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Citra Social Innovation Lab, Sri Lanka **Project Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

Date: Tuesday 12th June 2018

Venue: Citra Social Innovation Lab, 363, Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07

Time: 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Co-Chairs:

Ms. Sandhya Wijayabandara, Secretary, Ministry of Science, Technology, and Research, Skills Development and Vocational Training and Kandyan Heritage

Mr. Jorn Sorensen, Country Director, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Members Present:

Mr. Sisira Kumara, Secretary, Ministry of Water Management and Disaster

Prof. Sirimali Fernando, CEO, National Science Foundation

Ms. Dharshana Senanayake, State Secretary, Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs

Dr. Yuthika Indraratna, Director of Economic Research, Central Bank of Sri Lanka

Dr. Nandaka Molagoda, Policy Development Officer, Prime Minister's Office

Ms. Chandrika Senanayake, Department of Project Management and Monitoring, Ministry of Youth Affairs, Project Management and Southern Development

Mr. P. M. P. Anura Kumara, Department of Census and Statistics

Mr. Buddhika Dayagama, Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs

Ms. Harshani Ranasinghe, Department of National Budget

Ms. A. Kavitha, Assistant Director, External Resources Department

Ms. Shiranee Yasaratne, Country Representative, Biodiversity Sri Lanka

Ms. Thamindri de Silva, Representative, United Nations Global Compact

Mr. Sriganesh Lokanathan, Team Leader – Big Data Research, LIRNEasia

Mr. Fadhil Bakeer Markar, Partnerships Analyst, United Nations Development Programme

Mr. Yasas Thalagala, Project Coordination Associate, Citra Social Innovation Lab

Ms. Deshani Senanayake, Communications & Knowledge Management Associate, Citra Social Innovation Lab

Members Excused:

Dr. Indrajit Coomaraswamy, Governor, Central Bank of Sri Lanka

Mr. D.M.A.R.B. Dissanayake, Secretary, Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment

N. Rupasinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Megapolis and Western Development

Mr. Wasantha Deshapriya, Secretary, Ministry of Telecommunication, Digital Infrastructure and Foreign Employment

Prof. Rohan Samarajiva, Chairperson, ICTA

Ms. Dhara Wijayatilake, CEO, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne, General Secretary,

Prof Ajith de Alwis, Chairman, Coordinating Secretariat of Science, Technology & Innovation

Opening Remarks

The meeting opened with **Mr. Jorn Sorensen, Country Director, UNDP** welcoming all members of the Advisory Board to the 3rd Board meeting, and the first to be held at the newly refurbished Lab space. He explained that following the soft launch, the team has moved in and has been working on various initiatives, updates on which would be provided by the team during the course of the meeting. Mr. Sorensen commented on the open working space which has created a conducive environment for collaboration and co-creation. It will work towards breaking down barriers both within the team and externally, and work with partners to find unique and new solutions. Mr. Sorensen spoke of the ongoing Human Resources process; the position of the Lab Lead is yet to be filled. UNDP has advertised the position for the third time and is now going through the short-listing process. He stressed the importance of not settling for a candidate, but instead finding someone with the technical expertise and drive needed to take forward the work of Citra. In the meantime, Mr. Sorensen appreciated **Mr. Fadhil Bakeer Markar, Partnerships Analyst, UNDP**, who was overseeing the day-to-day work of the Lab and providing guidance to the team.

Mr. Sorensen went on to provide a quick update on Citra's engagement with external partners. After the successful Summit on Foresight and Innovation, UNDP had been able to link with multiple innovation facilities across the globe. After the formal establishment of Citra, the team has worked on building further partnerships with such facilities, and was able to secure a partnership with the Government of Denmark to conduct additional initiatives. Mr. Sorensen also spoke about the capacity building exercises carried out by The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) who spent a week with the Citra team to share their learnings and experiences in Australia and around the world.

Mr. Sorensen also acknowledged the fact that the Team's proactive approaches have initiated a keenness from the UNDP Regional Innovation Centre to work together on multiple initiatives going forward. He concluded his remarks thanking the Advisory Board again for their active participation and their willingness to candidly share their thoughts and give guidance and input on Citra's initiatives, highlighting also the key role each of the Board members play in assisting the work of Citra from within their respective Ministries and departments.

