

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANTS

1. The TA will use an estimated 55 person-months of international consultants and 60 person-months of national consultants individually or through firms. The consulting services will be used to support advisory, research and capacity building, and other activities according to the TA workplans. The overarching purpose of these activities is to turn the CI into a think tank recognized regionally and internationally for its high-quality output and for its significant regional development impact. It also seeks to assure that CI will become financially sustainable and managed according to the highest international standards. The inputs under this TA will be provided by consultants and short-term resource persons who will serve to introduce international best practices, provide in-depth local knowledge, and advise on institutional approaches for CI and on substantive research, capacity building, and knowledge management activities.
2. The work under this TA will be carried out in two stages:
 - a. Stage 1 will engage several resource persons who are experts on think tank management and regional cooperation to (i) review CI's substantial progress over the last five years; (ii) consider the CI Management's current strategies and plans for institutional development and substantive work; and (iii) advise on CI's overall directions and on how to structure and focus the detailed work plans under this TA.
 - b. Stage 2 will engage consulting services under the three output headers identified in the TA and further specified in the indicative terms of reference (ToRs) below. Based on the guidance of the experts under Stage 1, the indicative ToRs will be suitably modified by CI subject to ADB review and agreement. ADB will recruit consultants as individuals or firms in accordance with ADB Procurement Policy (2017, as amended from time to time) and its associated project administration instructions and staff instructions.
 - c. Throughout Stages 1 and 2, ADB will engage one or two consultants to support ADB staff in overseeing and managing the TA.

Stage 1: Indicative ToR

3. Under this stage of the TA, several resource persons will be engaged. They will carry out the following tasks:
 - a. Review CI's progress since its creation in terms of the focus, quality and efficiency of its research, capacity building and knowledge activities, drawing on
 - i. CI's published output, including research papers, training materials, newsletters, blogs, videos, etc.
 - ii. Reviews and evaluations of CI activities carried out over the last three years, and
 - iii. International standards of Think Tank activities.
 - b. Consider CI Management's current strategies, plans and initiatives for institutional development and substantive (operational) work, including
 - i. CI's five-year strategy, as amended, and its rolling operational plans;
 - ii. CI's initiatives for developing flagship products, task forces, quality control mechanisms, etc.;
 - iii. CI's financial management and sustainability (budgeting, auditing, resource mobilization, etc.)
 - iv. staffing;

- v. CI's business model, partnership and networking with other regional think tanks, and engagement with potential development partners and international think tanks.
 - c. Advise on CI's overall future directions and on how to structure and focus the detailed work plans under this TA (see indicative ToRs below).
4. The resource persons are expected to meet remotely three times over a three-month period, for 3-4 hours each time, with the following purpose:
- a. First meeting: experts get an overall briefing from the CI Management on the past, current and future activities and directions of the CI.
 - b. Second meeting: based on a review of documents and informal exchanges between the first and second meetings, experts discuss the whole range of issues indicated in para. 3 above with a view to providing feedback and guidance to CI Management and ADB.
 - c. Third meeting: based on the discussions in the first two meetings, experts review the plans for TA activities and detailed ToR prepared by the CI Management with input and guidance from ADB for work to be carried out during Stage 2 of the TA.

Stage 2: Indicative ToRs

5. Stage 2 will engage consulting services under the three output headers identified in the TA and further specified in the indicative ToR below. Based on the guidance of the experts under Stage 1, the indicative ToRs will be suitably modified by CI subject to ADB review and agreement. ADB will recruit consultants as individuals [or firms] in accordance with ADB Procurement Policy (2017, as amended from time to time) and its associated project administration instructions and/or staff instructions.

Output 1: CI's institutional capacity and financial sustainability strengthened.

6. For this output area a number of advisory and institution building tasks are envisaged, which could be packaged as separate assignments for individual consultants or grouped together in one or more consulting contracts, for individual consultants [or for one or more individual firms or consortiums of firms]. The tasks fall under the following headings.
- a. Business model: currently CI operates mostly on the basis of delivering its knowledge services using its own financial resources and employing its own staff (based at CI headquarters (HQ) and in their home countries), consultants, and/or the staff of other organizations (ADB, ADBI). Various issues regarding the CI business model will be explored, including:
 - i. Carrying out a larger fraction of CI's work with its own staff;
 - ii. Functioning (in part or whole) as a virtual organization, with (1) staff based not only at HQ but in their home countries, continuing the experiences of remote work during the COVID-19 crisis; (2) key functions (especially training) carried out remotely; and (3) assured virtual access to global knowledge resources, which is currently constrained due to location in Urumqi;
 - iii. Preparing selected knowledge service initiatives as projects to be funded by development partners or paid for by clients; and
 - iv. Strengthening partnerships and networking, including with selected think tanks in member countries and with think tanks in other countries (including Europe, the US).

