Call for proposals: Strategic grants for think-tanks under the Bangladesh Transformative Economic Policy Programme (TEPP)

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 About Kivu International

Kivu specializes in supporting local partners to influence policy by supporting the development and use of evidence in a politically informed way and providing tailored advice on the design and implementation of policy influencing strategies. Kivu will be leading the think-tank strand of TEPP, partnering with local think tanks in Bangladesh to provide support and advice on the delivery of strategic policy projects with the objective of helping think-tanks to achieve the policy change that they want to see. Kivu will work closely with successful organisations to deliver projects and will provide tailored capacity building.

1.2 About IGC and IGC Bangladesh

The IGC aims to promote sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice based on frontier research. The IGC directs a global network of world-leading academic researchers and in-country teams in Africa and South Asia and works closely with partner governments to generate high-quality research and policy advice on key growth challenges.

IGC Bangladesh has been operating since 2009 – one of the very first programmes of the IGC. The Country Team has based its activities upon dialogue with the government, research institutions, and the private sector to assess the most urgent constraints to economic growth in Bangladesh. The IGC has collaborated with key policymakers and senior government officials in the Prime Minister's Office, National Board of Revenue (NBR), Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS); Ministry of Land, Ministry of Labour, Power Division and Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED). Under TEPP, the IGC will be supporting policy research and engagement through academic institutions.

1.3 About the Transformative Economic Policy Programme (TEPP)

The Transformative Economic Policy Programme (TEPP) is a 2-year programme funded by UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) with the aim to support the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) to deliver an effective, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable response and recovery from the COVID-19 economic crisis.

The think-tank strand of TEPP will support think-tanks in Bangladesh to generate policy-relevant data, research, and analysis to inform policy and its implementation, and design and implement effective advocacy strategies, with the overall objective of achieving policy change in Bangladesh.

1.4 Priority issues

As countries turn their focus from the COVID-19 response to COVID-19 recovery, policy makers around the world are thinking about how to move on from the pandemic and 'build back better'. It is increasingly clear that creating jobs, raising incomes and reducing poverty must go hand in hand with efforts to increase resilience to climate shocks and to accelerate the decarbonisation of energy supply and production to ensure that growth is truly sustainable. Adaptation to climate change is crucial to building resilience and lowering risk, whilst mitigation

through low-carbon growth pathways is essential to ensuring the well-being of future generations.

We are particularly interested in projects that address these issues through one of our three themes (outlined below), all of which play a crucial role in building resilience and promoting sustainable growth. Project proposals should seek to address policy issues that related to one of these themes.

- **Green growth & green recovery:** Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to climate change. There is increasing interest and focus from policy makers on how to build climate resilience and support green growth. However, it is a relatively new policy area and solutions are not well known.

- **Inclusive and resilient job creation:** For the last decade, Bangladesh has had high growth and low unemployment. However, a growing labour force is increasing the demand for employment, whilst the changing nature of the labour market poses threats to key sectors. COVID-19 has exacerbated the jobs challenge.

- **Domestic resource mobilisation (DRM):** Bangladesh has a longstanding DRM challenge and has one of the lowest revenue to GDP ratios in the world. However, DRM is a difficult reform space, with many failed attempts to reform the system.

Covid-19 recovery will be a cross-cutting theme. Applicants should set out how their project proposal relates to covid-19 policy responses and economic recovery.

1.5 Scope of projects

Projects should clearly target a particular policy issue under one of the TEPP themes, and should involve a research and policy development, as well as an advocacy component.

Where possible, consideration should be given to where advocacy activities can be integrated across the lifetime of the project – and not limited to dissemination activities in the final stage of the project.

Projects will run for 6-12 months. The available budget is GBP25,000 – GBP40,000 per project.

2. Eligibility & participant information

Think-tanks registered in Bangladesh are eligible to respond to this call. A single institution is allowed to submit up to three proposals, one under each theme.

