

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title of Assignment: Research Methodology Training Workshop -
Social Research Methods for High-Impact Publications in International Relations and Foreign
Policy

Project title: Building Institutional Capacity for Sustainable Futures: A Pathway to
Competitiveness in Central Asia and Beyond

1. BACKGROUND

In 2024, the Institute for Advanced International Studies at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy was awarded a Public Research Institutes Modernization Program (PRIM) grant by the Project Implementation Unit of the “Modernizing Uzbekistan National Innovation System (MUNIS)” project under the Agency for Innovative Development. The awarded grant amount is \$195,600 and its implementation period from December 2024 to December 2025. Within the given grant, the title of the IAIS institutional modernization plan is “Building Institutional Capacity for Sustainable Futures: A Pathway to Competitiveness in Central Asia and Beyond”.

MUNIS PRIM grant program is envisaged under the Subcomponent 1.3 - Public Research Institutes Modernization of the MUNIS Project. The MUNIS Project Development Objective (PDO) aims to enable the development of a market-oriented national innovation system in Uzbekistan. Long-term priorities of national science and innovation sector transformation are defined in the Concept of Uzbekistan Science Development until 2030 (Presidential Decree PF-6097, 29.10.2020).

This strategic concept defined goals and targets for transformation of public management of science, improving science funding mechanisms, diversification of sources for financing, modernization of research infrastructure, and developing data and information systems. In particular, the Concept indicates a comprehensive approach to the transformation of PRIs and envisages scientific infrastructure update, as well as cooperation of institutions with enterprises in the real sector of economy, creation of innovative enterprises, cooperation between various actors of the national innovation infrastructure (institutes, foundations, laboratories, scientific and technical parks, etc.), improving management, planning and forecasting of PRIs, better community outreach of PRIs to increase awareness of society on societal and economic benefits of scientific programs.

Through this grant, IAIS seeks to strengthen its institutional capacity to tackle the interconnected challenges of sustainable development, water and climate diplomacy, energy diplomacy, international trade, and related areas. This project is aligned with IAIS’s strategic vision to establish itself as a regional leader in research, policy dialogue, and practical solutions, enhancing its competitiveness while shaping global policy frameworks.

Central Asia faces pressing challenges at the nexus of environmental sustainability, international trade, and energy security. With Uzbekistan’s ongoing efforts to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the region’s struggles with climate change, water scarcity, and energy transition, there is a critical need for rigorous research and informed policy guidance. IAIS, leveraging its expanding centers and interdisciplinary expertise, is well-positioned to provide such leadership but requires further capacity building to achieve its full potential. This project aims to enhance IAIS’s ability to deliver high-impact research and policy solutions that support sustainable development and regional growth.

The project has three core objectives:

- 1. Upgrading Research Infrastructure and Data Exchange:** Modernize IAIS’s digital platforms to support diverse research topics by developing an internal data management system and securing access to external databases.
- 2. Promoting Strategic Collaboration:** Strengthen partnerships with industries, international organizations, and research institutions to foster joint research and knowledge exchange.
- 3. Building Institutional Capacity:** Enhance IAIS’s capabilities through staff training in research methods, resource mobilization, leadership development, and governance, ensuring long-term policy influence and research excellence.

2. ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVE

This TOR is to hire an individual consultant that will support the implementation of the research training program under Pillar B – Capacity Building. The work outlined below shall be carried out by the Consultant on-site.

Scope and content of services

The Consultant shall organize and conduct the workshop in line with the following parameters and objectives. The Research Methodology Training Workshop is an intensive program designed to enhance the research capacity of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers in the field of international relations and foreign policy. The workshop will focus on advanced social research methods essential for producing high-impact publications in top-tier academic journals. This initiative aims to strengthen participants' ability to conduct rigorous and policy-relevant research, improving their contributions to global academic and policy discourses.

The objectives for consultant’s activities include the following:

- To develop and implement a structured training program on social research methodologies applicable to international relations and foreign policy studies.
- To equip participants with advanced research skills necessary for publishing in high-impact factor journals.
- To provide practical guidance on developing research questions, designing studies, and using qualitative and quantitative methods effectively.
- To foster a network of researchers committed to advancing scholarly discourse in international relations and foreign policy.

3. ACTIVITIES

The services provided by the consultant include the following activities.

Activity	Specific Actions or Tasks
Development of Training Materials	Creation of comprehensive guides, presentations, handouts, and digital resources covering social research methodologies, publication strategies, and journal selection.
Conducting Training Sessions	Delivery of in-person workshop covering theoretical frameworks, research design, data collection methods (qualitative and

	quantitative), content analysis, case studies, and comparative research techniques.
Development of Research Toolkits	Compilation of explanation of toolkits including research databases, statistical and qualitative analysis software (e.g., NVivo), templates for research articles, and guidelines for academic writing.
Hands-on Research Practice	Participants develop research proposals, conduct pilot studies, and receive peer and expert feedback on their work.
Establishment of Mentorship Programs	Creation of mentorship program connecting participants with experienced researchers and journal editors for ongoing guidance and support.

