# TENDER – TERMS OF REFERENCE

## STRONG CITIES NETWORK:

- **Organisation:** Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD)
- **Contract type:** Tender
- **Reporting to:** SCN Head of Global Engagement
- **Location:** Bangladesh, India or Pakistan
- **Date of issue:** July 26, 2022
- **Preferred Start Date:** September 12, 2022.
- **Duration:** 12 Months, with the option of an extension
- **Tender Amount:** up to $125,000.00 for staff time and local travel; management of direct costs up to an additional $195,000 for regional activities agreed with the SCN leadership team

## About SCN

Launched at the UN General Assembly in 2015, the Strong Cities Network (SCN) is an independent global network of 150+ cities and other local governments dedicated to addressing all forms of violent extremism, hate and polarisation, while promoting a human rights-based prevention framework in which local knowledge and practice informs national, regional and international approaches.  SCN is managed by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD).

Our mission is:
- To inspire, catalyse and multiply locally-driven, non-discriminatory, human rights-based, and gender-sensitive policies and programmes that prevent and counter violent extremism, hate and polarisation that rest upon trust-based partnerships with communities;
- To enhance the practical implementation of programming and practice at a local level aimed at building social cohesion and community resilience to all forms of extremist- and hate-motivated violence;
- To connect sub-national leaders and practitioners from a range of disciplines, including community relations, social and health services, education, leaders from the youth community, economic development, religious affairs, local community leaders and civil society, to exchange lessons learned and provide tailored training through face-to-face and online exchanges; and
- To elevate the voices of mayors and other local leaders and ensure the needs and priorities of cities and other sub-national authorities are reflected in national, regional, and international conversations around how to most effectively prevent violent extremism, hate and polarisation.

## Project context

As a part of its new strategy, the SCN will be launching "Regional Hubs" across key geographies to ensure that current and prospective members' needs are adequately addressed and serviced. **The purpose of this tender is to seek an implementing partner to support SCN engagement with cities and relevant partners across South, Southeast and Central Asia by managing the Asia Regional Hub that fosters strong and effective relationships with municipalities across these regions and**

**supports their active involvement into the SCN and its activities.** The project includes a significant emphasis on engagement with current and prospective member cities and municipalities in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Maldives, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to ensure the network is driven by – and ultimately responds to – the needs and gaps that cities themselves identify in their ability to prevent violent extremism, hate and polarisation at local levels. Dedicated to regional engagement, there will nonetheless be a need for strong internal coordination with HQ colleagues, so that HQ and 'Regional Hubs' function as a cohesive Management Unit serving SCN members around the world.

This RFP is being issued by the Strong Cities Network and the Regional Hub will be part of the SCN organisational structure and expected to work seamlessly with the rest of the project team. As the SCN is managed by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), the contract will be issued by ISD.

## Scope of work

The successful bidder will lead the operationalisation and development of the Asia Regional Hub in close coordination with SCN's HQ team. The bidder will be responsible for five key lines of effort which are broken down in detail in this section. They include:

1. **Strengthen and maintain effective long-term relationships with member cities and relevant local, national and regional stakeholders to secure their active involvement into the network and its activities (20%)**
   - Engage regional membership on the refreshed global SCN strategy and functions of the new Asia Regional Hub;
   - Conduct outreach with municipalities and mayors' offices to (re)engage key points of contact in the network's activities and build strong and lasting relationships with local governments throughout the region;
   - Conduct outreach with national government and international (donor) community representatives in each country to ensure buy-in for SCN's strategy and work, and leverage already existing networks so all relevant local and national relevant stakeholders are engaged;
   - Carry out day-to-day communication with SCN members and other interested cities in the region sharing updates, engaging stakeholders in upcoming events and activities and being responsive to questions, concerns and needs of our members;
   - Update regional member/partner contact databases and ensure they feed into centralised HQ databases.
   - Manage the on-boarding of new/prospective member cities in coordination with HQ colleagues;
   - Monitor upcoming election periods and identify other political events which may necessitate handover with/induction of new relationships with a different mayoral administration, or an *ad hoc* response, working to minimise interruption to SCN activities;
   - Capture and update key monitoring and evaluation data that enables us to track quality and consistency of member engagement;
   - Provide translation and interpretation support to the SCN Management Unit, whenever necessary.

