

British Council Burma
Frontiers 2020
Terms of Reference & Invitation to Tender
Millennium Centre Capacity Development

1. Background

1.1 About the organization

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. Its purpose is to promote a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and people worldwide; making a positive contribution to all the countries we work with; and making a lasting difference to the UK's security, prosperity and influence. It seeks to achieve its aims by working in education, science, governance, English and the arts. In 2014-15, its programmes reached a total audience of 647 million people worldwide, up by 43 million from the previous year. The British Council also had a total turnover of £973 million, which was 13% higher than the previous year. Its income included a grant-in-aid of £155 million, £637 million from fees and income from services such as English teaching, exams administration and £164 million from contract activity, such as the management of client-funded contracts, and funding from a wide range of public and private sector partners.

The British Council was established in 1934 and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1940. It is registered as a charity in England and Wales (charity no. 209131) and Scotland (charity no. SCO37733). It is also an executive non-departmental public body, with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as its sponsoring department.

1.2 Programmatic context

The tendered assignment is a component of the British Council's Frontiers 2020 project. The objective of the project is to develop the quality of capacity and connections of key social actors in specific provincial areas of Myanmar. The outcome of the project will be a contribution towards a more inclusive and equitable development in Myanmar. The project seeks to accomplish this by

- improving the quality and quantity of services offered by a network of local community hubs across the country – the Millennium Centre network – to improve their capacity to support local development; and
- enhancing the operational capacity and effectiveness of local social actors, primarily civil society organisations and social enterprises.

The Millennium Centres are an initiative of the British Council and UK Embassies. Beginning around 2000, this network of autonomous, mainly volunteer-run, locally-owned libraries and learning centres, based in local host organisations, has grown to a membership of nineteen, and enjoys a broad geographical distribution around the country. Further information on Millennium Centres and their distribution can be found at

<https://www.britishcouncil.org.mm/english/libraries/network-millennium-centres>

Support for the Millennium Centres through Frontiers 2020 will involve a combination of technical training, network strengthening and infrastructure upgrades in up to six specific Centres, and for learning and best practice to be cascaded among other Centres.

1.3 About the assignment

The Millennium Centres are a network of libraries, community centres, language centres and self-study spaces across nineteen locations in Myanmar. The first Millennium Centres were inaugurated around 1999-2000 with the support of the UK Embassy and British Council. Since then, the network of Centres has expanded; currently there are nineteen, located in most of the key provincial towns and cities across the country. Although they have historically benefited through British Council provision of books, audio-visual materials, library management and teacher training and – in more recent years – participation in project activity, they are locally run. They are housed in host organisations well-placed to navigate local contexts, maintain the Centres' facilities and deliver appropriate services.

The longevity and local management of Millennium Centres means they enjoy organic links with local communities, and their limited but real, experience in local development and capacity building work, and because of the British Council's historical links with these Centres. They possess a reasonable level of current capacity and a progressive, inclusive orientation that, by utilizing resource developed in earlier or ongoing British Council projects and delivered by graduates from or partners involved in those programmes, can be developed to enable them to better fulfil their role as

- providers of quality, relevant training programmes to diverse communities
- a convening space for a variety of actors
- enablers of national and international links and of development opportunities for local community actors – the primary beneficiaries of the project.

Current activity in Millennium Centres targeted in Frontiers 2020 – based in Dawei, Hpa-an, Maung Mya, Loikaw, Taunggyi and Myitkyina – includes working with local CSOs and groups on the British Council's Active Citizens programme, pursuit and delivery of MC's own youth training and empowerment-related projects, mobile library services and English language teaching. Research and discussion with Millennium Centres has shown that they exhibit wide variation in, amongst other things, staff and volunteer development, monitoring and evaluation, relationships with host organisations and management and delivery capacity. This impacts on the potential of individual centres and the network to realise future ambitions in community development and education work.

