External Final Evaluation of the Global Research Project: Urbanization and Development: Delving Deeper into the Nexus

Terms of Reference

A. The Global Development Network

The Global Development Network is an International Public Organization that supports research in economics and social sciences in developing countries and connects researchers and development research institutes globally. Founded in 1999, GDN is headquartered in New Delhi, with offices in Cairo and Washington D.C. GDN supports researchers in developing and transition countries to generate and share high quality applied social science research to inform policy-making and advance social and economic development. GDN’s core business is building research capacity, understood as the combination of individual and organizational competences as well as institutional features needed to produce good and relevant research and to mobilize knowledge for public policy purposes. GDN works in collaboration with 11 Regional Network Partners, international donor organizations and governments, research institutes, academic institutions, think tanks and more than 12,500 individual researchers worldwide.

B. Project Description

The Global Research Project, Urbanization and Development: Delving Deeper into the Nexus provided research grants to support comparative and systematic research that looks across continents and brought together experts from Latin America and Asia respectively to address fundamental issues on urbanization and development, as well as, opportunities for researchers from these regions to engage in meaningful academic collaborations in a globally interconnected way.

C. Project Objectives

The key project objectives, as stated in the project proposal, were:

- Understanding the inter-linkages between urbanization and development from a local perspective;
- Building the research capacity of Southern researchers in the theme of urbanization through in-depth mentoring by experts in the discipline;
- Helping shape South-South research collaboration and peer learning opportunities on a variety of issues related to cities in developing countries; and
- Preparing case study reports pertaining to urbanization in Latin America and Asia with a policy focus.
The project was supported by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) under its initiative for Strengthening Research and Policy Links between Latin America and Asia. Under the project, there were five country research teams representing countries in Latin America and Asia. For more information on the teams, please click on the following link: http://gdn.int/html/page2.php?MID=3&SID=24&SSID=5&SCID=34

D. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will be carried out for the five research teams and will cover the lifespan of the project (from February 2012 to May 2013). The funding for the five research teams was provided by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The premise of the evaluation is to evaluate the extent the project has achieved its stated objectives (as stated above under Section C) and the contribution of various project components (mentioned below) to achieving the overall project objectives.

The evaluation can be split into 4 activities:

1. **The extent to which the project has met its stated objectives.** The evaluation will measure the degree to which the project has strengthened research and policy links amongst centers of research and think tanks of Latin America and Asia, has contributed to understanding the inter-linkages between urbanization and development, and the extent of capacity building of the grantees as a result of their participation in the project. While the main unit of analysis is the Principal Investigator (PI) of the participating teams, the remaining team members are also to be covered under the evaluation for examining spill-over effects.

For the purpose of the evaluation, the following key evaluation criteria have been identified:

I. **Research capacity building:** Grantees have the knowledge and skills needed to be able to excel in policy research areas related to urbanization and development

II. **Contribution to development knowledge:** Contribution of the project to understanding the inter-linkages between urbanization and development from a local perspective

III. **Outreach and Connectivity:** Grantees have the knowledge, behaviours and skills needed to network globally and connect with geographically dispersed researchers and institutions

IV. **Professional development:** Continuing professional engagement of the grantees through networks, participating in research related to urbanization and development

2. **To evaluate the contribution of project components to overall project objectives** i.e. the grant, mentoring, project management, technical workshops, networking, etc.
   a. The level of achievement of project objectives (as stated above under Section 3)

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1 Given the short period of time between the project completion and the evaluation, it may be difficult to gauge the overall impact of the project on the professional development of the grantees. However, preliminary impact on the professional development of the grantees can be captured.
b. The extent of contribution of each project component to the achievement of the overall project objectives. The evaluation must identify which components have been most effective and ineffective and also provide the reasons for the outputs and outcomes of the project.

3. Assessing the extent to which value for money has been achieved in the implementation of project activities and whether the impact of the money spent under the project have been maximized. The evaluation will also explore if the same results could have been achieved for less money and the extent of any obvious links between expenditures and key project outputs.

4. To evaluate the processes engaged in the formulation of the project, selection of grantees, the research phase and outreach phase. Where appropriate, the evaluation will also highlight unexpected results (positive or negative) and missed opportunities; and provide an analysis of how GDN has positioned itself to add value in response to building research capacity and strengthen research links and networks in the context of research on urbanization and development, present key findings, draw upon key lessons and provide a set of clear and forward – looking options leading to strategic and actionable recommendations for similar research capacity building activities.