The contracted institution (i.e. the think-tank) will be responsible for managing the grant funds, including overseeing project-spend in line with the approved budget; ensuring that the research is conducted as outlined within the approved proposal and that outputs are delivered on time.

For these contracts, the full project budget will be split into payment milestones each of which is tied to one or more outputs. Payments are made to the institution upon final approval of all outputs in each milestone.

At least 20% of the budget is linked to the final milestone to ensure final deliverables are submitted and approved by the project end date.

3. Submitting your application

3.1 Instructions

Applicants are required to complete the proposal and budget templates, and email these to jess.latchford@kivu-international.org by 23.59 GMT on Sunday 21st November 2021. Proposals received after this date will not be considered.

3.2 Guidelines

The proposal form contains word limits for each section which you are expected to comply with.

Any supplementary information such as tables, charts, graphs lor letters of engagement are not required as part of the application form and should not be submitted / emailed. Please use particular sections in the proposal form to describe your design in simple language within the word limit.

We strongly encourage applicants discuss their proposal with Kivu International before applying. Please email jess.latchford@kivu-international.org with any questions.

4. Review process

4.1 Evaluation criteria

Projects will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. **Alignment with TEPP Research Priorities:** Is the project relevant to promote inclusive growth and structural change in Bangladesh?
2. **Clarity of Policy Influencing strategy:** Has the proposal provided a well-argued overall strategy for how it will approach achieving change? Does the applicant demonstrate understanding of the policy challenge and political context?
3. **Quality of proposed research and policy analysis:** Does the proposed research and policy development reflect the proposed policy influencing strategy? Is there a clear approach to conducting sufficiently rigorous research/policy analysis?
4. **Quality of proposed advocacy activities:** Are the proposed activities consistent with the policy influencing strategy and well-judged with potential for impact?
5. **Organisational capacity and demand for Kivu support:** Is there sufficient evidence that the organisation will be able to deliver project outputs to a high standard? Does

the bidder demonstrate a clear account of priorities for organisational development, which the project could help achieve?

6. **Value for money:** Do budgets for both research and analysis (e.g. day rates, level of output etc), and advocacy (costs for events, media etc) represent good value for money?

4.2 Preview of proposals

Kivu International will evaluate all proposals against the evaluation criteria in section 4.1. The IGC will perform a secondary review. FCDO will approve the final project selection.

4.3 Awards

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application in December 2021. Successful applicants will be issued an award letter which contains details of the funding and contractual agreements are drawn up. Successful applicants will be contracted through the IGC, on behalf of Kivu International. b

Applicants are strongly advised to give detailed and accurate information in the application form. Incorrect information on the application form, costs which do not adhere to guidelines, and negotiations with institutions regarding the IGC Terms and Conditions can all lead to contracting delays.

5. Guidelines for completing the proposal form

Applicants are asked to submit:
- Completed proposal template
- Budget
- Workplan
- CVs

5.1 Proposal template

Applicants are asked to complete the proposal template. The template provides details on the required information and prompt questions for applicants to consider. Word limits for each section are indicated in the template.

5.2 Additional attachments

In addition to a completed proposal template, applicants are asked to complete a budget template (additional guidance on this is provided in section 6) and a rough workplan, including timeline for outputs (see below). Finally, applicants will be required to submit the CVs of the core project team.

5.3 Timeline of outputs

Applicants are asked to submit a high-level workplan, which includes a timeline of outputs. In your timeline of outputs, you are asked to estimate when you expect to need your requested budget.

Providing accurate and detailed information in the application will allow us to better match grant disbursements to your needs and to match payments to major blocks of research activity. Disbursement of all funds will be conditional upon the quality review and approval of all deliverables. The successful applicant will be required to alert Kivu of any project delays or changes as soon as possible. Failure to do so may lead to payment delays and even threaten overall project success. Certain outputs on the schedule have been pre-selected as they are mandatory.

Think-tanks will be required to submit outputs over the course of the project lifecycle.

