

# Open Call: DIAL Research Consultants

## DIAL Research

DIAL's research agenda is focused on how digital transformation and data governance can be designed for the public good, i.e., fostering participation, individual agency, choice, and trust. The research team pursues this through its own independent research as well as through a broad range of collaborative efforts with a global network of digital thought leaders. The team's research products are broadly organized around two main categories:

1. *Documentation & Analysis*: Through this work, the team identifies, documents, and analysis current examples of digital transformation and data governance – producing case study-type knowledge products that seek not only to surface lessons learned and pathways to positive development impact but also to understand the risks of and constraints to digitization.
2. *Exploratory Research & Thought Leadership*: Through this work, the team identifies frontier issues that will play a formative role in how digital transformation and data governance is designed and implemented in the future. In some instances, these research processes can help DIAL investigate emerging topics and help shape an organizational perspective or policy position. In other instances, this work will be used to pose questions, bring visibility to emerging concepts, or prompt public debate.

In both cases, the goal is ultimately to produce practical guidance and actionable insights that enable policymakers, technologists, and those that support them to navigate the complex choices and inevitable trade-offs they are faced with today and those they will be faced with as technologies, business models, and consumer expectations evolve.

## Open Call for Consultants

The DIAL Research team seeks to cultivate a cadre of expert consultants interested in contributing to both its documentary and exploratory functions by leading the production of specific research products aligned with their subject-matter expertise. The purpose of this open call is to identify consultant(s) with expertise and a demonstrated track record of high-quality research related to DIAL's research priorities including but not limited to a) digital public goods, inclusive platforms, and open digital ecosystems and b) data governance and trusted data sharing.

Across these thematic priorities, the research team will be emphasizing several functional areas of expertise including but not limited to 1) legal, policy, regulatory, 2) measurement and evaluation, 3) financing, and 4) technology architecture for digital transformation.

Responsibilities of the consultant can include such activities as:

1. *Producing case studies and/or other knowledge products*: The specific expectations for each product will be determined based upon the topic, volume of existing research, DIAL's intended use, etc. This may include producing short blogs or articles to spotlight specific issues, white papers to help refine and articulate DIAL's position on an issue, and/or rigorous peer reviewed papers. The DIAL research team will work closely with the consultant at project initiation to identify the appropriate length, tone, style, etc. of each written product.
2. *Engaging DIAL staff and relevant partners on thematic discussions*: In addition to engaging with DIAL staff and relevant partners over the natural course of developing research products, consultants be asked to lead discussion/debate/presentation related to the themes covered in their research.

The specific deliverable(s) and expectations will be determined on a case-by-case basis and in close coordination between DIAL's Research Director and the consultants.

Ultimately, the goals of this work are twofold: First, the consultants will generate best-in-class research which will contribute to the body of knowledge around digital transformation and development impact. Second, the project will expand DIAL's technical expertise and raise the organizational profile as a research entity.

## Period of Performance

The period of performance will be determined based upon identified need and scope of particular assignments. Performance period for any given assignment would likely range between 15 days (for a single, brief paper) to 100 days (to support a sustained line of inquiry through various research efforts).

## Proposal Submission Requirements

In preparing submissions, respondents should briefly address each of the following areas. Additional information to support submissions is welcome but not necessary:

- **Areas of expertise:** Briefly enumerate areas of technical expertise and research interests and how those would support DIAL's thematic research priorities: a) digital public goods, inclusive platforms, and open digital ecosystems and b) data governance and trusted data sharing.
- **Relevant experience:** Briefly explain experience relative to this project and provide 2-3 examples of similar work (where possible please share links or attachments to existing research products)
- **Budget:** Provide a desired daily rate and an estimated percentage of time you would have available to commit to this project on a monthly basis [up to but not to exceed fifty percent of the consultant's time]
- **References:** Provide names and email addresses of at least two prior clients willing to discuss their experiences working with you.

## Submission Process

- Submissions will be reviewed on a rolling base
- Selected consultants will be notified of opportunities on a rolling basis and as need arises. Due to the large volume of submissions, only qualified candidates will be contacted for further discussion.
- Please send all submissions to [jdolan@digitalimpactalliance.org](mailto:jdolan@digitalimpactalliance.org) and any questions to [jdolan@digitalimpactalliance.org](mailto:jdolan@digitalimpactalliance.org). DIAL will make every effort to respond to questions and may choose to share anonymously the questions and answers from these bilateral discussions.

