



Harm Reduction International is seeking an independent research consultant for a study into drug law enforcement expenditure in Vietnam

Harm Reduction International (HRI) is a leading NGO dedicated to reducing the negative health, social and legal impacts of drug use and drug policy. We promote the rights of people who use drugs and their communities through research and advocacy to help achieve a world where drug policies and laws contribute to healthier, safer societies.

HRI is a technical partner on a 2017-2020 Global Fund regional harm reduction grant, for which the India AIDS Alliance is the principal recipient. The overall aim of the grant is to increase access to essential HIV and harm reduction services for people who inject drugs in Asia. HRI's contribution is to increase the availability of evidence through community driven studies to inform harm reduction funding advocacy.

Problem Statement: Punitive drug policies remain the dominant state response to drugs in most countries. Governments spend vast amounts of money enforcing punitive drug laws, despite a lack of evidence of their impact upon the numbers of people who buy, sell and use drugs. In some countries, this has resulted in large-scale human rights abuses - including executions for drug offences, arbitrary detention and torture and ill treatment. Punitive drug policies further perpetuate entrenched stigma towards people who use drugs, increase HIV risk, and create barriers to accessing vital HIV and harm reduction services.

Coverage of essential harm reduction services remains low in many countries, with few governments investing in their own national programmes to the extent necessary to prevent HIV among people who use drugs. HRI's research has shown that redirecting just 7.5% of the considerable funds spent on ineffective punitive drug law enforcement to harm reduction could result in a 94% drop in new HIV infections among people who inject drugs by 2030.

Critical evaluations of national drug policy spending are necessary in order to inform strategic allocation of funds towards effective, cost-effective and humane responses to drugs. However, drug law enforcement spending estimates are not often transparent, in the public domain or easy to disaggregate from wider expenditures. To inform advocacy for a shift in resources from ineffective drug law enforcement to health and harm reduction, thorough assessments of national drug law enforcement expenditures are necessary.

Scope of Work: HRI is seeking an independent consultant to carry out research and data collection on drug law enforcement expenditure in Vietnam. The successful candidate will work in close collaboration with HRI and a national civil society partner organisation. This research will provide valuable insights for national and regional



advocacy and findings will be published in English, disseminated in Asia and internationally.

The consultant will use HRI's research methodology and tools to gather information. They will undertake desk-based research and consult with relevant stakeholders including representatives from government, the criminal justice system, civil society and networks of people who use drugs.

Deliverables and timeline: The consultant will be required to submit the following:

- 1) Proposed workplan for data gathering, to include initial mapping of key information sources and relevant in-country contacts, developed in consultation with national NGO partner (*week 1*);
- 2) Quantitative data gathered using HRI's expenditure assessment tool including clear workings and references, (*week 3*);
- 3) Completed HRI survey on drug law enforcement expenditure, informed by stakeholder interviews (to be submitted alongside interview fieldnotes) (*week 3*);
- 4) Draft 5-10 page country snapshot developed in line with guidance provided by HRI and in consultation with national NGO partner (*week 4*);
- 5) Final completed 5-10 page country snapshot, incorporating feedback from HRI and national NGO partner, fully referenced, with accompanying documents shared to HRI (*week 5*).
- 6) HRI will invite the consultant to provide feedback on the research tools, guidance and process to inform their future use.

All work is to be submitted to HRI in English with full references and accompanying documents (including spending and budgetary records, published papers, websites and grey literature) saved within a dropbox or google drive (or shared directly with HRI).

Timeline: Final submission of report is expected by end November. The consultant is expected to regularly report to HRI's Sustainable Financing Asia Focal Point and to consult with the national NGO partner organisation during the consultancy. Consultant compensation will be USD 4000.



Person specification: The successful candidate will be an experienced harm reduction researcher and/or advocate with some familiarity with drug law enforcement in the national context and insight into spending information sources. Ideally they should also have awareness of funding and budgetary challenges for harm reduction. Research experience, including data-gathering via interviews and desk-based research, data analysis and report writing are essential. Membership of, or close links with national harm reduction and/or people who use drugs advocacy networks is desirable and an awareness of the role research can play in informing advocacy work is vital. Excellent written and spoken communication skills in English are essential and fluency in local language is imperative.

Place of Work: Vietnam.

How to apply: Please send a CV and a cover letter detailing your suitability for the role by Wednesday, 14th October 2020 to emily.rowe@hri.global and catherine.cook@hri.global