E. Indicators

Indicators to be used may include (but not limited to):

- Number of reports produced by grantees that is conducted collaboratively with researchers in other Southern countries and mentors in the North and South,
- Change in level of grantees' subject knowledge on the theme of Urbanization and related research methods from the beginning the completion of the project (in comparison to the baseline measurement); both in terms of perceptions of grantees and mentors,
- Scores, after controlling for other factors, measuring the quality and policy relevance of analytical reports prepared by grantees (difference between baseline reports written prior to the project and the project funded research output). For this purpose, an external quality review of the research outputs has to be carried out,
- Number of reports produced by grantees on enhancing and generating new knowledge in the issues related to Urbanization and Development,
- Number and type of products (research report, working paper, policy brief, discussion paper, press release, policy memo, GDN and donor websites) used to disseminate findings of the outputs and avenues used for such dissemination,
- Number of grantees that are members of networks on theme of Urbanization and Development and related themes,
- Additional grants received during the project and professional development of grantees, and
- Frequency and quality of mentoring, technical inputs provided during the project period.
F. Methodology and Data Sources

The evaluation will employ a mixed method design to evaluate the project. Qualitative and quantitative analysis will be undertaken to assess all aspects of the project. A quantitative evaluation will also be used which may employ a before-and-after (reflexive) design. Baseline data has been gathered at the start of the project. It is expected that the evaluation team will provide full details of the evaluation design (methodology, indicators and plan for collection of data) and finalize it in discussion with GDN’s M&E unit as part of the Inception Report.

In addition, the evaluation will also produce one or two short case studies on the grantee teams by triangulating data from grantees, mentors and the project management team. The case study can highlight best practices, lessons learned and the Most Significant Change experienced by the teams as a result of the project.

Data sources will include among others:

- Project proposal and overall program budget
- Project M&E Plan
- Quality review of research papers (endline external quality review to be coordinated by the evaluation team);
- Principal Investigator Surveys
- Mentor Surveys
- Interviews with grantee teams, technical resource persons, mentors and project management team
- Baseline Data (already gathered)
  a. Baseline Analytical Reports prior to the project
  b. Baseline Principal Investigator survey results
- Knowledge products produced during and after the project
- Communication products used to disseminate the findings of the project
- GDN and donor websites
- Data related to the project that is available in the public domain

G. Composition of Evaluation Team

GDN wishes to engage either a single Principal Evaluator or a two or three member evaluation team comprising of one Principal Evaluator and two or more team members (assistants).

The Principal Evaluator will either be an evaluation expert or a senior academic with experience in the field of Urbanization and Development with:

- *(essential)* demonstrated technical expertise in evaluation methodologies and previous proven skills and experience in undertaking evaluations, preferably based on strong academic credentials
- *(essential)* a strong background and experience in evaluating research organizations and research programs aimed at building research capacity to influence policy
• (essential) excellent research and communication skills (in English) as evidenced by academic degrees (Ph.D. preferred) and a record of scholarly and policy publications
• (essential) high analytical skills with experience in conducting interviews and surveys and interpreting data and information
• (preferred) experience with research programs or research capacity building programs in developing countries and transition economies

Team members can complement or add to the expertise of the Principal Evaluator (listed above).

H. Timeline, Reporting and Budget

Timeline: The evaluation timeframe is from middle or end of August 2013 to end October 2013.

Reporting: The Evaluator will report to Savi Mull, Coordinator - Monitoring and Evaluation, GDN.

Budget: The budget for the evaluation (including consultancy, local taxes, travel, overheads, etc.) is approximately US$ 7,500.

I. Outputs and Final Report

The following written outputs will be produced:

• An Inception Report to be produced prior to undertaking any data collection activities. The report will cover the evaluation questions to be answered, a detailed design matrix, and the methodology and work plan to answer the evaluation questions. It is expected that the methodology is finalized in discussion with GDN.
• A Summary Report to be produced containing findings and recommendations of the evaluation.
• A Final Report (more detailed evaluation report). The report must cover the following sections:
  I. Title Page
  II. Table of Contents
  III. Abbreviations / acronyms page
  IV. Executive summary (maximum 3 pages)
  V. A short introduction to the project
  VI. The evaluation methodology
  VII. Findings in relation to outcomes
  VIII. Innovation and lessons learned
  IX. Case Studies
  X. Conclusions and Summary of Recommendations