In October 2018, a Millennium Centre forum and workshop held in Mandalay assembled MC leads and explored questions relating to past achievements, current conditions in and around Centres, values and principles held in common, community development needs, local governance issues and ambitions for MC operations in the future. Organisational developments, skills, resources and other practicalities required to realise these ambitions were discussed, and three key areas were identified as development priorities:

- **Skills and knowledge among Centre management for sustainable, well-governed Centres;**

- **Building connections between Centres that can benefit all;**
- **Establishing principles and procedures for a successful registered Millennium Centre association.**

Both the British Council and the Millennium Centres look forward to continuing and in many ways deepening their existing relationships. The Frontiers 2020 project works on the assumption that this will be best achieved by improving MCs' capacity for quality, autonomous, sustainable operations, their ability to manage projects to a professional standard and their continued ability to design and deliver products and services appropriate for the communities they serve and the particular identities they have built for themselves. A number of Millennium Centres have already received some funding from development partners for project implementation, and this is expected to increase in the future. This underscores the importance of achieving measurable standards in relation to governance, including accountability and transparency, financial probity and service delivery standards. In keeping with their role in the community, the Millennium Centres are in a good position to promote and disseminate these standards and approaches to CSOs and play a part in the development of civil society.

Training on its own is not, however, sufficient to ensure that quality outputs are achieved. To develop and ensure continued excellence in planning and delivery, quality standards and a capacity for continued, honest self-assessment is required. The assignment will therefore involve the deployment and, where deemed necessary, the adaptation of the CSO capability self-assessment tool developed as part of the British Council's Amatae programme. This should be used to assess the extent to which the Centres, and the Millennium Centre network as a whole, are achieving desired standards.

2. Description of the assignment

2.1 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the assignment are

- To support Frontiers 2020 with the creation of a capacity development strategy appropriate for the needs, resources and ambitions of the Millennium Centres;
- To deliver capacity development sessions that contribute to the better management and sustainability of the Millennium Centres;
- To enable Millennium Centres to better assess and address their own capabilities and delivery standards using the capability self-assessment tool;
- To develop a strategy for the effective governance, sustainability and eventual legal registration of the Millennium Centre network association.

2.2 Requested services

2.2.1 *Inception*

Inception meetings with Frontiers 2020 and other relevant British Council staff, during which the Supplier will be provided with relevant reading materials and briefings. These will conclude with the Supplier producing a workplan for the rest of the assignment.

2.2.2 Millennium Centre capacity development strategy

The Consultant is requested, in close collaboration with the Frontiers 2020 team, to develop a strategy to guide the capacity development efforts for individual Millennium Centres, and for the Millennium Centre network / association as a whole. This should include:

- Identifying common capacity development needs of the six Frontiers 2020 Millennium Centre partners;
- Prioritising capacity building needs of the six Frontiers 2020 Millennium Centre partners;
- Identifying and recommending approaches to fulfilling capacity development needs among all Millennium Centres, suitable and feasible for the variegated conditions and limited resources; this may include workshops, coaching, surgeries, placements, peer-to-peer support, exposure visits etc;
- Identifying capacity building requirements to better ensure the Millennium Centre network lasts and succeeds as a registered legal entity.

The Consultant will be expected to deliver:

- Capacity assessments of Millennium Centres and the Millennium Centre network;
- A draft capacity development strategy, presented to Frontiers 2020, MC leads (if possible) and British Council for input and refinement;
- A revised and finalised capacity development strategy.

2.2.3 Delivery of capacity development support for selected Millennium Centre leads.

In line with the emerging strategy and building on discussions with British Council and reviewed documentation, the Supplier, working closely with Frontiers 2020 project team, will deliver capacity development services for the Millennium Centres participating in Frontiers 2020 and for the broader MC network (or its representatives). In delivering these services, the Supplier is expected to use highly participatory approaches, enabling partners to maximise agency and assert ownership over the strategy. The Supplier will be mindful of

- the distribution of Millennium Centres around the country and difficulties of travel
- limited time of Millennium Centre leads and the voluntary nature of other staff
- developing plans that utilise economy of scale
- contributing to strengthening connections between Millennium Centres (and their local CSO partners), including those not directly participating in Frontiers 2020.

