

Terms of Reference for the Landlocked Developing Countries Research and Innovation Network (LLDC-RIN)

1. Background

In accordance with the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries¹, the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries (ITLLDC)² was established in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in 2009. The objective of the ITLLDC is to use top-quality research and advocacy to improve the ability of landlocked developing countries to build capacity with a view to benefiting from the international trade including WTO negotiations, with the ultimate aim of raising human development and reducing poverty.

The mandated activities of the ITLLDCs are:

- a) Producing and disseminating research and studies on trade-related topics, aid-for-trade, transport and transit, as well as databases on issues of interest to landlocked developing countries;
- b) Promoting cooperation between landlocked developing countries with a view to strengthening their analytical capacity in key areas of transit transport, infrastructure investment, aid and trade facilitation, trade negotiations, poverty reduction and economic growth;
- c) Sharing information, networking with a view to coming up with a better understanding of challenges facing landlocked developing countries;
- d) Contributing to the formulation of strategies and policies aimed at the effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action through analytical studies and research on key issues;
- e) Fostering convergent views and approaches among landlocked developing countries with respect to global economic issues of interest to landlocked developing countries, such as effects of the global economic and financial crisis, climate change and food security;
- f) Establishing continual relationships with international organizations, including the United Nations system, and development partners, with a view to mobilizing awareness of special needs of landlocked developing countries and financial and technical resources for the implementation of identified studies and research;

¹ https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=X-19&chapter=10&clang=en

² <https://land-locked.org/>

g) Making available to all landlocked developing countries, development partners and other partner research institutions, publications, research results and studies for the use and benefit of landlocked developing countries.

One of the functions of the Secretariat of the ITLLDC is to establish networks with international organizations, LLDCs experts, members of the academia as well as representatives of civil society and the private sector for purpose of facilitating the Think Tank's activities. In this connection, a Research and Innovation Network for LLDCs is established.

2. Name

The name of the Network shall be the Landlocked Developing Countries Research and Innovation Network (LLDC-RIN). Hereinafter shall be referred to as the Network.

3. Objective

The objective of the Network is to support the ITLLDC in carrying out its mandated tasks in scope of activities as specified in paragraph 4 with a focus on areas specified in paragraph 5, in a need-based and result-oriented manner as much as possible.

4. Scope of activities

The Network will carry out activities in the following areas:

- Research and analysis
- Capacity building
- Awareness-raising, policy advocacy and facilitation
- Coordination/cooperation with other research network/institutes in related works

5. Focus Areas

The Network will focus on the following areas in carrying out its activities in the context of LLDCs.

- Trade and trade facilitation
- Transit and Transport
- Digital transformation/innovation
- Social issues for poverty reduction
- Economic growth and diversification
- Infrastructure development
- Regional Integration
- Climate change

6. Membership

6.1 The Network is an open network of organizations and individuals having proven expertise, either academically or professional work-wise, in the areas as per paragraphs 4 and 5.

6.2 The membership of the Network has two categories – organizational and individual membership. There is no fee for both membership.

6.3 Organizational members

6.3.1 UN agencies, international organizations, research and academic institutions may apply for organizational membership.

6.3.2 Organizational members shall designate focal point(s) who would represent their organizations and play a role of regular communication channel for their contribution to the Network.

6.3.3 Organizational members may enter into a separate cooperation arrangement with the ITLLDC, should they intend to make a significant organization-level contribution, either financial or non-financial, to the work of the ITLLDC.

6.4 Individual members

6.4.1 Any individuals having academic and/or professional expertise in the areas as per paragraphs 4 and 5 may apply for individual membership.

6.4.2 Individual members, regardless of retaining academic and/or professional affiliations, shall be expected to contribute to the Network solely on the basis of their individual knowledge and expertise, not representing their affiliations.

6.4.3 To avoid any potential intellectual property conflicts from contribution, those individuals wishing to contribute on behalf of their affiliated organizations shall be advised to contribute through organizational membership of their affiliated organizations.

6.5 Any organizations and individuals interested in becoming a member to the Network may express interest by writing to the ITLLDC (thinktank@land-locked.org). The ITLLDC, upon receiving expression of interest and verifying their qualification, shall inform them of acceptance and provide guidance on contribution to the Network.

6.6 The ITLLDC shall regularly communicate its planned and on-going work and activities related to paragraphs 4 and 5 to members of Network, and invite them for contribution.

7. Meetings

The ITLLDC may call a meeting as frequently as it may wish but at least once a year, either virtually or in-person, to consult members on operation of the Network. The ITLLDC may call a meeting in connection with its planned activities to take advantage of substantive contribution from the members.

8. Research fellow programme

8.1 The ITLLDC may establish a Research Fellow Program to facilitate and acknowledge dedicated contributions from Network members.

8.2 The Research Fellow Program is a voluntary (pro bono) initiative that allows Network members to contribute their knowledge and expertise to the ITLLDC.

8.3 The ITLLDC may designate qualified Network members as Research Fellows upon receiving their expression of interest and verifying their academic and/or professional qualifications, as well as their potential to contribute.

8.4 Once designated, Research Fellows are expected to contribute to the ITLLDC by regularly conducting research and analysis on relevant issues and producing at least one substantive written work (such as an article, policy brief, paper, or study report) per year.

8.5 The term for Research Fellows is two years, renewable based on the fulfillment of the annual contribution requirement.

8.6 The ITLLDC will recognize the contributions of Research Fellows by creating a dedicated webpage on its website, displaying their bios and contributions.

8.7 The ITLLDC will publish the substantive written contributions of Research Fellows, provided they meet the required standards of substance and writing quality, and will disseminate them to relevant LLDC stakeholders through its network and partners.

8.8 Research Fellows may choose to work at the ITLLDC with a physical presence for an intensive and dedicated contribution period (referred to as Visiting Fellows). The duration of the visit will be mutually agreed upon by the Visiting Fellows and the ITLLDC. Visiting Fellows will be responsible for their own living expenses during their stay. The ITLLDC will provide office space and support Visiting Fellows in obtaining the necessary entry and stay permits for Mongolia, such as visas and residence permits, to the extent feasible.

9. Secretariat

The International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries (ITLLDC) shall be the secretariat of the Network.