



## Call for Proposals

# Strengthening Institutional Capacities of Research Actors to Understand the Links between the Economy and the Environment

The Global Development Network (GDN) is launching a call for proposals for institutions interested in strengthening the production and use of policy-relevant knowledge on the links between the economy and the environment. **The call targets research institutions** with long-term plans to work on the topic, at the local, national or regional level. National research institutions based and working in South Asia, South-East and the Pacific are eligible to apply. Proposals are invited for projects of between **USD 25,000–40,000, and with a duration of 12 months**. Project proposals should aim **to strengthen and/or expand existing efforts to support the production and use of policy-relevant knowledge on the links between the economy and the environment, based on the needs, priorities and vision of the applying institutions themselves**. Projects can focus on research, research capacity building, and/or engagement with policy actors, and can integrate innovatively these three dimensions as appropriate. GDN will partner with the selected institutions over the duration of the program, and offer several support services to further develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the projects. GDN expects institutions to use the funds and the support to boost existing efforts in a strategic way, with prospects to make the project sustainable once it has been tested throughout the grant period. GDN will select up to three institutions based on the quality of the proposals and the size of their financial proposition.

**The deadline to apply is April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018, and the expected start date is July 15<sup>st</sup>, 2018.**

## THE LINK BETWEEN THE ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In the contemporary context of developing and emerging economies, growth aspirations must come to terms with two contradictory realities: a) unprecedented awareness on the limitations of development models that do not put environmental sustainability at their heart, and b) unprecedented pressure on the environment as the result of existing growth models. The linkages between the economy and the environment are complex and environment degradation and depletion is not only a technical problem that needs to be fixed, but an economic, social and political one as well. A better understanding of the links between the economy and the environment can help implement more efficient, effective and equitable policies and interventions for development trajectories that better consider the environment and that are better tailored to local context.

The new paradigm of low-carbon development trajectories enshrined in the Paris Agreement will have economic and social implications on Asian and Pacific economies that are still underexplored, whether at the local, national, regional or global level and it has become imperative for countries across Asia and the Pacific to become responsive to these challenges.

Against this general backdrop, universities and research centers have a key role to play in supporting debates and decision both in a short and long-term perspective. A number of conditions are likely however to influence the capacity of these actors to play this critical role in better understanding the interactions between the environment and the economy and the impacts of one on the other:

1. Identifying ways to work across natural sciences and social sciences;
2. Identifying ways to link systematically the supply and demand of knowledge on development at different levels;
3. Identifying ways to train the next generations of policy actors and researcher to understand and address these challenges.

Because of the pressing needs to support local and national research capacities in these countries to address the challenges mentioned above, this program aims to strengthen and/or expand existing efforts to support the production and use of policy-relevant knowledge on the links between the economy and the environment, based on the needs, priorities and vision of the applying institutions themselves. This program is the first step in a larger GDN initiative under development to strengthen local capacities in developing countries to produce – locally – the policy relevant research needed to support development debates and policies on environment and climate change.

## THE CALL

As part of its 2017-22 strategy, GDN is committed to support research institutions in developing countries to emerge as reference centers for the production of rigorous development knowledge that can directly support local development debates and decisions. GDN recognizes that research institutions and universities in developing countries have a vital role to play in the **production of knowledge** that can inform development debates and decisions; it recognizes that universities also remain the key actors for **training new generations of researchers**, finally, GDN recognizes that universities are in a privileged position to build and sustain **long-term relationships with actors on**

**the demand side of development knowledge, including policy institutions.** During [a successful program funded by IDRC between 2014 and 2017](#), GDN developed a tailored approach to support institutions on a demand-driven model, through competitive selection and a tailored suite of support services ranging from mentoring for institutional development to advisory, grant management support and support understanding and packaging impact. This approach has become the reference for GDN's work under Pillar 1 of its strategy: building local capacities. By deploying this approach, GDN aims to identify and work with local champions to develop and strengthen their *own* research programs, research trainings and/or strengthening capacities for institutional outreach. The present call focuses specifically on institutional capacities to work on the links between the environment and the economy. It is the first phase of a broader initiative supporting the work of research institutions on ecological transitions in developing countries.