2. **Identify, develop and deliver regional SCN programming that responds to the needs of cities (30%)**

- Build and maintain a consistent profile of member needs/gaps in preventing and countering violent extremism, hate and polarisation at the city level across the region, involving conducting interviews, running focus groups, holding informal discussions and roundtables, conducting desk-based research and literature reviews and developing and disseminating survey instruments;
- Ensure that global SCN strategy is informed by needs, priorities and concerns of members in Asia, including through supporting regional strategy development processes;
- Ensure cities are given a platform to inform relevant national government and other regional stakeholders about their needs and priorities;
- Establish, promote and staff an SCN "help desk" to respond to member requests for support and expertise;
- Scale up lessons learned based on previous regional deep-dive programming that are pertinent for municipal-level policy and practice;
- Coordinate with HQ practice and policy team and other Regional Hub teams to understand which in-house modules are most relevant for individual cities in the region;
- Design, deliver and evaluate key regional engagement, training and networking activities including regional workshops, exchanges, webinars, mayoral fora, with responsibilities for technical input and content development as well as a number of complex, logistical tasks including contracting services, securing speakers and participants, arranging travel, organising and liaising with event venues and services, and budgeting/forecasting effectively;
- Ensure that South, Southeast and Central Asian city participants are represented in/engaged with SCN and relevant partner activities at global and multilateral levels beyond the region;
- Co-design and co-deliver local initiatives with municipal governments based on their needs utilising funds from the technical support budget;
- Identify and build synergies with already existing municipal or community-led programming on the city level with a view to amplify local impact;
- Disseminate capacity building opportunities led by SCN partners in the region, and globally, to members and partners.

3. **Facilitate the identification and exchange of good practices (35%)**
   - Identify the critical thematic priorities for cities across the region through general engagement and needs/gaps assessment processes;
   - Secure engagement of South, Southeast and Central Asian member cities with SCN Working Groups launched at the global level, contributing experience and expertise generated through local practice in the region as well as lessons learned and challenges;
   - Lead the delivery of regional workshops which will unite mayors with relevant national and local stakeholders on key thematic priorities determined in accordance with local needs;
   - Work with HQ team to develop policy learnings, good practice case studies and recommendations that draw on the experiences of cities in the region;
   - Explore opportunities for inter-regional best practice exchange based on shared needs and gaps together with Regional Hub teams;
   - Develop policy briefings, training manuals, guidelines, blog posts, quick-turnaround research analysis briefings for dissemination to regional cities and global membership;

- Lead the organisation and delivery of regional webinars on thematic issues that speak to the priorities of members, and ensure regional voices are represented in global-level webinars where relevant;
- Ensure active involvement of South, Southeast and Central Asian members in the International Steering Committee and global thematic working groups, working closely with HQ colleagues;
- Disseminate relevant and innovative policy briefings, training manuals, guidelines, blog posts, and quick-turnaround research analysis briefings to regional members;
- Produce annual SCN Asia report identifying member needs, progress towards implementing global SCN strategy in the region, and key policy/practice take-away that should inform discussion at global levels.

4. **Project management and financial management (15%)**
   - Contribute to weekly regional and global SCN internal team meetings;
   - Submit quarterly progress reports;
   - Support monitoring, evaluation and learning efforts at regional and, where necessary, global levels;
   - Use institutional and external project management tools to effectively manage projects and activities to time, quality and budget;
   - Ensure consistent internal coordination with regional and HQ colleagues;
   - Deliver communications outputs in coordination with HQ colleagues ensuring that work from Asia in reflected in broader SCN communications including the newsletter and blogposts on the website;
   - Support the development of communication outputs in local languages.
   - Handle financial aspects of regional SCN activities organised as part of the Asia Hub, including: three regional workshops (up to $139,000 total maximum), SCN regional technical support fund (up to $40,000 total maximum) and other direct costs (up to $16,000 total maximum);
   - Financial reporting of said funds in line with ISD and the U.S. Department of State's project guidelines, including ensuring correct procurement processes are followed for contracting goods and services.

