

Global Development Awards Competition

CALL FOR EVALUATION AND STORYTELLING CONSULTANT

Capturing GDAC's Impact through Stories and Film

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

Grant-based programmes are rarely evaluated beyond their immediate or medium-term outcomes, leaving important questions about their long-term influence unanswered. Yet, for grants that aim to open doors—personally and professionally—for researchers and practitioners, understanding these trajectories is essential. The Global Development Awards Competition (GDAC) presents a unique opportunity to explore such questions and document the enduring legacies of grant-making.

By shedding light on the long-term impact of GDAC, organised for over 25 years by the Global Development Network (GDN), this initiative seeks not only to assess how the awards have shaped the lives and careers of grantees, but also to contribute to wider debates about the role of international grants as tools for building research capacity on development research, fostering innovation and fresh ideas in development implementation, and rebalancing opportunities between the Global South and the Global North.

The Competition, which is targeted to individuals or organisations in low or lower income countries (LMICs) considers the following categories:

1. **Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development (ORD)** - a competitive research grant programme that identifies and funds outstanding research proposals that have a high potential for excellence in research and clear policy implications for addressing development issues. Applicants receive expert feedback from junior and later senior researchers.

Additionally, throughout the implementation of their projects, the research teams are supported by a Scientific and Technical Advisor, who is selected based on the theme of their research.

2. **Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project (MIDP)** - a competitive grant programme that supports Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to recognise the innovative approach of their projects. The first prize winner is also eligible to compete under the Japan Social Development Fund. Additionally, throughout the implementation of their projects, the NGOs are supported by a Technical Advisor, who is selected based on the particularities of the project.
3. **Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF)** seeks to recognise innovative ideas in the implementation of development projects for vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in developing countries. Through the JSDF Award, GDN provides large grants to NGOs to support the replication and scaling-up of their development projects identified through the MIDP Award.
4. **Connector Grant (CG)** seeks to encourage the development of collaborative projects between ORD and the JSDF Winner within the same edition to support scale-up efforts with research-based evidence. The CG will support the collaborative efforts towards measuring and analysing scale-up impact, as well as to enhance the robustness of the JSDF's M&E activities.

To celebrate this milestone and inform future strategies, GDN is undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the competition's long-term impact. The quantitative analysis of this impact is being conducted in-house by GDN.

To complement this, GDN seeks an external consultant to capture high-quality qualitative evidence of the awards' influence on the professional and personal trajectories of past winners – researchers or the organisation, as well as the communities involved/targeted in the projects.

This assignment is designed to produce a compelling, narrative that highlights the human impact of the awards. The goal is to create a powerful, persuasive body of work that not only enhances the competition's visibility but also serves as a strategic

tool for securing future partnerships and aligning with their priorities. This qualitative evidence will be a crucial component in GDN's broader mission to foster development knowledge and capacity in developing countries.

Previous Evaluation Reports

- GDN Impact Study: An Evaluation of Award Winners from 2015 - 2018 - Evaluation by Aidenvironment (August 2022)
- Global Development Awards Competition - Evaluation by Aidenvironment (June 2018)
- GDNNext - A network of Laureates (March 2018)
- Ten years of the Global Development Awards (2000-2010)

Objectives of the Assignment

The primary objectives of this assessment are to:

1. Profile Competition Winners and Assess Career/Institutional Impact

Develop a comprehensive overview of the Competition winners' profiles across all editions, based on desk review and a survey (or other formats/methods) as needed.

2. Develop a framework for assessing, qualitatively, the Awards' impact

Understand the change in the grantees' professional careers, including advancement, access to further grants and funding opportunities, increased visibility and recognition (national and international), and institutional development where applicable. Furthermore, we also want to capture the impact on the communities which were targeted by the Awards.

3. Capture Qualitative Evidence

Conduct in-depth interviews with a representative sample of past GDAC winners. The focus will be on capturing their personal stories and gathering rich qualitative evidence on how winning the award changed the trajectory of their careers as researchers and practitioners and their communities.

4. Develop Impact Stories and Case Studies (to be translated to a documentary and independent short videos)

Based on the comprehensive findings from the preceding objectives, we will identify and develop compelling impact stories and detailed case studies of selected Awards grantees. These are not just showcases; they are deep dives into the mechanisms and pathways through which the Competition has generated its most significant achievements. By highlighting how the awards facilitated career growth, influenced research agendas, and contributed to policy and human impact, these stories will serve as powerful communication tools to enhance the Competition's visibility and demonstrate its unique value. They will also provide crucial qualitative evidence for understanding the dynamics of impact.

5. Strengthen Strategic Partnerships

This assessment will critically inform GDN's strategic approach to future global competitions and partnerships. Based on the qualitative findings and analysis of the competition's impact pathways, the consultant will provide guidance towards actionable recommendations for designing the next generation of GDN's initiatives. This will include a comprehensive review of relevant Government of Japan initiatives to generate strategic insights for the competition's purpose, design, management, and outreach. This review will ensure all outputs are aligned with Japanese formats and priorities, strengthening the ongoing partnership.

The assessment must consider the long-term effects of the Competition, including the lasting effects on the winners, their institutions, and the communities involved in the projects.

Scope of Work and Deliverables

To achieve the objectives outlined above, the external consultant/consulting team will undertake the following key tasks:

INCEPTION PHASE

Review existing documentation, including application guidelines, evaluation criteria, winner lists, project reports, communication materials, and other relevant documents as well as their publicly available work.