4. OUTPUTS

The expected and tangible outcomes of the activities of the consultant include the following:

Output	Tangible Products or Deliverables
Development of Training Programs	At least two specialized training modules on qualitative research methods in international relations and foreign policy.
Training Materials Prepared	Training materials such as presentations, handouts, research guides, and digital resources created and distributed.
Training Participation	At least 80% of IAS research members, with a 75% completion rate.
Research Assignments Completed	Participants complete a research paper draft and receive structured feedback.
Research Proposal Development	At least 50% of participants develop and submit a research proposal for consideration in an academic journal.

Indicative Short- and Medium-Term Results

- Increased submission rates of research papers to high-impact journals in international relations and foreign policy.
- Participants applying advanced research methodologies in their academic and policy work.
- Strengthened research collaborations and networking among scholars and institutions.
- Improved research visibility and citation impact for trained researchers.

Outcomes

- **Enhanced Research Quality and Impact:** Participants produce more rigorous and policy-relevant research, leading to higher acceptance rates in top-tier journals.
- **Increased Academic and Policy Contributions:** Research findings contribute to global discussions on international relations and foreign policy, influencing decision-making processes.
- **Greater Research Funding and Collaboration:** Enhanced research capabilities improve competitiveness in securing grants and international partnerships.

Place of the workshop within the scheme of modernization of IAS

The Research Methodology Training Workshop is a strategic initiative to elevate the quality of social research in international relations and foreign policy. By equipping IAS researchers with essential methodological skills and publication strategies, this workshop aims to strengthen academic contributions, foster impactful scholarship, and enhance global policy engagement.

5. DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The Contract period is 2 months. Depending on the results of the Program implementation, the period may be extended on the basis of additional agreement between parties.

6. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

The table below shows the key deliverables of the Consultant's work.

Expected Deliverables and Timeline

Deliverable	Estimated (from contract date)	Deadline signing Expected Results
Development and submission of the Inception Report	1 week	Submitted Inception Report detailing the training plan and methodology
Development of training materials	2 weeks	Comprehensive training guides, presentations, handouts, and digital resources
Conduct training sessions	3 weeks	Three-day in-person workshop completed
Development of research toolkits	3 weeks	Compilation of software tools, templates, and research guidelines
Hands-on research practice with participants	4 weeks	At least 50% of participants develop research proposals
Establishment of mentorship program	4 weeks	Ongoing mentorship for workshop participants
Submission of final report	4 weeks	Summary of training outcomes, participant feedback, and recommendations

7. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Report	Deliverable	Deadline	Payment (% of total contract amount)
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Inception Report	Submission of workshop implementation plan	1 week	15%
Mid-Term Report	Completion of training sessions and development of research toolkits	3 weeks	35%
Final Report	Research practice outcomes, mentorship establishment, and overall workshop impact	4 weeks	50%

8. REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Consultant reports to and coordinates its work with IAS.

The Consultant submits to the Client a report and an act of work performed, on the basis of which payment is made after the services rendered.

Payments will be done based on approval of the WB/IAS project to submitted reports (deliverables), signed Act of Execution (both sides) and Invoice.

9. CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS

Consultant or Consultant company needs to be able to demonstrate or subcontract the consultant with demonstrated experience and skills as the following:

- PhD in International Relations, Political Science, or a related field.
- Professorship in International Relations/Senior roles in the academic research institutions
- Fluency in academic writing in English, Russian and Uzbek languages which are instrumental for the delivery of the workshop.
- Proven track record of 20 years in research publications in high-impact journals.
- Proven track record of publishing English language manuscripts over the last 10 years
- Consistent track record of publishing in high-impact factor journals included in the SCOPUS and WEB of SCIENCE Data bases in the last 5 years with at least 10 papers over the given period of time.
- Track record of conducting research training workshops for international organizations and development agencies in the field of social research, international relations and foreign policy.
- Proficiency in qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.
- Strong mentorship and academic writing guidance skills.

The following range of scores should be defined considering three sub-criteria and corresponding percentage weights:

- Adequacy and quality of the proposed development methodology with a description of the system design of the entire project and an action plan in accordance with the terms of reference – 30 points.
- Relevant experience and qualification of key personnel – 70 points.

Interested candidates should submit their proposals and details of the consultants to include the following information:

- Detailed information and publication list of consultants and other relevant experience.
- Proposal including methodology, timeline, and approach to training.
- Sample of previous training materials or research publications.

The contract will be awarded based on expertise, experience, and alignment with IAS's objectives for research capacity building.

10. APPLICATION PROCESS AND QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

The consultant will be selected in accordance with the applicant's qualifications as per the requirements highlighted in point 9. Interested candidates should submit their CVs outlining their experience and providing the list of publications to the following email address: info@iais.uz, for the attention of Mr Shakhboz Akhmedov;

or

to the following office address: the Institute for Advanced International Studies under the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, 54 Mustaqillik Avenue, Tashkent 100007, Uzbekistan, for the attention of Mr Shakhboz Akhmedov.