

Terms of Reference
ECID Ethics Panel



1. Background

International NGOs do not generally have ethics panels or processes as universities do. Similarly, many research institutes outside universities do not have access to research ethics committees. This absence jeopardises the quality, accountability and rigour of evidence and research. It also prevents practitioners and non-academic researchers from publishing, given that many academic publications often require ethical assessments.

The Learning and Research Working Group in the *Evidence and Collaboration for Inclusive Development* (ECID) programme works to create and strengthen the quality of research led by practitioners, and, overall, to eliminate knowledge inequalities in all their forms. In December 2020, the Learning and Research Working Group programme agreed to set up an ECID's Ethics Panel to address this situation.

2. Objectives

The Panel will provide:

- **Ethical and research leadership**, ensuring the research undertaken in ECID in Myanmar, Nigeria, the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe is carried out ethically, with rigour and accountability, and adherence to principles of Do No Harm that are appropriate to the context.
- **Programme alignment**, ensuring the research aligns with the main ECID objectives, adding value to the programme and creating outputs that engage with the target populations.

ECID already has an ethics framework that has been rolled out in Myanmar, Nigeria and Zimbabwe and covers the areas of risk assessment, responsible data management, informed consent, protection and safeguarding, conflict sensitivity, and vulnerable populations. The Panel should base their review on this ethics framework. There is also an additional resource on “research ethics during COVID-19”. Both documents can be found on this [link](#).

3. Duration

The Panel will run until the end of 31 December 2021. The Terms of Reference may be extended until the end of the ECID programme in October 2022.

4. Members

The Panel will include **research** and **programme representatives**.

Research representatives will have familiarity with, and capacity, to assess an ethics and research process. Ideally, they should be hybrid professionals, who have worked both as academics and practitioners. No specific thematic specialisation is required, although knowledge of social exclusion and accountable governance would be ideal, given ECID's thematic focus (see Annex 1 for ECID objectives and website).

Programme representatives should be part of the ECID programme and be familiar with ECID's programme design and objectives.

Members should all be experienced professionals.

The Panel will consist of four members. The Panel will have two reserve members, who will replace main members in the event of a notified absence:

- **1 research representative from Myanmar** – Dr Patrick Meehan, Myanmar expert, SOAS University, London, UK
- **1 research representative from Nigeria** – Dr Jimoh Amzat, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Department of Sociology, Sokoto.
- **1 research representative from Zimbabwe** – Mr Wonder Phiri, Director for The Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation (CCMT)
- **1 research representative from the United Kingdom (reserve)** – Professor Giles Mohan, Chair of International Development & Director of SRA International Development and Inclusive Innovation Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, The Open University (ECID partner)
- **1 programme representative from ECID** – Ms Felicia Wong, Head of Head: Innovation, Frontline AIDS (ECID partner)
- **1 programme representative from ECID (reserve)** – Ms Dinah Musindarwezo, Director of Policy and Communications, Womankind (ECID partner)

Research partners in each country – the Kachinland Research Centre (KRC) in Myanmar, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in Nigeria, the Open University in the UK, and the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT) in Zimbabwe – will nominate the four research representatives. ECID management will nominate the two programme representatives.

The Panel should be diverse and representative (ethnicity, gender, disability, Global South). The initial candidates nominated may be rejected if this is not the case, until this is achieved.

The Chair will be decided by the Panel once it has been set up, in agreement with ECID's management and ECID's Research and Learning Coordinator. The Chair will represent the Panel in the communications with ECID staff and research partners.

5. Tasks

The role of The Panel will take a **maximum of 25 hours** for the whole of 2021, and consist of three key moments in the research process (see Annex 2 for the full timeline) – the approval of an ethics plan (end of January 2021); presentation of preliminary findings (July 2021); and an assessment of the implementation of the ethics plan, as described in the research reports (September 2021).

While the main task of The Panel will focus on four to five research pieces, members may be requested to assess other one-off evidence generating activities in ECID that are sensitive and require an ethical review.

TIME	TASKS	ESTIMATED HOURS
End January	Feedback in online presentation of research proposals <i>ECID research partners will present ethics plans as part of their research proposals in an online meeting. The Panel will provide verbal feedback to the proposals taking into account the ethics plan.</i>	2 hours
July	Feedback in online presentation of preliminary findings <i>ECID research partners will present their preliminary findings in an online meeting. The Panel will provide verbal feedback to the findings, with particular attention to ethics.</i>	2 hours
December	Written feedback to research reports <i>ECID research partners will share their draft research reports by email. The Panel will provide written feedback to the reports, with particular attention to ethics. Verbal feedback can be given instead of written feedback, previous agreement of the interested parts.</i>	6 hours
Ongoing	Other one-off ECID data and research activities that are sensitive in their nature and require an ethical review.	12 hours
Ongoing	Email correspondence for confirmation of meetings and timeline, etc.	3 hours

6. Meetings

Meetings will be chaired by a member of the Panel and notes will be taken by ECID’s Research and Learning coordinator. ECID’s Research and Learning coordinator will also be responsible for the planning and confirmation of the two meetings a week before they take place, as well as the dissemination and sharing of comments and decisions with the relevant audiences, mainly through ECID’s website.

Meetings will be held via videoconferencing (Skype; MS Teams) and will last for a maximum of 2 hours. They will consist of 15-minute presentations by research partners (60 minutes) and feedback comments by members of The Panel (60 minutes, divided per presentation).

7. Compensation

Members of The Panel will be remunerated for their time. Those members of The Panel who are already ECID staff can discount the hours spent in their Ethics Panel role as part of their overall ECID participation/time. Those members who are not ECID staff will receive a financial compensation.

ANNEX 1 – ECID OBJECTIVES AND WEBSITE

ECID research objectives are aligned with ECID’s overall programmatic objectives, which are:

1. Improve access to services for marginalised people
2. Improve participation in decision-making processes for marginalised people
3. Increase the effectiveness of civil society and other actors at all levels to address the priorities of marginalised people
4. Create greater accountability and responsiveness among power holders to act on the priorities of marginalised people, from the local to global level.

ECID’s website is <https://evidenceforinclusion.org/>

ANNEX 2 – TIMELINE OF THE ECID RESEARCH PROCESS

End January	Present research proposals to ECID, REL-CA, DPP-OU	Ethics panel
February	Share first results from literature reviews	
March	Share templates/questions for survey and interviews	
April-May	Share first results from data collection	
June	Share preliminary findings (internal)	
July	Present preliminary findings (public)	Ethics panel
November	Present an Open University International Development and Innovation research seminar	

December	Written feedback to research reports	Ethics panel
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