- Review comparable and distinct initiatives undertaken by the Government of Japan (pursuing the same goal, though through different means) to ensure outputs are aligned with their format, given their key role in the Competition.
- Develop an analytical framework to research the qualitative impact of winners.

- Develop a sampling approach for selecting a representative group of grantees for in-depth interviews. The sample should reflect various award categories, geographic locations, and thematic areas of research or projects.
- Collaborate with GDN's in-house team working on the quantitative analysis to ensure the qualitative work effectively complements the quantitative analysis.
- Present the inception report and methodology to GDN for review and approval.

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION AND PRODUCTION

- Conduct a series of in-depth, high-quality interviews (not necessarily all recorded) with the selected awardees. The interviews should be designed to elicit personal narratives, reflections, and anecdotal evidence of the award's impact.
- Record and edit the interviews into compelling, visually rich video segments suitable for a media-rich presentation.
- Produce written summaries of the interviews and transcribe the key quotes and stories for use in other communication materials.
- Travel to key locations may be required to film on-site with awardees and their communities, subject to a pre-approved travel plan and budget.

STORY AND CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

- Transform the collected qualitative data into a series of impactful outputs. These should be suitable for a variety of media outputs, including a documentary, shorter video clips for social media, and written content for reports and communication materials.

The stories should not only detail the outcomes but also explore the mechanisms and pathways through which the competition generated its most significant achievements.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMES

- Based on the qualitative findings, provide clear, actionable recommendations for designing the next generation of GDN's competitions.
- Develop frameworks and strategies for creating a sustainable and active network of previous winners.

REPORTING AND DISSEMINATION

- **Inception Report:** outlining the methodology, interview questions, and a selected list of interviewees for approval by GDN.
- **Developing of a documentary and video segments:** A documentary and a series of professional, high-quality video segments (with accompanying transcripts) capturing the personal impact stories of the selected awardees.
- **Written Impact Story Compilation:** A document containing well-written and compelling narrative summaries of the interviews and stories.
- **Final Report:** synthesising all findings, analysis, case studies, and provides clear, actionable recommendations for future designs of Global Competitions and Strategic Partnerships *with input from GDN before a final version*.
- **Final Presentation:** summarising the qualitative findings and showcasing the key video and written outputs. The presentation of findings and recommendations will be at an event in Japan in late 2026.

Profile of Applicants

GDN is expecting reviewers to demonstrate the following:

- **Extensive experience in high-quality qualitative research and narrative storytelling,** preferably in a journalistic context, through advanced audio-visual techniques, both in-person and remotely.
- **Proven expertise in producing video content,** including filming, interviewing, and editing for a high-end audience.
- **A strong understanding of the global development landscape** and the ability to conduct sensitive interviews with researchers and practitioners in this field.
- **Excellent analytical and writing skills** to synthesise complex qualitative information into clear, compelling narratives.
- **Experience working with international organisations** (experience with GDN or similar networks is an advantage) and a track record of producing influential, high-visibility media outputs.

Application Structure

Given the scale of this assignment, the application and review process will take place in two stages -

Concept Note stage

1. A cover letter expressing interest and summarising relevant experience – not more than 1 page.
2. A concept note (not more than 3 pages) outlining their understanding of the assignment, highlights of the proposed methodology and work plan. The applicant may use this note also to propose improvements to the structure of the assignment and to address questions to GDN on any aspect of the assignment as an Annex (not considered on the limit of the concept note).
3. Detailed background of the applying team highlighting relevant experience and expertise with examples of previous relevant work (at least 1 documentary or 2 A/V samples)
4. Contacts of three references that can support the applicant's qualifications for undertaking the review process.
5. Contact information of the leading team member (full name, full postal address, telephone number, email address, professional website) who will act as contact points with GDN, if selected.
6. Tentative Budget with brief details that align with the activities proposed.

Selected applicants will be invited for an interview and those shortlisted will move to the next stage.

Shortlisted Applicants

Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full technical proposal and budget.

1. A technical proposal with a detailed methodology and work plan
2. A detailed budget for the assignment.

Budget

The estimated budget for this assignment is in the range of **USD 45,000–70,000**, depending on the methodology, travel, and production plan proposed.

The application must include a tentative budget aligned with the concept note. Shortlisted applications will be requested a detailed budget with justifications, including but not limited to the following categories: Professional fees (lead qualitative evaluator/storyteller, videographer/editor, research assistants); Travel & fieldwork (multi-region filming and interviews); Production costs (equipment, editing, post-production for documentary and clips); Reporting and dissemination (written

report design, final presentation in Japan); Overheads (insurance, project management, communications, contingencies).

Timeline

The assignment is expected to be completed within a timeframe of up to 12 months from the contract signing date. A detailed timeline will be agreed upon with the selected consultant/consulting team. It is expected for the assignment to start in or about early November 2025.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Previous winners of the Awards competition are not eligible to apply. Applicants are required to show cumulative experience in monitoring and evaluation for development programs of at least 10 years.

The consultant will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Quality of the methodological approach (50%)
- Profile and complementarity of the team (30%)
- Experience of similar assignments (10%)
- Value for money (10%)

Application Procedure

Candidates are requested to submit their applications by sending the documents listed in "Application Structure" to jobs@gdn.int.

Reporting

All reporting will be done to João Costa, Senior Programme Manager, through the email addresses awards@gdn.int and jcosta@gdn.int (all communications to be addressed to both emails).

Regular progress updates and communication will be expected throughout the assignment.

Deadline

The deadline for submission of applications to the first stage is **October 23, 2025 (Indian Standard Time 6 PM)**.