GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS COMPETITION

TERMS OF REFERENCE
Consultant - Content Developer: Leadership Training Curriculum

The Global Development Network (GDN) is a public international organisation that supports high-quality, policy-oriented, social science research in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), to promote better lives. Founded in 1999, GDN is headquartered in New Delhi (India), with offices in Clermont-Ferrand (France) and Arlington (USA). Our work spans the Global South.

Background

The Global Development Awards Competition is an innovative award scheme administered by the Global Development Network (GDN), funded under the Policy and Human Resources Development Fund (PHRD) trust fund managed by the World Bank, and generously supported by the Ministry of Finance, Government of Japan. This programme has 2 categories open for interested applicants:

- Japanese Award for **Outstanding Research on Development (ORD)** - Competitive research grant programme that identifies and funds outstanding research proposals from researchers from low and middle-income countries (LMICs) that have a high potential for excellence in research and clear policy implications for addressing development issues.
- Japanese Award for **Most Innovative Development Project (MIDP)** - Competitive grant programme that supports NGOs from LMICs to recognise the innovative approach of their projects.

This competition has been running uninterruptedly since 2001, with over 100 Awards and USD 4.2m in grants. Some of the winners have gone to occupy prestigious roles in governments, academia and in global development institutions.

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It is important to note that the participants involved in GDAC come from two different backgrounds:
- Young researchers from different fields of knowledge that apply for the ORD category with research proposals addressing development issues with policy implications, and high potential for excellence
- Representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or civil society organisations (CSOs) that apply for the MIDP category with projects currently at the stage of implementation

The cohabitation of researchers and practitioners within this initiative has fed over the years GDN's reflection on the challenges of bringing research and implementation closer together, with the vision to address the needs of most marginalised communities. A recent comprehensive needs assessment of the GDAC programme revealed that while GDAC grantees possess strong technical ideas, they frequently encounter barriers during project implementation, scaling, and policy engagement. To maximise the impact and sustainability of GDAC-funded projects, GDN is launching an innovative training program to equip GDAC grantees with the tools and skills needed to navigate the complexity of working at the intersection of development research, practice and policy.

The goal of this training curriculum is to transform GDAC grantees from effective grantees and successful professionals in their own niche, into "Champions of Development".

This curriculum will provide GDAC grantees with the leadership, project management, and policy-influence skills required to successfully navigate the development ecosystem.

Objective of the Assignment

The primary objective of this consultancy is to develop the curriculum architecture, and develop ready-to-use on up to 15 modules composing the curriculum.

This content could be directly uploaded and hosted on GDN's new ERPNext (Frappe) Learning Management System (LMS). The curriculum must be modular, highly

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practical, mobile-friendly, and designed for adult learners operating in low-bandwidth LMIC contexts.

Scope of Work

The consultant will be responsible for the instructional design, drafting, and packaging of approximately 15 micro-learning modules with its content focused on maximizing research capacity, evidence translation, and project implementation excellence. The content should be grouped into two core "Leadership in Development" tracks:

1. The Leader's Mindset: Evidence and Policy Impact

Modules focused on the rigorous translation of research and project outcomes into actionable evidence for policymakers. Topics will include: understanding the evidence-to-practice and evidence-to-policy work streams; structuring research findings for policy audiences; impact-driven project development; and planning for partnership and inclusion, including the ethics of working with the most marginalised groups.

2. Managing for Impact: Operational Excellence

Modules addressing the practical challenges of grant implementation lifecycle. Topics will include: decoding and applying Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL); financial management and budgeting for impact; leading impact-driven projects; and project timeline management in complex, risky or uncertain scenarios; strategic communications.

Deliverables

The consultant will deliver the following:
- Curriculum Blueprint: A detailed syllabus outlining the modules, their specific learning objectives, and the proposed assessment format for each.
- Full Module Content (Draft & Final): The complete written content for all developed modules.

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Profile Specifications

The expert/team should possess the following expertise:

- Strong expertise in curriculum development and instructional design, specifically for digital, self-paced, and low-bandwidth Learning Management Systems (familiarity with Frappe/ERPNext or Moodle is highly desired).
- A strong understanding of the context of international development in LMICs, particularly grant lifecycles, MEL, and the operational challenges faced by early-career researchers and NGOs.
- Extensive and demonstrable expertise in adult education principles and writing concise, engaging content for non-native English speakers.

Application Procedure

Interested candidates must apply through GDN's application portal and submit a proposal that includes:

1. A cover letter demonstrating their understanding of the assignment and highlighting their expertise in digital curriculum development for LMIC audiences.
2. A proposed work plan and timeline with clear milestones.
3. A financial proposal with a detailed breakdown of costs.
4. CV(s) of the consultant(s) involved.

Deadline

The deadline for submission of demonstrations of interest is April 7, 2026.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Demonstrated expertise:** Proven track record in developing practical, low-bandwidth, digital learning modules and toolkits for adult professionals in LMICs (30%).
- **Quality of the proposed methodology and portfolio**: Clear approach to translating complex topics (e.g., MEL, policy impact, financial management) into bite-sized, engaging, LMS-ready content (e.g., for Frappe/ERPNext or Moodle), supported by strong examples of previous work (30%).

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- **Understanding of the subject matter and target audience**: Strong grasp of the specific operational challenges, leadership needs, and capacity gaps faced by early-career researchers and NGOs in the Global South (20%).
- **Feasibility**: Demonstrated capacity to strictly meet the fast-paced delivery schedule within the allocated resources (20%).

Timeline and Budget

This is a strictly time-bound, short-term consultancy. All final deliverables must be completed and submitted by June 30, 2026. A detailed timeline with specific milestones will be agreed upon with the consultant.

A maximum budget of USD 16,000 is available for this assignment.