## Evaluation Process

DIAL will review all written proposals and may request a phone interview to address questions or provide clarification. The Research Team will use the following criteria to evaluate candidates' response and make selection decisions:

- Solid understanding of the key dynamics and trends in the relevant areas of expertise
- Appropriate level of understanding of the key stakeholders and dynamics within the ecosystem
- Can speak with authority and credibility on the key project issues
- Experience working with emerging markets
- The proposed pricing is competitively priced

## About DIAL

The Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL) is a “think, do, replicate” tank that investigates digital transformation best practice at the national, regional, and global level. DIAL combines practical research with evidence-based advocacy to identify which digital efforts work, package them as re-usable solutions, and encourage their use. DIAL is funded through a collaboration among the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United Kingdom’s Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCDO) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and hosted within the UN Foundation in Washington, D.C. In its new [Strategic Plan](#) period, 2021-2025, DIAL is providing more direct support to national governments, beginning with one country in 2021, to enable more low- and middle-income countries to embark on and accelerate “good” digital transformation and data governance.

## Intent and Disclaimer

This RFP is made with the intent to identify a consultant (or consultants) to deliver results as described in this RFP. Issuance of this RFP does not obligate DIAL to award a resulting contract and any costs incurred in preparation of a proposal is the sole responsibility of the respondent.

In submitting a proposal, the respondent certifies that information contained therein is truthful and accurate to the best of the respondent’s ability. Should any information later be found to not be in-line with this certification, DIAL reserves the right to terminate any resulting contract(s) and/or select an alternative contractor. DIAL assumes it can be confident in the Consultant’s ability to deliver the product(s) and/or service(s) proposed in response to this RFP.

If DIAL amends the RFP, copies of any such amendments will be sent to all respondents.

DIAL is partially funded by SIDA with a commitment to women and non-US owned organizations, DIAL will consider all proposals in consideration of the selection criteria but will give preference to women and non-US owned businesses.

## Contract Terms

The UN Foundation/DIAL will negotiate contract terms upon selection. A copy of the contract terms and conditions will be provided upon pre-selection. All contracts are subject to review by UN Foundation’s Business Services Budget Reporting (BSBR) team. Once a draft contract is reviewed by BSBR, DIAL’s Program Manager will contact the Vendor. The project will start upon the execution of the contract. The contract will outline terms and conditions, scope, budget, and applicable flow-down terms proscribed by the funding partners and the UN Foundation.

## Release

Consultant understands that DIAL has chosen to solicit an RFP for consulting services, and that consultant's response does not guarantee that DIAL will enter into a new contract with Consultant or continue any current contract(s) with Consultant.

Consultant agrees that DIAL may, in its sole discretion:

- Amend or cancel the RFP, in whole or in part, at any time
- Extend the deadline for submitting responses
- Determine whether a response does or does not substantially comply with the requirements of the RFP
- Waive any minor irregularity, informality or nonconformance with the provisions or procedures of the RFP
- Negotiate with all consultants UNF deems acceptable
- Issue multiple awards
- Copy the responses

This RFP is not an offer to contract. DIAL assumes no responsibility for Consultant's cost to respond to this RFP. All responses become the property of DIAL.

The Consultant, by submitting a response to this RFP, waives all right to protest or seek any legal remedies whatsoever regarding any aspect of this RFP.

Consultant represents that it has responded to the RFP with complete honesty and accuracy. If facts provided in Consultant's response change, Consultant agrees to supplement its response in writing with any deletions, additions, or changes within ten (10) days of the changes. Consultant will do this, as necessary, throughout the selection process. Consultant understands that any material misrepresentation, including omissions, may disqualify it from consideration for a contract award.

Consultant understands it may receive proprietary and confidential information from DIAL during the RFP process ("Confidential Information"). Consultant agrees to not use Confidential Information for any purpose other than its participation in the RFP process and to not reveal Confidential Information directly or indirectly to any other person, entity, or organization without the prior written consent of DIAL. Consultant further agrees to exercise all reasonable precautions to maintain the proprietary and confidential nature of Confidential Information where it can best demonstrate its value and capacity to delivery ecosystem-wide, meaningful value.

## Intellectual Property (IP) Considerations

DIAL's mission is to create public goods that enable a more efficient digital economy for everyone's common benefit. To serve this goal in partnership with other organizations and individuals, DIAL funds the development of important hardware and software, databases, computer protocols, research and useful industry standards.

Intellectual property ("IP") is at the heart of all things creative and inventive. DIAL's IP policy is shaped by our key funders' (i.e., the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) policies. DIAL's work products thus must comply with BMGF's "Open Access" policy. Further, any IP DIAL funds should be licensed for free use worldwide. This is

accomplished through open source and Creative Commons licensing and by open standards, unencumbered by restrictive copyrights and patents.

The scope of work for this project and deliverables will, as such, abide by DIAL's intellectual property (IP) policy and its donor' compliance requirements. If special considerations are required, DIAL will negotiate those on a case-by-case basis with selected vendors.

As required by its donors, DIAL is committed to "Global Access". As such, DIAL will ensure that knowledge and information gained from any project and any deliverable produced will be prompt and broadly disseminated under a creative commons license, and any funded developments will be made available at an affordable price to:

- People most in need within developing countries and /or
- In support of the U.S. educational system and public libraries, as applicable

DIAL will take into consideration consultants' intellectual property issues as part of the selection process.