Identifying critical capacities to develop will be the requirement of the Supplier, but might include

- Effective organisational governance

- Strategic planning and programme management
- Effective advocacy & policy influence
- Effective M&E, using learning & evidence
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Business development and effective donor engagement
- Human resource management and development
- Better programming through research
- Stakeholder engagement and communications

2.2.4 Ongoing capabilities and delivery standard assessment using the organisational capability self-assessment tool

As part of the DFID-funded Amatae organizational development project, British Council developed the CSO capability self-assessment (OSCA) tool. Frontiers 2020 envisages the Millennium Centres, as well as partner or beneficiary CSOs, using the tool to assess progress and quality in service delivery. The Supplier will be expected to

- Incorporate use of the tool as part of trainings in 2.2.3;
- Offer advice and ideas regarding regular use of the tool to improve service delivery quality;
- Suggest improvements and innovations to make the tool more effective.

2.2.5 Support effective governance and sustainability of the Millennium Centre network association, maximising benefit of legal registration

The Millennium Centre network has expressed a strong desire to exercise their associational autonomy, expand the reach and impact of their services and improve opportunities for the sustainability of the MC network by legally registering as an association. It is envisaged that this will ensure the network's longevity and make the network an attractive beneficiary for new partnerships and donor investment.

To this end, the Supplier will

- Liaise with Millennium Centre representatives and relevant British Council staff to examine current network capacity and constraints;
- Advise on any legal or administrative matters relating to the registration and operation of the network;
- Devise, document and disseminate an advisory strategy that would support the effective governance, visibility, MEL and sustainability of the network;
- Undertake necessary any training, capacity building or other support required to effectively implement the strategy.

2.2.6 Final report

The assignment will close with a debriefing with the Frontiers 2020 to reflect on the work completed, and any next steps. The Supplier will provide an overall mission report to conclude the assignment.

The Supplier will be expected to deliver:

- A debrief with short presentation to the British Council
- Final mission report within one week of the debrief

2.3 Methods

The Supplier will define the methodology to be used in their initial proposal, with any refinements to the methodology agreed during the inception phase. In delivering the services, the Supplier will be expected to consult regularly with the Frontiers 2020 team, particularly the Project Manager and Head of Programmes. It is crucial to define and refine methods before and during the project through the input and feedback of Millennium Centres.

The Supplier will be expected to utilise participatory and adaptive approaches in their delivery of the services, which in themselves will contribute to the capacity development of the Centres.

2.4 Logistical support

The Frontiers 2020 team will provide reasonable local support to the consultant, including

- Organizational, partner and stakeholder contacts lists;
- Availability of Frontiers 2020 project team to familiarise consultant with project and project partners;
- Use of communication and, when available, meeting facilities in British Council office.

2.5 Timeframe

All services are required to be completed by May 2019.

3 Supplier specification

1. Registered local or international organisation, or consortium, able to demonstrate extensive knowledge of Myanmar civil society, especially its variation across the country;
2. An excellent track record in capacity development support and project management;
3. Local experts, or international experts proficient in Burmese language;
4. A sound knowledge of the history and context of Myanmar civil society, particularly as it relates to the operation of local non-governmental organizations.

4 Budget

A maximum total budget of **USD 50,000** is available for this work. This includes consultant daily fee rates, subsistence costs, and any further project costs incurred. Applicants should provide a detailed breakdown of costs in their commercial proposal.

5 Application

Applications to tender are invited from all qualified persons. Interested applicants should send the following documents, in English:

1. Technical proposal, specifying the approach, methodology and a timeframe of the evaluation (12 pages maximum)
2. Financial proposal, detailing daily fee rates and other associated costs.
3. CV(s) of key designated staff, and summary of the supplier's previous relevant experience.

Applications should be sent to jahtoi.aung@mm.britishcouncil.org Applications should be received no later than 23.59 Myanmar time, 16/12/2018.