Through this competitive call, GDN invites research institutions in South Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific to propose a project for the duration of 12 months (one year) that aim to strengthen their existing program on topics at the intersection between the economy and the environment. Competing institutions should design the project on the basis of their specific needs and strengths, and propose interventions that can support and strengthen either their research capacities, their capacity to build research capacity, their capacities to engage with policy actors (broadly understood). Specifically, GDN is looking for institutions that have a research stream on the topic of the call, the link between the environment and the economy, and that sees themselves, or aim to become reference center on this topic, nationally or regionally. GDN is looking for projects that are:

- Demand-led, designed to support the selected institutions in addressing gaps with an aim to raise and strengthen their research, research capacity building and outreach skills.
- Sustainable in the medium-term, that is projects that have a potential to be institutionalized (in part or it full) at the end of the project.
- Inclusive, tailored and suited to the country-context and the local needs.
- Designed to build identifiable capacities and skills for individual researchers to help them initiate, conceptualize and undertake quality development research that is timely, demand-driven itself and can contribute to evidence-based policymaking in their country in the long-run;
- Projects that integrate a strong dimension of research capacity building in research efforts.
- Open to the regional and global research community in order to help connect local researchers with their peers and benefit from quality mentoring;
- Focused on the links between the economy and the environment.

The grant for each selected institution will range between **US\$ 25,000 to US\$ 40,000** for a period of 12 months (one year), contingent on the scope and success of the proposed project.

**GDN's Support:** Once selected, GDN will work closely with the partner institutions to provide them with a suite of support services on-demand (beyond funding), for the effective implementation and monitoring of the proposed project throughout the grant period. Additionally, GDN will also engage a panel of advisors to mentor and support the selected partner institutions as and when required. These

advisors will provide guidance on the project design, development, implementation and effectiveness.

## ELIGIBILITY

### Who can apply?

- This Call is open to non-partisan, not-for-profit, research institutions headquartered and working in South Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific. For the list of eligible countries, see annex 1.
- GDN is concerned with the capacity, functions, skills, and interests of institutions rather than with the formal type or classification of an institution, and, accordingly, a variety of research institutions may participate including:
  - o Universities
  - o Think-tanks
  - o Stand-alone research institutions
  - o Research networks or consortia that produce research, train researchers and/or act as boundary institutions between research and policy actors.
- The applying institution must be headed and managed by members who are citizens and resident of developing or transition countries. The applicants can be asked to submit proof of their citizenship and residency through documents with legal standing at any point during the Call.

### Who cannot apply?

- Individuals cannot apply in their own capacity to this Call, but as members of an institution.
- Institutions headquartered in developed countries but working in developing countries are not eligible.
- Networks that are exclusively focused on coordination or translation of research.
- Staff members who are citizens of developing or transition countries but currently residing in a developed country are not eligible to apply in the name of the institution.
- Multilateral, bilateral and other donor organizations (DFID, IDB, IDRC, IMF, UN agencies, the World Bank etc.) are not eligible.

## APPLICATION

### What is expected from the applicants?

Interested institutions should prepare and submit their proposal for a project that will make a difference to their research skills, institutional capacities to train researchers and/or do outreach, in a sustainable manner, and that **directly strengthen their existing activities on topics that look at the interactions between the environment and the economy**. The proposal should provide a description of the pressing research gaps and needs at the institution and recommend well-defined, innovative and feasible interventions to address them.

Institutions are expected to select a few goals and may draw on the examples mentioned below. The

list is by no means exhaustive and GDN welcome any other innovative ideas that are not mentioned below but pertained to the remit of this call.

- Methodology workshops,
- Regular seminars on the topic,
- Development of networks and platforms,
- Research visits, lectures by regional and global experts in the given field or methodology;
- Faculty exchange program to scale-up their mentoring skills.
- Online tutorials or on-site mentoring.
- Refresher courses/ workshops on contemporary topics of research for mid-career researchers and academics to improve quality of research, teaching and peer-learning environments in universities and think-tanks.
- Scholarships for Masters' students and guidance to try and steer more towards pursuing PhD and research.
- Small grants/ fellowships to allow researchers to participate in relevant summer courses in some of the established universities in the world.
- Scholarships for PhD thesis – partial grants for field research or primary data collection, stipends, paper presentations in international conferences, short duration stay in an advanced university with an assigned mentor.
- Summer schools focusing on sharing research and offering research capacity building
- Policy labs to connect the demand and supply of research, at any point of the research process.
- Research labs for multidisciplinary research.
- Science-policy interface.