- b. Organization:
- i. CI's substantive ("operational") work is currently mostly organized in functional ways (research, capacity building/training, and knowledge management), although recently it has also organized work under taskforces on a cross-functional basis. The experience to date will be reviewed and alternative ways of matrix management will be explored to ensure an effective deployment of CI's knowledge service capacities under key programmatic priorities;
 - ii. CI's administrative functions currently require a significant share of CI's resources (staff and budget). The deployment of these resources will be reviewed to ascertain whether and how cost reductions and improved administrative services could be obtained through increased efficiencies;
 - iii. CI's financial resource mobilization capacity needs to be strengthened. The required institutional and staffing actions will be considered (see also item 7.e. below).
- c. Quality:
- i. CI recently introduced a new system of quality assurance for research products. This will be reviewed against best international practice and recommendations for further improvement provided, as appropriate.
 - ii. Similarly, CI's quality assurance process for its capacity building/training activities will be assessed, with recommendations for potential improvements.
- d. Staffing: For knowledge-based organizations the quality and dedication of its human resources is its greatest asset. The consultants will assess various aspects of human resource management and the qualifications of current staff and management, including
- i. Contractual conditions (length of appointment, salary and benefits, etc.);
 - ii. On-boarding, mentoring and training; and
 - iii. Access to knowledge resources at HQ.
- e. Financial management and sustainability: Based on the recently completed consultant report on financial sustainability, specific aspects of CI's financial management and sustainability will be further analyzed and recommendations provided to ensure they meet best international practice; items covered include
- i. Financial planning, budgeting and cost control;
 - ii. Financial record keeping;
 - iii. Auditing;
 - iv. Financial oversight by Governing Council and its Audit Committee; and
 - v. Financial resource mobilization, including member contributions, project-based financing from development partners, and fees for knowledge services from national or international public and private clients.
- f. Results management: Effective results management requires the specification of suitable results metrics and goals for research, capacity building, and knowledge management, as well as for the key administrative functions and then a process for monitoring and evaluating progress towards results goals. The consultants will review current results management practices and recommend improvements, as appropriate.

Output 2. CI's knowledge functions enhanced.

7. Under the TA consulting services, experts will provide advice to individual knowledge service initiatives to help ensure their relevance, improve their quality in design, implementation and dissemination, and to put in place effective monitoring and evaluation. It is not possible to predict the specific themes or tasks that will require such assistance. The ToR will have to be adapted to the specifics of each task that may require this assistance. It is expected that such assistance will be provided by individual consultants or short-term resource persons.

Output 3. CI's knowledge management improved.

8. Consultant will support the CI in designing, implementing, and monitoring of activities related to knowledge management, communication, and outreach activities. The consultant will be responsible for providing assistance to develop and deliver effective and targeted communication messages through multiple channels to all regional stakeholders, partner organizations, and wider public. The Consultant will also support CI's capacity in communications and outreach using existing platforms and developing social media and digital content strategies. The Consultant will report to the TA Task Manager and actively collaborates with designated CI team members to ensure that lessons learned and best practices are effectively documented and shared with relevant stakeholders to contribute to on-going and upcoming CI's regional and country-level research and capacity development activities. The specific responsibilities of the Consultant will include, but not limited, to the following:

- (i) Develop strategies for knowledge exchange, communications, social media, knowledge dissemination, and outreach for the research projects based on audience analysis and review of existing communication mechanisms.
- (ii) Build capacity of CI staff and its collaborating national partners to conduct effective communications and outreach strategies.
- (iii) Assist CI management and staff members to effectively communicate about project content and its accomplishments to various audiences by developing key messages, basic communication scripts, and other tools.
- (iv) Support CI team to manage publications, web pages, social media, case studies of project target groups, press releases and presentations.
- (v) Develop communication materials/templates and informational products, such as video, social media posts, infographics, monthly project updates, reports and tools.
- (vi) Use videography and social media and other platforms for disseminating messages about CI initiatives and projects and for achieving public interest and awareness.
- (vii) Develop quality assurance standards for all communication and informational products and ensure they are in line with ADB's and CAREC Program's standards and guidelines.
- (viii) Establish good working relationships and collaborative arrangements within research community groups, existing and potential donors, governments, and other organizations to ensure harmonized, effective programming, non-overlap of activities, and the best use of resources.
- (ix) Ensure that the regional and country outreach objectives reflect the priorities of the CI and contribute to the effectiveness of its knowledge programs and capacity development services.

Overall TA Management

9. ADB will require consulting services to help oversee and manage the TA throughout its implementation, to help ensure timely and high-quality delivery. One or two intermittent consultants will assist ADB staff in managing the TA accounts, consultants and resource persons engagement, participation in various workshop and knowledge events, communication with CI management and staff, manage consultants' contracts, and review and evaluate progress of TA implementation.