Mandatory outputs, which will help form key milestones are:

- Project influencing plan
- Research plan (including IRB approval where necessary[1])
- Research report
- Project influence report
- Final financial statement

Applicants should integrate these outputs into the draft workplan.

In addition to these milestone outputs, applicants should indicate which advocacy activities they plan to undertake and when. This should include early advocacy activities (e.g. meetings with policy makers to inform them of policy research and get inputs; blog posts on upcoming research); interim advocacy activities (e,g, blogs, articles and/or social media outputs on emerging findings; ongoing dialogue with policy makers); and post-research advocacy and dissemination (e.g. full research report; policy briefs; media engagement; events etc.). Applicants should consider what balance of insider and outsider advocacy activities to use. Examples of different types of advocacy outputs are listed in the table below.

Insider advocacy activities	Outsider advocacy activities
Informal meeting	Full report
Formal meeting/presentation	Policy brief
Networking	Press release
Ministerial memo	Articles & blogs
Use of other influential message carriers	Social media
Arranging visits and stakeholder engagement	Infographics/data visualization
Policy workshops	Radio, TV, YouTube content
	Public events (presentations, panel events, workshops)

5.4 Payment schedule

Two project payments will be made. The first payment will be disbursed on receipt and approval of the influencing strategy and research plan.

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[1] For any research involving human participants, and/or data relating to identifiable human subjects, researchers are required to complete a research ethics review and provide proof of the approval and/or exemption from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) that conducted the review.

The second and final payment will be made at project completion, when final outputs have been delivered.

6. Budget guidelines

Applicants should submit a detailed budget breakdown using a budget template in Excel. The proposed project budget will be scrutinised, and applicants should keep in mind that value for money is a key evaluation criteria.

Budgets should be submitted in Great British Pounds and include line by line information of all expected costs to be incurred on the project. Any budgetary requirements tied to the funding will be shared in the award letters. Kivu and the IGC will perform a thorough review of all project costs and budgets may be subject to negotiations.

Awards will be made in GBP and the IGC does not allow for changes to budgets post project approval to account for exchange rate fluctuations.

Institutions will be contractually bound to keep accurate and systematic accounts, files and records (which must clearly identify the basis upon which charges have been calculated), and which can be made available for audit as required.

6.1 Fees for project personnel

Fee rates should comply with the guidance and figures set out in the IGC pay matrix.

Project staff fees

Proposals can include remuneration for staff time where this is not covered from other sources.

Daily fee rates

For staff fees, please specify in the budget the daily rate for each individual claiming fees on the project and the expected number of days work. Fee rates will be assessed in line with value for money evaluation criteria.

Employment benefits

For all fees that are part of the budget, the IGC will not provide additional funds for employment benefits over and above the fee rate. Institutions are allowed to charge their own employee and employer's oncosts to the project and can include these in the daily fee rates when submitting the proposal (ensuring that these are also in line with the IGC pay matrix guidelines).

6.2 Data collection

Data collection costs refer to any costs related to the gathering of data such as conducting surveys, field work, data subscriptions, etc. It can include enumerators' salaries, subsistence, training, accommodation, transport, materials or other related costs that are essential for the successful completion of the data collection activities. All data collection costs should be justified in the budget template.

Please note that we require to know the size of the sample that you will be surveying. This is to put the cost of the survey into context so a value for money judgement can be made.

Survey staff salaries

Proposals can include salaries for field/survey staff. Please describe in the budget how many field staff will receive a salary, the number of expected days' work, and the daily rate. Please also provide a justification that explains how their time will be spend on the project.

Survey staff travel

Proposals can include travel cost such as transport, accommodation, food, etc. for the field/survey staff working on the project. Please identify for each travel cost, how many field staff this covers, the number of days/units, and daily rate or unit cost. Please also provide a justification for the travel that will be undertaken. Any travel related expenses of the research team should be included in the travel expenses for project team section of the budget.