These projects should focus on the interactions between the economy and the environment, tackling upfront the need for a mix of social and natural sciences. For instance, this includes (but is not limited to):

- Green growth strategies
- Natural capital accounting
- Green finance
- Adaptation to climate change
- Carbon pricing
- Political economy of policies integrating economic and the environmental consideration
- Environmental or ecological economics
- Investment in restoration and protection of agricultural and forest landscape
- Inequality of contributions and exposure to climate change
- Costs of environmental degradation on different socio-economic groups
- Pattern of land use and its link with poverty

**Note:**

- Proposals that suggest project that are open to researchers from other institutions in the country are welcome.

- Submissions concerning a baseline, evaluation or research study will not be considered.
- Submissions for funding unrelated conferences and seminars, or the purchase of equipment will not be considered.

### **Guidelines to submit the Proposal**

Applications must be submitted on the dedicated online platform<sup>1</sup> before April 10<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Proposals received by email will not be considered.

The Proposal should be submitted as a Microsoft word document file only (.doc or .docx). Submissions should be less than 15 pages. Format should be in Times New Roman, 11-point font with single-line spacing and one-inch margins. The Proposal **must have the following structure and include all the sections listed below in a single word document file:**

Page1: Proposal cover sheet, including

- Name of the proposed project
- Applicants details (Institution Name, Name of the Principle Coordinator and team members)
- Mission statement of the applying institution

Page 2- 15: Proposal with the following structure.

#### **A. Project's Goals**

*Clearly define your project goals in terms of (i) production of quality research, (ii) research capacity building goals, and/or (iii) research outreach. Explain how (i), (ii) and (iii) are integrated in the project, if applicable*

#### **B. Description of the gaps and needs at the institution that justify the project**

*Define how this project will contribute to fill a gap in the existing work of the institution*

#### **C. Brief description of the development challenges being address through the project**

#### **D. Comprehensive and detailed implementation plan of the activities**

*Discuss (in details) the proposed interventions (activities) that will be undertaken to achieve the above-mentioned goals. **Please Note:** Simply providing a list of activities and interventions will not be considered. Provide a comprehensive and detailed plan that covers the following details:*

- *How each proposed activity is relevant in achieving the above-mentioned goals?*
- *Is this activity new or currently being implemented by your institution?*
- *How will each activity be pursued?*
- *What will be the time-span for each activity?*
- *Who are the target participants/ beneficiaries for each activity and how will they be selected?*

#### **E. Monitoring and evaluation plan**

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<sup>1</sup> The online platform will be accessible from March 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 and the link will be provided on GDN's website at this date ([www.gdn.int](http://www.gdn.int))

*Specify your M&E plan, presenting clearly how the team expects activities to lead to the desired outputs, and to the outcomes that are sustainable in the context of the applying institution and how results will be documented*

F. A short statement on how the proposed project and the broad objectives of this project relate to the applicant institution's business plan and institutional development strategy

G. GDN's Role

*Clearly define GDN's role in supporting your institution's project. How does your institution see GDN's involvement (beyond funding) in the implementation of your proposed project?*

H. Impact and Sustainability

- *What will be the impact of the proposed project in the long run? Does the organization have the capacity to sustain the activities and results of the proposed program? How?*
- *How likely are the operations of the project to continue over time, even after GDN's funding comes to an end, and what are the specific plans to ensure it? After the activities have been completed, what will be the extent of the proposed program?*

I. Organization and Management

*Define the relevant skills of each team member in implementing the proposed project. Furthermore, provide details of the responsibilities of each team member and the division of labor, knowledge sharing and communication within the team. Describe the distinctive role of the Program Coordinator in managing the proposed project.*

The following documents should be submitted as annexes to the Proposal on the online platform:

- a. Detailed budget (use the template provided by on the online platform)
- b. Timeline (use the template provided by on the online platform);
- c. A dully-filled in copy of the GDN questionnaire on your institution's financial operations
- d. A copy of the recent financial audit of the applicant institution (if available);
- e. Legal status of the applicant institution with proof of headquarters (copy of the incorporation or registration certificate);
- f. CVs of the coordinator and all team members;