Progress Update

The opening remarks were followed by a progress update of Citra's work facilitated by **Mr. Yasas Thalagala, Project Coordinator, Citra**. He began with acknowledging the valuable lessons and experiences gained through the week-long capability building training with TACSI which took place in April. The hands-on approach of working through a simulation of possible Lab initiatives provided the team with great insights on how established innovation facilities, such as TACSI, function. Exposure to their systems and processes greatly shaped the way the team also developed Citra's process framework and its service offerings.

Mr. Thalagala went on to explain that during the sessions with TACSI the team was able to further elaborate the process framework which Citra will take when developing prototypes of a solution. Keeping in mind that Citra will not implement solutions, the Lab will co-create solutions with relevant partners and stakeholders keeping the end user, or the general public, at the forefront of it all. This continued user engagement will be done through user-journey mapping exercises which will gauge the insights and perceptions of the general public with regards to any of the issues at hand.

He also explained Citra's position in the global innovation landscape as the first innovation lab in the region. This extensive network of partners provides the Lab with a wide array of experiences and skill sets which Citra can draw upon. Additionally, highlighting the insights of a multi-disciplinary team, and the technical roster of experts the Lab is working on building will allow Citra to develop comprehensive and viable solutions to the issues it will work on.

The 'ShaRe Hub'

The first initiative expanded on was the development 'ShaRe Hub', a communication and coordination tool for disaster relief efforts. Citra is working with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), consisting of UN agencies and other development and Non-Government Organizations working in the Humanitarian sector in Sri Lanka. The project is currently being tested with multiple partners and stakeholders to collect user feedback and make necessary changes. As of now, the team has tested this with Humanitarian agencies in Colombo, government counterparts in the Ministry and field officers in Vavuniya and Batticaloa. After making relevant changes and updates the team will conduct more tests and finally hand the tested prototype to the HCT for implementation.

Sustainable Development Goals Dashboard

The second on-going project is the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Dashboard. This online platform was developed at the request of the Government of Sri Lanka, through the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), and the United Nations Driver Group 1 to collect and provide all data related to the SDGs in a centralized location and provide simple and straight-forward graphical representations of the data sets. For the prototype, Citra worked with the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine and the World Health Organization (WHO) to collate data related to Goal 3. The completed and tested prototype of this Tracker was launched on the 7th of April at the World Health Day celebrations held at Colombo in the presence of dignitaries such as His Excellency the President, the Honourable Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, the Global WHO Director General, and many others.

The prototype is now accessible to the public, and going forward Citra will incorporate user feedback into the prototype in order to maximize the effectiveness of this platform. Following the successful completion of the prototype Citra was requested by other UN agencies to develop the Tracker for all 17 Goals, including its 169 targets and 250 indicators within 2 years.

Mr. Bakeer Markar expressed the value-addition Citra will bring to policy-making through this Dashboard by providing an effective tool to streamline the coordination and tracking of all initiatives contributing towards achieving the 2030 Agenda by providing data required to produce targeted and

evidence-based development interventions. Mr. Thalagala went on to explain that discussions were underway with DCS and the Hon. State Minister Dr. Harsha de Silva to finalize technical details such as where the Dashboard would be housed and what methodology would be used to update the data.

Colombo Development Dialogues

Another initiative Citra has been supporting is the Colombo Development Dialogues (CDD). Mr. Thalagala explained that the inaugural knowledge sharing session with world renowned academics facilitated by the London School of Economics South Asia Centre was held in April on the topic of 'Integrated Development through Innovation and Partnerships'. A policy paper was drafted capturing the deliberations held during this event and will be used to facilitate more discussions and initiatives based on the recommendations put forth. The next Dialogue is scheduled to take place in August on the topic of 'Water Security and Climate Variability'.

Partnership with the Ministry of Public Administration

A parallel initiative that was explained to the Board members was the development of the Capacity Building programme for public sector officials. Citra is working with the Ministry of Public Administration and the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA) to create a comprehensive programme on Innovation and Foresight tools for 30 selected public sector officials. Following a successful meeting with the Hon. Minister of Public Administration, Ranjith Madduma Bandara, and the Secretary Mr. Padmasiri Jayamanne, an official letter requesting the Ministry to actively work with Citra on this initiative was sent by Ms. Sandhya Wijayabandara, Secretary of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Research.

