

Terms of Reference: In-Country Researchers (Consultant)

Introduction and Background

Publish What You Fund was established in 2008 with the goal of ensuring that aid and development information is transparent, available and used for effective decision-making, public accountability and lasting change for all citizens. As the largest donor of aid and development finance, we have placed a particular emphasis on transparency of United States (US) foreign assistance.

This project seeks to assess the potential impact of changes to US foreign assistance on countries receiving aid. It will start by reviewing the current levels of assistance, consider scenarios for changes to US foreign assistance -- looking both at the quantity of resources and how they are delivered -- and assess the potential impact of those changes in a selected number of countries.

The findings will be used to influence the debate on US Fiscal Year 2019 spending levels in two ways: first, to make policymakers aware of the potential impact of changes to US foreign assistance; second, to demonstrate how better data on foreign assistance can be used to improve the budget.

Description of Assignment

The project team will consist of a Project Lead, a Research Coordinator, four In-Country Consultants and a US Advocacy Representative.

The In-Country Research Consultant will be responsible for:

- Conducting independent desk-based research.
- Working closely with the Research Coordinator to implement an agreed research methodology with the intention of assessing the impact of the proposed US Budget cuts in their country.
- Playing a leading role in identifying relevant individuals for key informant interviews (KIIs) and possibly focus group discussions (FGDs) as relevant, and arranging those interviews.
- Conducting interviews, in and outside of the capital city, as well as other relevant research
- Writing up, and ideally translating, KII and FGD notes according to guidelines provided by the Researcher.
- Working under the supervision of the Research Coordinator to ensure a smooth research process.
- If requested, be available to feed in available findings into briefing material.
- Analysing and writing up the results of the desk-based review and KIIs / possible FGDs for the production of a final draft report/s.

Activities and Deliverables

Desk review:

- Consideration and analysis of previous desk-based research, interviews and other assembled papers relevant to the project.
- Independent desk-based research into US budget proposals and US development strategies in their country.

- Work with the Project Lead and Research Coordinator to finalise a methodology which includes key informant interviews and focus group discussion research questions and key concepts, to assess the impact of proposed cuts which can be coherently applied to all focus countries.

Research:

- Assist in preparations to ensure a smooth launch of the programme of in-country research; planned to begin in January/February 2018.
- Implement the agreed methodology, remain on course to hit targets and deadlines and produce satisfactory outcomes.
- Identify interview targets, arrange the interviews and – if necessary – conduct follow up interviews. Interviews should include a range of actors, including representatives from: government, civil society, donors, aid implementing organisations and beneficiaries of aid. Interviews should be conducted inside and outside of the capital.
- If considered necessary, conduct and hold FGDs.
- Access and analyse key data and form conclusions.
- Work with the Research Coordinator to remedy any issues which arise during the duration of the programme of in-country research.
- Be available for at least weekly calls / touchpoints with the Project Lead and Research Coordinator.
- At the discretion of the Research Coordinator, be available for individual calls to provide updates and feedback.
- The In-Country Consultants will be asked to travel outside of the capital.

Production of materials:

- To produce a concise, clear and usable write-ups of every interview in English, and in accordance with the Researcher Coordinator's guidance.
- To consolidate and analyses research findings, so they can be fed into the final reports.
- To feed into the production of briefing material, potentially before the deadline for final reports.
- To provide a consolidated analysis of the in-country research findings and relevant data-sets as both data and as written conclusions in English.
- To contribute to the draft final report, of an agreed length, which draws the in-country findings together, provides comprehensive analysis and identifies the general conclusions of the research. The final report will be targeted at the following audiences:
 - Key US Influencers, including members of the US Administration and Congress
 - Members of government and civil society within the case study country
- To review and comment on any subsequent revisions by Publish What You Fund of the final draft report.
- To draft, contribute or otherwise help with the development of any briefing materials being produced during the duration of the contract.
- To comment and input into any communications material produced during the duration of the contract.
- In conjunction with the Research Coordinator, to help prepare research validation webinars with in-country research participants.

Other:

- The In-Country researchers must be in regular contact with the Research Coordinator and Project Lead, and available for at least a weekly call with the Researcher throughout the assignment.
- Any changes to the Deliverables of this Agreement must be decided by mutual agreement.

Timeframe

The role will require roughly 15 days spread over February, March and April, with the highest demand for time likely being in March. The specifics of time allocation can be discussed prior to the commencement of the assignment.

The project is bound by a strict external deadline (US budget process). Consequently, regardless of the start date of the In-Country Researchers, the research must be complete and written up by April 2018.

Any changes to the timeline must be agreed by the Researcher and / or Project Lead.

Payment

Payment will include a payment upon reaching a milestone and final payment on satisfactory and timely delivery of all services. The specifics of payments can be negotiated.

Required Skills and Competencies

- Extensive research experience in international development.
- Demonstrable experience of producing high-quality, well-written, impact assessments to a tight deadline.
- Track record and familiarity with conducting interviews with a range of stakeholders.
- Strong data analysis skills.
- Ability to identify trends and key messages.
- A strong personal network with the development sector.
- A strong understanding of the US' development approach, and of other donors' approaches.
- Both native and English language skills (preferable).
- The successful candidate would ideally be based in the country they are applying to work in.