### **Other information about the submission**

- The deadline for submitting the Proposal is **April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 (6:00 PM Indian Standard Time)**. Any submissions/ documents received after this date will not be considered.
- Application must be submitted in English
- An institution cannot submit more than one application
- Incomplete applications will not be considered  
Information and details provided in the application (including the institutional details) should be correct and verifiable; else the submission will be liable for disqualification
- GDN will accept submissions as electronic files only. Submissions by any other method will not be accepted.
- For queries, email us at [rcb@gdn.int](mailto:rcb@gdn.int)

### **Ethical considerations**

GDN-supported projects must be carried out in accordance with common research and professional ethical standards, related to plagiarism, surveys and other forms of data collection that involve human subjects, confidentiality and transparent use of financial and human resources. In their proposals, applicants are required to clearly identify all possible ethical issues relating to their proposed project.

Furthermore, all forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable to GDN, plagiarism being one of them. Plagiarism is unauthorized use of other people's work, ideas and/or writings (in part or in full) and presenting or giving notion of these work(s), ideas and/or writings being one's own work, idea(s) and/or writing(s). GDN takes plagiarism very seriously and will take immediate and appropriate action, including and not limited to withdrawal of funding for any such grantee found guilty of plagiarism.

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

Eligible and complete proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee, based on the following criteria:

#### **Quality of the proposal**

- Needs assessment: What challenges does the institution face? To what extent is the proposed project demand-driven and sustainable? Does the institution have a clear sense of the research environment and is the proposed project contextualized and tailored to the environment?
- Monitoring, learning and evaluation: Does the proposal clearly specify the objectives of the project and respond to the needs identified? How does the institution envisage building research capacity through the project? Is there a specific theory of change? What tools will be used to monitor implementation and progress against the expected results?



- Clarity and coherence: Given the needs assessment, to what extent is the project well-defined and justified? Does the project fit within the institution's overall organizational strategy and capacity?
- Feasibility: Given the country/regional context, is the proposed project feasible? Does the institution have a clear assessment of the risks involved, as well as a well-defined plan to mitigate such risks?
- Beneficiaries and scale of operations: Who are the primary beneficiaries of the proposed project? How does the institution plan to identify and select its beneficiaries? What is the extent and reach of the proposed project?
- Value for money: Does the proposed project promise substantial research capacity building results in a cost-effective manner?
- Work plan and budget: Has the institution provided a clear and comprehensive work plan along with a detailed and feasible budget?

### **Institutional capacity**

- Institutional ability and relevant experience: Whether the institution is well positioned to implement and manage the project. Does it have previous experience in undertaking projects that have proven to build research capacities?
- Knowledge sources: Does the institution have in-house expertise to develop and deliver research programs and build the capacity within the institution? To what extent does the institution draw on external resources to execute such programs?
- Access and links: Does the institution have links with other organizations implementing similar projects within the country/ region? How effective are its networking services in ensuring access to resources and information, and facilitation of links with other stakeholders?
- Quality controls: Does the institution have a transparent governance structure and financial operations/ records? How well is the Monitoring and Evaluation component embedded within the activities of the institution, from their design and inception to completion? Does it have clear and measurable objectives for research capacity building?
- Potential for continuity and expansion: Is there a perceived interest and ability for the institution to expand the project beyond the support provided by GDN?

### **CONTACT**

GDN will accept questions related to this call at [rcb@gdn.int](mailto:rcb@gdn.int) until March 28 th, 2018.

**Please note:** GDN reserves the right to modify, cancel or not award grants at any stage of the Call and grant-making.

## ANNEX1: LIST OF ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

Afghanistan	Laos	Papua New Guinea
Bangladesh	Maldives	Philippines
Bhutan	Malaysia	Samoa
Brunei	Marshall Islands	Singapore
Cambodia	Micronesia, Federated States of	Solomon Islands
East Timor	Myanmar (Burma)	Sri Lanka
Fiji	Nauru	Thailand
India	Nepal	Tonga
Indonesia	Pakistan	Tuvalu
Kiribati	Palau	Vanuatu
		Vietnam