



The McConnell Foundation

Helping Build Better Communities Through Philanthropy

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Lower Mekong Network Facilitator

Opening Date: 15 March 2021

Closing Date: 15 April 2021

Submission: Proposals should be sent to LMN@mccconnellfoundation.org by the closing date.

BACKGROUND

Launched in 2016, the Lower Mekong Network (LMN) brings together local and international civil-society organizations, their funders, and intermediary organizations working on ecosystem conservation, land rights, sustainable livelihoods, and related issues in the Lower Mekong Region.

The purpose of the LMN is to provide a platform on which to build common understanding; to learn, share, and discuss strategies; and to pursue common purposes and address lessons learned and common challenges. The aim is to ensure that each individual organization's position is strengthened, aiding participants to achieve their goals in the Lower Mekong region.

The LMN is a closed network. New participants are added through a clearly defined nomination process involving existing participants, and the participant list is kept confidential; this is done to protect the safety and security of each LMN participant. There are currently 54 participants with the following geographic representation:

- Cambodia (17)
- Lao PDR (17)
- Myanmar (1)
- Thailand (14)
- Vietnam (9)
- US/International (16)

The network's staff consists of two people – the LMN Facilitator (subject of this RFP) and the LMN Coordinator, who is a national of, and is based in, one of the countries of the Lower Mekong.

Additional information about the network's purpose and agreements will be shared with final candidates.

To ensure a smooth transition, there will be a handover period between the current LMN Facilitator and the new LMN Facilitator.

OBJECTIVE

The facilitator fosters network engagement and development within the LMN. A significant responsibility of the person in this role is to codesign and cofacilitate the LMN annual regional meeting.

SCOPE and DELIVERABLES

Network Development

- Research, catalyze, and design network-wide activities. Provide strategic, systems, and adaptive thinking for network development and strengthening.
- Help the network maintain appropriate processes and operations (e.g., systems of relationship-building, sharing learning, decision-making, communication, evaluation) to meet its vision and purpose. Foster learning within the network about the difference between institutional/organizational processes and network processes.
- Be attuned to the emerging needs of the network. Help network participants build relationships of trust and mutual understanding.
- Consult with network-weaving experts and communities of practice to bring a depth of experience and thought to network development.
- Design and facilitate network-wide (and subgroup) convenings as requested.
- Stay attuned to network strength and value to participants. Notice network challenges and specific problems and bring them to the Working Group and or full network.
- Design pathways for network evaluation.
- Write background and conceptual materials to advance the goals of the network. Edit and review all network documents before dissemination.

Capacity Strengthening of LMN Coordinator and Participants

- Coach and mentor participants (especially the LMN Coordinator) in design and facilitation of meetings.
- Build capacity of LMN Coordinator and network participants so that event/meeting design and facilitation can eventually be carried out without the need for a Network Facilitator.

Annual Regional Meeting (ARM)

- Bring expertise with and experience of meeting design and facilitation to a codesign, cocreative process of determining objectives and program for annual meetings.
- Mentor and coach ARM planning and facilitation team in designing and implementing the ARM, including attending and cofacilitating the meeting.

Network Map

- Facilitate ongoing changes and adaptations of the LMN online social-system map on the basis of the emerging needs and feedback of the network.¹
- Show network participants how to find information on the map.
- Coordinate with map technical experts on desired features of the map.
- Use map information to identify opportunities for further network development.

¹ The LMN online map uses the SumApp and Kumu platforms.

Liaison with the Lower Mekong Funders Group

- Update funders group on LMN progress.
- Coordinate funding for ARM and liaise between funders group and ARM implementation organization.

Maintain Strict Confidentiality

- Maintain the highest standard of confidentiality with regard to network contact list, organizations, and relevant documents.
- Ensure that contact information of participants is not shared unless consent has been given.
- Respond to confidential communications from LMN participants and provide them with anonymity when requested.
- Handle complaints and objections with understanding and confidentiality.

REQUIREMENTS / EXPECTED COMPETENCIES

- Experience in building and nurturing networks that encompass a range of diversity. Takes adaptive approach to supporting networks.
- Deep experience in group-process design and facilitation that fosters participatory learning and decision-making.
- Skills and experience at coaching others in network weaving and participatory design and facilitation skills.
- Acts as neutral facilitator for the network. Does not make decisions for the network; rather, facilitates decisions through the Working Group and the whole network per the LMN Foundation Document. Does not insert personal or organizational opinions unless specifically requested by participants of the network and clearly states that.
- Commitment to civil-society strengthening, natural-resource management and biodiversity conservation.
- Strong interpersonal abilities. Skill at adapting to and navigating multicultural settings.
- Ideally, candidate would have proficiency in online learning and mapping tools.
- Ideally, candidate would be located in one of the countries affiliated with the network (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam).
- Desired candidates are independent consultants without staff affiliation to LMN-participating organizations.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

The proposal should contain the following components:

- Consultant's approach and methodology
- Consultant's past experience in network development and facilitation, including two examples of related work and results or outcomes related to that work
- Consultant curriculum vitae
- Budget for personnel time and expenses
- For questions about the RFP, please contact LMN@mccconnellfoundation.org

PROCESS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection of consultant will be overseen by the members of the Lower Mekong Funders group. Award of contract will be made to consultant whose proposal is determined to be responsive to this RFP, who meets the requirements, and who is determined to represent the most advantage to the LMN.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Approach and methodology
- Qualifications and related experience in network development and facilitation
- Cost

CONTRACT DETAILS

- A six-month contract with possibility of extension
- 8 to 20 hours (maximum) per month
- The consultant will be paid by wire transfer in US dollars. Therefore, an account that accepts US dollars is required.
- Additional 10 to 15 days for the preparation and co-facilitation of the Annual Regional Meeting
- We aim to have the new facilitator in place by June 1, 2021

Reporting

- The consultant will work under the direction of the Lower Mekong Funders Group.
- The consultant will be contracted through and paid by The McConnell Foundation, CA, USA.
- The consultant closely collaborates with LMN Network Coordinator, a half-time staff position held within a current LMN participant organization.