

**Consultant:** The influence of contractors in large-scale infrastructural developments in Kenya (fixed term)

Department of Geography at University of Cambridge is seeking to hire a consultant to conduct a fixed-term consultancy for a research project that is a part of the Development Corridors Partnership project funded by the UK Research Council's Global Challenges Research Fund.

## **The Project**

Funded by the [UK Research Council's Global Challenges Research Fund](#), the [Development Corridors Partnership](#) began in October 2017 and will end in December 2021. The Partnership will build capacity to address concerns about development corridors by encouraging scientific collaboration and stakeholder engagement in key issues of corridor planning and management. This will include applying the best tools and analyses (and developing new ones if necessary), and communicating recommendations to all stakeholders more effectively.

## **Background**

In recent decade imaginaries and practices of large-scale infrastructural developments have captured the mainstream development discourse in a number of African countries. Megaprojects that consist of transport networks – road, railway, port, and pipeline infrastructures – aim to connect sites of production (often landlocked areas), economic hubs (often urban and coastal processing zones), and global markets. In the mainstream development policy discourse, these corridors have been framed as central in generating economies of scale sufficient to attract the sort of private sector interest needed to fuel growth, increase exports and, ultimately, spur poverty alleviation. However, recent geographical research, focusing on how megaprojects interact with landscapes of host countries, has highlighted social and political tensions that emerge as a result of infrastructural developments associated with these infrastructural investments. These analyses particularly focus on civil society mobilisation, local-level social and economic impacts and tensions, or broader national political dynamics that emerge out of these infrastructural development processes. In this context, however, the role of private contractors in shaping the design and implementation of large-scale infrastructural developments and their broader social and political effects remain understudied; therefore, the influence of contractors in determining the outcomes of large-scale development projects on the ground merits further empirical research and analytical reflection.

## **Purpose**

This short-term consultancy project will aim to understand these dynamics of contractor influence in determining the outcomes of large-scale infrastructural projects through the case study of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) in Kenya. Funded with financial loans from the Exim Bank of China and implemented by the China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), the project, whose construction started in 2016, now connects the port of Mombasa, the biggest port in Kenya, with the capital city of Nairobi, and continues further west to Naivasha. The SGR is a flagship project of the Kenya's national development Vision 2030 that, focusing on mega infrastructural projects, aims to transform Kenya into a newly-industrialised country and

overcome its old aid dependencies and achieve a “middle-income status” in less than two decades.

In this context the research consultancy will aim to understand the role of contractors in implementing large-scale development projects, their influence on design, implementation, and social outcomes on the ground. It will particularly aim to understand the following four dynamics: (1) what are the practical mechanisms through which decisions regarding the design and implementation of the SGR are made; (2) how are national regulatory frameworks (Social and Environmental Impact Assessments) or local government authorities consulted in the process of the SGR implementation; (3) how are local communities included or consulted in the SGR implementation processes; and (4) what characterises the emerging relations between contractors, national regulatory frameworks, and local communities on the ground. This will require undertaking research with representatives of contractors that have worked in Phase I and Phase II of the SGR project, in such counties as Kajiado, Machakos, and Nairobi counties.

### **Deliverables**

1. A detailed report, in the range of 12-15,000 words, which will include an executive summary, introduction, methodology, research sites and actors, result analysis, conclusions, and bibliography. This report will focus on the on-the-ground dynamics of the role and influence of contractors in shaping the SGR project implementation as explained above. In conjunction to the report, the succinct summary of interviews carried out as part of the research project will be provided in English as a separate appendix.
2. The results of the study will be presented at a mid-term DPC programme conference in Nairobi in the week of June 1 2020.
3. After the completion of the consultancy, the researcher undertaking the consultancy will have a possibility to work on a co-authored peer-reviewed research article for such academic journals as *Geoforum* or *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* with the research staff in Department of Geography, at University of Cambridge. This article would draw on the data gathered during the consultancy, as well as the data gathered by the research staff at University of Cambridge, in relation to the broader critical social sciences literatures on large-scale infrastructural developments in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Global South more broadly.

### **Activities and timeframe**

1. Design of the study (10 working days).
2. Fieldwork (20 working days).
3. Data analysis and report-writing (33 working days).
4. The overall 3-month workload will be divided over a 6-month period at the decision of the consultant.
5. Deadline for the delivery of the first report draft is 1 May 2020, for it to receive feedback from research staff at University of Cambridge and the DCP team before the mid-term DCP conference in Nairobi. The deadline for the final report is 1 June 2020.
6. The presentation of the main research findings at the DCP conference in Nairobi, in the week of June 1 2020.

7. After the completion of the consultancy, the possibility of a co-authored peer-reviewed article will be discussed between the consultant and the research staff at University of Cambridge.

## **Resources**

A travel budget of 800 USD for the fieldwork period provided by the contracting party.

## **Profile of Consultant**

1. Postgraduate degree in a social science discipline.
2. Demonstrable research experience on infrastructural developments and the role of private sector contractors in the region of Eastern Africa.
3. Proven track record of peer-reviewed research outputs.
4. Full working proficiency of Chinese.
5. Relevant work experience in Kenya, or in a similar context.
6. Excellent project management skills.

## **Application Process**

The closing date for submitting applications is 13 November 2019.

Your application should include:

1. A cover letter with a succinct explanation of your suitability for the role, how you would plan to conduct the research required, and a proposed fee for the work.
2. A CV with 2 references.

Please direct any inquiries about the role and submit your application to Dr Gediminas Lesutis at [gl451@cam.ac.uk](mailto:gl451@cam.ac.uk).