## Programme Phases and Deliverables

| Project Activity | Delivery Dates | Milestones |
|---|---|---|
| Re(engaging) key points of contact with regional city membership, national government stakeholders, and international (donor community) to introduce new SCN strategy, functions of the Regional Hub, and upcoming opportunity, secure buy-in and ensure strong and longstanding relations. | November 2022 | • Meetings held with all 20 SCN members in South, Southeast and Central Asia.<br>• Meetings held with key national government partners in priority countries mentioned, wherever possible.<br>• Meetings held with key partners from the international donor community in the region, particularly focused on strong working relationship with US Posts. |
| Carry out continuous day-to-day communication with a view to ensure opportunities and materials are disseminated, contact databases are | Continuous | • Regular lines of communication established with the majority of SCN members in the region. |

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| updated, new members are recruited, and key monitoring and evaluations data is collected | | • SCN member and partner databases are updated bi-weekly.<br>• Application processes of prospective members are efficient and recruitment is strategic. |
| Build and maintain a consistent profile of member needs/gaps in preventing and countering violent extremism, hate and polarisation at the city level across the region | October 2022 and continuously update | • Set up key informant interviews, focus groups discussions and conduct desk-based research to update all member city profiles and draft profiles for newly recruited members.<br>• Ensure profiles are updated at least on a bi-annual level to ensure the provision of SCN services is always relevant. |
| Establish, promote and staff an SCN "help desk" to respond to member requests for support and expertise | Continuous | • Timely, relevant and quality response to members' requests.<br>• Collect and analyse feedback to improve service provision. |
| Deliver three regional workshops with at least 20 participants each on topics of key interest for cities in Asia where mayors and practitioners would have a platform to discuss crucial issues and share good practices. | November 2022; February 2023; June 2023 | • Identify and invite participants for the event.<br>• Successfully organise logistics of the event.<br>• Collaborate with SCN HQ team to design agenda and content for the workshop based on city need profiles.<br>• Jointly deliver the workshops with SCN HQ team.<br>• Follow up with workshop participants. |
| Co-design and co-deliver local initiatives with municipal governments based on their needs utilising funds from the technical support budget | July 2023 | • Successful allocation and use of a 40k Technical support budget for local initiatives based on city needs and requests.<br>• Co-design and co-deliver strategic projects in at least four cities.<br>• Evaluate local initiative impact. |
| Design, deliver and evaluate key regional engagement, training and networking activities including regional workshops, exchanges, webinars, mayoral fora, with responsibilities for technical input and content development as well as a number of complex, logistical tasks including contracting services, securing speakers and participants, arranging travel, organising and liaising with event venues and services, and budgeting/forecasting effectively; | Continuous | • Plan and deliver two regional workshops<br>• Produce regional workshop summary and recommendations papers.<br>• Plan and deliver regular "regional" webinars based on need/gaps assessment.<br>• Ensure Asian city officials and local practitioners are engaged in global webinars.<br>• Develop policy briefings, training manuals, guidelines, blog posts, quick-turnaround research analysis briefings for dissemination to regional cities and global membership. |
| Involvement of city policymakers and practitioners from Asia in dedicated SCN-led, as well as attending events and engagements with other relevant institutions and partners | Continuous | • Ensure Asian city official and local practitioner involvement in UNGA SCN or partners-led side-events.<br>• Ensure Asian city officials take active part in the International Steering Committee and thematic groups.<br>• Ensure Asian city officials take part in other global online and offline SCN-led events. |

| | | • Ensure Asian city official and local practitioner involvement in relevant conferences, workshops and trainings convened by partners regionally and globally. |
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## What does success look like?

The successful bidder will ensure an active and engaged membership in Asia, driving forward a regional programme of work that is driven by and responds to the needs of its members. Working closely with HQ and the wider SCN Management Unit, the implementing partner will ensure that regional needs, priorities and good practices are reflected in global SCN operations and activities and that Asian members benefit from global connections, networking and learnings. Beyond furthering city-to-city engagement and supporting local capacity building and regional coordination, the successful bidder will work closely with HQ to raise the profile and voices of mayors and cities in national and international fora and driving forward new channels for cooperation.

Initially running for 12 months, the SCN intends to turn the SCN Hubs into long-term regional structures. Based on satisfactory delivery of programme activities, it is envisaged that ISD and the successful bidder may explore future joint programming and development opportunities to ensure the Asia Hub is able to continue delivering its key functions and potentially carry out in-depth programmes with cities in the region.

