

Terms of Reference

Research Consultant for mapping study on International Financial Institutions (IFIs)

1. About FORUM-ASIA

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) works to promote and protect human rights, including the right to development, through collaboration and cooperation among human rights organisations and defenders in Asia and beyond.

FORUM-ASIA is a network of 85 members in 23 countries across Asia. It was founded in 1991 in Manila, the Philippines. Its Secretariat was established in Bangkok, Thailand in 1992. Since then, offices have been opened in Geneva, Jakarta, and Kathmandu. FORUM-ASIA has had consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC Status) since 2004, and a consultative relationship with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) since 2017.

2. Context

International financial institutions (IFIs) play a critical role in the global economy by providing financial services and support to countries and international organisations, mostly in developing nations. They are supposed to not only provide funding for development projects, but also facilitate trade and promote economic growth. IFIs are becoming increasingly significant in addressing business and human rights issues through their lending and investment activities. They are responsible for setting standards, conducting human rights due diligence, engaging with stakeholders, and disclosing information in a transparent manner to protect and promote human rights. Without these safeguards, they run the risk of contributing to human rights violations.

In recent times, IFIs have been criticised for financing controversial projects that lead to human rights violations such as forced evictions, land grabs, and environmental degradation. These projects often take place in developing countries, where the lack of effective oversight and regulation can exacerbate the negative impact on affected communities.

However, considering the strategic importance of IFIs, they can play a significant role in strengthening human rights by creating robust policies and mechanisms for the projects they finance.

3. Purpose:

In order to explore the IFIs ecosystem, FORUM-ASIA wishes to undertake a mapping exercise with a focus on:

- Existing trends in financial lending by IFIs
- Key stakeholders
- Examples of human rights abuses linked to IFIs (with a focus on Asia)
- Potential entry points for advocacy, access to remedy and overall accountability

The research consultant is tasked with conducting this mapping study and producing a research report. The report should not be of more than 10 pages (excluding annexes). The research consultant will work under the direct supervision of the Development and Knowledge Management Programme.

4. Description of tasks and deliverables:

The consultant is to undertake the following tasks:

- To conduct desk research on existing trends in financial lending from IFIs, key stakeholders involved, examples of human rights abuses linked to IFIs (with a focus on Asia) and potential entry points for advocacy, access to remedy and overall accountability;
- To carry out interviews with key organisations working on similar issues to get a holistic understanding of existing work in the area;
- To recommend strategies for advocacy at the national, regional and international level;
- To deliver a 10-page report by the agreed upon deadline.

5. Timeframe

This research will take a maximum of 20 cumulative working days. The assignment will tentatively start on 1 March 2023 and be completed by 21 April 2023.

6. Working relationship and contractual arrangements

The consultant will be working under the overall supervision of FORUM-ASIA's Development and Knowledge Management Programme.

- FORUM-ASIA is responsible for the contractual arrangement and payment.
- The consultant is responsible for delivering all the above-mentioned tasks within the specified deadlines.
- The consultant is under the obligation of confidentiality. Any information and data disclosed during the course of the research will remain for use and distribution by FORUM-ASIA only.

7. Qualifications and requirements

- At least three years' experience conducting research on human rights issues;
- Demonstrable expertise on IFIs;

- Excellent command of spoken and written English;
- Able to work independently;
- Master's degree in relevant field (*Desirable*);
- Ability to work in a multicultural context.

8. Budget

The total remuneration for this assignment is USD 3000 all inclusive.

Interested applicants are requested to send a cover letter and CV to **applications@forum-asia.org** before **17 February 2023 midnight Bangkok Time (UTC+7)**, stating "Research Consultant on IFIs: Application Name" in the subject line. Please note that late applications will not be considered. A CV of the applicant should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

Only short-listed candidates will be invited to an interview.