Materials

These include the sub-headings a) tech equipment rental, b) tech equipment purchase, c) stationary, d) communications, and e) data purchase / subscriptions. Proposals can include cost of data collection tools such as rental or purchase of tech equipment such as tablets, the use of stationery items such as pens and paper etc. and communication related costs such as network provider charges. Other categories such as data purchase/subscription and incentives for data collection purposed also need to be categorized separately according to the template. Please provide a description of the item, the quantity and cost of each material, and what data collection activity will be carried out using those materials.

Training

Proposals can include costs for training for staff conducting the data collection. Please provide a description and breakdown of the training costs and clarify what the training is for. Any training for project personnel like Research Assistants should be included in the 'other' under events/dissemination section of the budget.

Other

Please use this section in the budget to specify any data collection costs for the project that are not covered by the aforementioned categories. This can include monthly subscription for specialised software, etc. Please ensure that you provide details and a justification for each of those costs.

6.3 Events & dissemination

Proposals can include event costs and other related costs to disseminate the research findings, facilitate engagement with policymakers and public advocacy. Please ensure that the event costs of catering, conference package, venue hire and marketing/advertising are provided separately with justifications for each of those costs. Capacity building costs such as training research assistants, training for policymakers etc. can come under the 'other' sub-section.

6.4 Travel expenses

Travel expenses may cover project related travel of the research team. Travel expenses for field and survey staff should be included in the data collection section of the budget.

Flights

Any contribution towards air travel (both international and domestic) should be for standard economy class travel only, across the most cost-effective route between country of location and country of destination, booked reasonably in advance of the travel dates. Business flights will not be reimbursed. If the traveller plans to travel on a ticket other than standard economy he/she must provide a standard economy class quote for the exact same itinerary. Please specify in the budget what the flight route is (to/from), the number of flights/travellers on that route, and the cost of the flight.

Other travel

For other transportation costs, please include the mode of transport, the number of travellers, and the anticipated cost.

Accommodation and subsistence

Accommodation and subsistence rates will be applied in line with the IGC's travel policy.

Miscellaneous

Travel expenses such as visa costs and vaccinations can be included as direct costs when the traveller is a non-fee earning participant on the project. Otherwise, these costs should be incorporated into the daily fee rate.

6.5 Equipment

All procurement of equipment must be undertaken in accordance with FCDO Guidance on Procurement of Goods and Environmental Procurement Policy or such other procedures as may be agreed in writing. Procurement must also achieve value for money and be conducted in a fully transparent manner; and be on the basis that the ownership in equipment shall vest in FCDO, and shall be so marked.

Kivu expects that researchers and institutions provide their own IT equipment to carry out its project activities and does not normally contribute funds for tools of trade. If there is a strong case for charging for IT equipment on this project, strong justification needs to be provided.

In the event that Kivu agrees that project funds can be spent on IT equipment such as laptops, tablets, computers, etc. this will be limited to either a case for renting the equipment or claiming only the value of the equipment for the period it will be used during this project by applying an accelerated 3-year depreciation rule (50 – 30 – 20) to the full cost of the equipment. For example, if a £400 laptop will be used for the project for 1 year, then Kivu may contribute £200 towards the purchase of that laptop. If the full cost of the equipment is charged to the project, a rationale needs to be provided in the budget template. Kivu does not guarantee funding towards cost of equipment and will determine if it represents clear value for money.

6.6 Subcontractor(s)

If you are using a third party to carry out work on the project, those costs should be included in the data collection or events/dissemination costs sections of the budget template. Please provide a breakdown of the activities and associated costs that the subcontractor will implement for the project. Please include the name of the supplier or write 'supplier TBC' if you have not yet chosen your preferred supplier. You should justify in the budget why you have chosen that particular supplier and whether you have gone through a competitive procurement process; demonstrating that this represents value for money. For any service (such as a firm hired to conduct a survey) included in the budget which amounts to £8,000 or more, researchers are encouraged to obtain competitive quotes in order to ensure value for money. For auditing purposes, the think-tank should retain all receipts from all service providers.