## Selection Criteria

### Eligibility
- Legally registered organisation in Bangladesh, India or Pakistan with the ability to conduct work in South, Southeast and Central Asia and demonstrated experience working in the regions;
- Bidder must hold, or commit to securing, all the appropriate permits to conduct activities in the region, in line with the Scope of Work;
- Physical presence (office) in one of the countries in South Asia;
- For-profit organisations are eligible to apply, but are restricted to the same indirect cost limits as non-profit organisations and may not charge a fee;
- All applicants will be subject to ISD's due diligence checks and will be required to demonstrate evidence of robust policies for fraud prevention, anti-corruption and safeguarding

### Essential
- Experience of developing partnerships with local and national government stakeholders and civil society organisations;
- Experience and active engagement in local-level extremism, hate and polarisation prevention in the regions;
- Knowledge of regional, national and local P/CVE frameworks, strategies and structures;
- Demonstrable expertise and capacity to work in at least one of the relevant local languages including Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi and others as relevant to South Asia.
- Strong project management skills, as evidenced by the successful delivery of projects and grants.

- Experience in managing grants worth between $100,000.00 – $350,000.00
- Strong training, facilitation and train-the-trainer expertise.

### Desirable
- Bidder has experience working with US Government funding and understanding of USG grant and procurement guidelines;
- Bidder has capacity to engage in Indonesian, Russian and other languages relevant for South, Southeast and Central Asia;
- Knowledge of existing SCN capacity building engagement in South, Southeast and Central Asia
- Already existing relationships with local governments and civil society organisations in the three regions.

## Evaluation Criteria

Bids will be evaluated and scored by a panel of SCN's senior programme and operations staff, in line with the below selection criteria and weighting.

### Quality of Personnel (25%)
The SCN puts a large significance on the capacity of the candidate organisation to deliver the work outlined above. In addition to the essential and desirable requirements listed, the SCN expects the applicant to allocate 100% of time of three staff members, or equivalent, to service the key functions of the Asia Regional Hub. The SCN envisions that the three staff position wound include:

- **Head of Regional Hub**: this role will be responsible for overall management of the Regional Hub, overseeing its engagement with cities, partners, the SCN Management Unit's Central Team, and providing strategic and managerial support for delivery of activities like the regional workshops and needs assessments.
- **Programmes Lead:** this role will build relationships with new member cities and strengthen relationships with existing ones through sustained engagement and communication. The Programmes Lead will support with practical deployment of the technical support fund, populate regional pages of the SCN website, and support the Hub Lead and Network Officer with delivery of large-scale activities like the regional workshops.
- **Network Officer:** this role will provide outreach and engagement support to the Head of Regional Hub, supporting with identifying and on-boarding new city members. The Network Officer will also support with collecting data for the capacity and needs assessments, and will provide logistical support for the delivery of regional activities and the involvement of key cities in the region in global SCN and multilateral partner events.

The SCN requests the bidder to provide three CVs, including contracts of already existing staff or letters of intent. However, the SCN is open to proposals with different staffing allocations that equally reflect the total effort of contribution mentioned at the start of this paragraph.

### Organisational Capacity (15%)
In assessing applications, the SCN expects the applicants to have robust procurement and financial management processes. As a part of this, the SCN expects the organisation to set up processes that will make it compliant with USG regulations such as following the Fly America Act, and already set foreign per diem rates. Other policies and guidance on issues such as human rights, gender and

diversity, capacity development, conflict sensitive approaches and do no harm principles are also considered as essential and need to be submitted.

## Relevant Institutional Experience (10%)

The SCN will consider the 'added value' offer of the applicant involved in the project, especially where it develops networks and capacities or valuable collaborations. The successful candidate is expected to work closely with other stakeholders, in particular local governments, but also national government, international community and civil society stakeholders in the region. Candidates are asked to list a total three relevant projects to demonstrate the breath of their network and relevant experience which will allow them to successfully carry out the tasks outlined in this tender. Please include the name of the project, value of the award, granting authority (donor), implementation period and a short description of the project. Do not include projects that have been completed more than three years ago.

