2-3 pages)
- Proposed team members and their CVs

Please refer to and use the more detailed guidance provided in **the Application Form below**.

Stage 2: Shortlisting

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

It is anticipated that the results of the conditionally approved finalists will be announced by 15 January 2024.

The following criteria will be used to rate concept note and short-list organisations:

Selection Criteria
Prior experience in conducting research, communication, or dialogue
Concept note quality
The proposed topic acquires inclusive and innovative approaches to address inclusive climate resilience; digital transformation; situation, needs, and access of GEDSI accessing public services; women, peace, and security; and other policy-relevant topics
Organisations that have leadership and/or staff from traditionally under-represented groups (e.g., women, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ, marginalised communities, etc.)
Extent to which Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) is incorporated into the proposed topic
Secure collaboration from relevant government agency(ies).

Stage 3: Due Diligence

Following shortlisting, the Program will notify the conditionally approved finalists to confirm their willingness to undergo due diligence checks by The Asia Foundation for final confirmation of their selection status between 22 and 31 January 2024. The Asia Foundation will apply the minimum standard of due diligence to provide the opportunity for community-based organisations and other actors to be able to participate.

Stage 4: Notification of Selected Grantees and Funding Release

The Asia Foundation will commence fund disbursement after grantee selection has been finalised and the concept note, budget, and grant period have been established for each grantee. The Asia Foundation will then issue a Letter of Grant to each grantee. Grantees will initiate their activities only after the Foundation has signed off on the agreement and their budget. It is anticipated that funding will be released to successful applicants in mid-March 2024.

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 Innovation Fund for Cambodian organisations to conduct joint activity (research, communication³, or dialogue) with relevant government agencies by using inclusive approaches to address inclusive climate resilience; digital transformation; situation, needs, and access of GEDSI⁴ accessing public services; women, peace, and security; and other policy-relevant topics.

DUE 15 DECEMBER 2023

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

Please answer a few questions about your organisation.

1. What is your organisational mission statement? What is your organisation’s goals?
2. What areas/topics does your organisation work focus on?
3. What year was your organisation established? _____
4. Is your organisation a legal entity registered with the Royal Government of Cambodia? If yes, with which entity?
5. Please attach a copy of your organisational structure, which shows your organisation’s operations and governance (board, etc.) as annex.
6. Please provide a numeric overview of your organisation’s staffing composition:

Type of staff	Status	Number
Management	Full-time	
	Part-time	
Technical staff (e.g. researchers, communications)	Full-time	
	Part-time	
Other / support staff	Full-time	

³ Communication refers to *communication of research findings* meaning that packaging policy research (existing or new) into different formats to communicate to a diverse audience, for example, translating policy research into policy briefs for policymakers, utilising infographics for media dissemination, and simplifying language to enhance understanding amongst the general public or target community and accessible to women, members of the LGBTIQ and indigenous communities, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.

⁴ GEDSI – Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion

	Part-time	
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What is the gender composition of your staff?

	Status	Number
All staff	Female	
	Male	
Technical staff (e.g. researchers, communications)	Female	
	Male	
	Persons identified with disabilities.	
All staff	Cambodian citizens	
	Non-Cambodian citizens	

7. Has your organisation produced or communicated or conducted dialogue on any (action) research products? Yes/No

- 7.a. If yes, could you please elaborate in further detail?

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

Year	Donor	Project name

9. Please list other sources of funding/income that your organisation currently has:

10. Does your organisation have in place systems to review your (action) research?

YES / NO

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

12. Does your organisation 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 organisation regularly consults with about your activities.

13. Is your organisation actively involved in any established policy or dialogue networks to share knowledge and best practices? Please list up to five.

14. Do you have current partnerships with other Cambodian or international (policy) research institutes to jointly conduct research or undertake policy advocacy? Please list up to five.

15. Under Ponlok Chomnes Innovation Fund, what topic are you proposing? Please describe your concept note and explain how your activity will influence policymaking and/or public-policy dialogues in Cambodia and at what level (2 to 3 pages and submit it as attachment).
16. Please list down research team members for the proposed topic and their CVs.
20. How did you hear about this Call for Expression of Interest/ Program?

Submission:

Please submit this completed form and attach your organisational chart by 15 December 2023 to ponlokchomnes@asiafoundation.org with the subject line: "Ponlok Chomnes Innovation Fund".

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

Concept note content

- Title
- Rationale
- Objectives and questions
- Relevance/contribution in relation to policy priorities and issues
- Innovative approaches
 - How do you address the selected policy topic?
 - Please explain why your approaches are innovative and inclusive.
 - Explain how your activity will influence policymaking and/or public-policy dialogues in Cambodia and at what level
- What Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion strategies will you employ? Explain how you will ensure participation from under-represented groups (explain which groups will be involved, where and how)
- Limitations and risks
- Stakeholder engagement plan (Pre, During and Post)
- References

Timeline

Description of Team (Including CV and their roles in the Innovation Grant)

Description of roles and responsibilities of your organisation and the partnering government institution

Proposed Budget

References