## Strategic Approach and Workplan (20%)

The SCN expects organisations to provide a clear and detailed strategic plan for effective city engagement in South and Southeast Asia. This should include views on how the SCN through its Regional Hub should strengthen its regional work to ensure it is viewed as a credible partner for local governments in facilitating networking and sharing of good practices among cities, providing tailored support and elevating their voices in national, regional and multilateral fora. Moreover, the applicant should have a well-developed, realistic workplan to execute the strategic vision, referencing key delivery outputs and milestones mentioned above. Applicants should set out the challenges risks they anticipate in relation to this potential award, and the steps they will take to mitigate these.

## Budget (20%)

Realistic and responsible budgets are an important part of our assessment of grants. Where existing investment can be unlocked or additional funding or in-kind support can be acquired to support project activities, this should be highlighted.

Organisations should provide their latest bank statements and latest audited accounts to demonstrate their capability to manage grants of between $100,000 to $350,000. Descriptions of individual transactions may be redacted for reasons of confidentiality or security, at the applicants' discretion.

For this grant, the SCN has a maximum budget of $125,000.00 for staffing and local travel costs, with additional direct costs for regional activities of up to $195,000 which are expected to be managed by the successful applicant. Specifically, this includes the financial management of three regional workshops (up to $139,000 total maximum), the SCN regional technical support fund (up to $40,000 total maximum), and other direct costs (up to $16,000 total maximum). At this point we ask organisations to submit a budget where they will **provide budgets only for staffing and local travel costs** (up to $125,000.00) without breakdown of any direct costs based on the abovementioned ceiling. The exact amount of direct costs will be determined in close coordination with HQ in the course of the project, in line with pre-existing budget lines for specific activities. However, organisations are asked to demonstrate their ability to manage budgets up to $320,000, in order to give confidence that the organisation has the capability to manage such a level of funding if required to.

Applicants are asked to set out how they will ensure that funds provided by the SCN/ISD will be managed responsibly and transparently, with full accountability to SCN/ISD and our donors as required. Applicants should set out their policies for avoiding financial misconduct, fraud or corruption in relation to this potential award from the SCN.

## Security and Duty of Care (10%)

Applicants should demonstrate that they take ethics and security risks seriously, and consider the risks of projects professionally and proportionately. Organisations are asked to detail their approach to security and duty of care for staff, contractors and beneficiaries/clients. As organisations will have a role in supporting SCN/ISD in managing security and duty of care for their staff and contractors on official business in areas supported by the Hub, applicants should also indicate how they will support ISD to understand security risks in those locations.

## Application process

### Timetable

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| 26th July 2020 | Request for proposals published |
| 7th August 2020 | Deadline for registering any queries on the RFP, to be submitted to tenders@isdglobal.org by 23:59, UK time |
| 10th August 2020 | The SCN to share responses to queries with bidders |
| 29th August 2020 | Applicants submit complete proposal package to tenders@isdglobal.org by 23:59, UK time |
| 5th September 2020 | Preferred bidder to be notified, start of due diligence checks. ISD reserves the right to conduct interviews with potential successful candidates dependent on need |
| 12th September 2020 | Start of contract |

### Submission guidelines

All bidders must submit the following documents. See the enclosed template for further details.

**Technical Response (to be sent in a separate file to the Financial Response) with the following sections:**
- Executive Summary
- Organisational Capacity
    - Response to the Scope of Work
    - Financial Management Capacities (this is fine to be separate from the Financial Proposal)
    - Organisational Processes, Policies and Guidelines
- Relevant Institutional Experience (I suggest asking for 3 examples, not 3-5)
- Strategic Approach and Workplan
    - Strategic Approach
    - Workplan
    - Risks
- Added Value and Sustainability
- Security and Duty of Care
- Presentation of Key Personnel (Quality of Personnel)- 3 CVs responding to the key positions outlined in the RFP.

- Any other relevant documents (Optional)

**Financial Response (to be sent in a separate file to the Technical Response) with the following sections:**
- Budget in the provided template
- Budget narrative
- Copy of the organisation's registration documents
- Copy of latest company accounts

Proposals must be submitted via email to tenders@isdglobal.org by 23:59 BST **on Monday 29th August 2022.** Subject of the email must be **SCN Asia Regional Hub tender.**

For any questions please contact tenders@isdglobal.org.
*ISD reserves the right to interview and appoint applicants prior to the closing date of this vacancy.*