Citra will facilitate the technical skills and expertise of an international innovation facility with substantial experience in developing and conducting similar programmes for public sector officials. It will consist of a 5-day residential training which will focus on customized material that is specifically targeting the needs of the public sector of the country. After the completion of the programme, the officials will be convened for a 2-day recap session after 3 months to share their experiences in using these techniques and tools in their everyday processes. It was also mentioned that there was a suggestion by Mr. Jayamanne to involve a recently retired senior public sector official in the process in order to better understand the cultural context and to make sure the programme is relevant to the needs. Citra team will proceed in identifying potential candidates for this role and acquiring their services.

Prof. Sirimali Fernando, CEO, National Science Foundation suggested to include a written assessment in the selection process and ensure it is an independent selection process to identify the candidates. Mr. Bakeer Markar seconded this statement and suggested including senior public servants in the selection panel as well in order to create a fair and effective process. **Ms. Thamindri de Silva, UNGC** also advised the team to ensure the publicity given around this programme sets it aside from the numerous trainings and workshops that are available to the public sector in order to reach and attract the right candidates.

With the official approval from the Ministry of Public Administration, the team will be opening the applications for this programme starting next month (July).

Mr. Bakeer Markar explained further that during the initial meeting with the Secretary, Mr. Jayamanne, there was a keenness to work on transforming the existing service offerings of SLIDA and work on further developing the capacities of the public sector through the strengthening of SLIDA. A systems-mapping was suggested to map out the existing system and identify areas to improve and focus on going forward. He also mentioned that Nesta's expertise and prior experiences conducting extensive programmes such as the 9-month long programmes they provide to the Governments of Australia and Canada would be useful in assisting the larger initiative as well. Mr. Bakeer Markar further communicated that the team hopes the Board members would assist in possible information gathering exercises in the coming months which might be carried out for this purpose.

Colombo Municipal Council Engagement:

A final update on an initiative the Lab is working on was its engagement with the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC). Mr. Bakeer Markar explained that Citra has been in touch with the Seoul metropolitan government who is interested in working with municipalities to share expertise and work with them on strengthening these entities. Following this, the team had a positive discussion with the Chief of Staff of the Colombo Municipal Council who is keen on working towards finding solutions to certain issues which are affecting their staff performances. A key area which was identified was the need for better public engagement with the council. When the Citra team carried out initial research into this, many initiatives targeting similar issues were discovered.

One such initiative is the 'Fix My Street' application which allows a citizen to take a picture of an issue and upload it to the platform which immediately notifies the government servant in charge of that issue/area. A similar programme has been rolled out in the Maldives termed 'Make My Island'. Mr. Bakeer Markar explained further that similar programmes could be implemented in Colombo as well with context modifications made to suit the needs of the CMC. He explained the initiative as being a small but important step towards creating accountability within government bodies. **Ms. Dharshana Senanayake, State Secretary, Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs** echoed this thinking, commending the initiative and acknowledging the ripple effect it could have on other government entities as well.

Ms. Thamindri de Silva suggested piloting this initiative in a different municipal council as well since learnings from Colombo might be difficult to use when replicating the prototype in other parts of the country. Mr. Bakeer Markar agreed to the point made but also highlighted the fact that the CMC was quite keen to work with Citra on this, and as the Lab is still in its early stages, it might be best to try out new initiatives with willing partners first. **Mr. Sriganesh Lokanathan, Team Leader – Big Data Research, LIRNEasia**, mentioned that the initiative should be tackled with a citizen empowerment approach utilizing the Behavioral Psychology expertise within the team to give a voice to the people to take a stand against what is not working in their area and mobilize themselves to make a change.

Discussion on Any Other Business:

Ms. Sandhya Wijayabandara informed the Board members that the lease agreement is currently being drawn up between the Ministry and the Industrial Technology Institute, whose premises Citra is currently occupying. The space was valued at LKR 150,000 per month. The agreement covers the Cabinet approved time span of the project, which is till the year 2020. Additionally, speaking to other changes within the Ministry, the Secretary offered to facilitate a meeting with the new Minister in charge, Hon. Dr. Sarath Amunugama and the Citra team to update him on the Lab initiatives.

Prof. Fernando also inquired regarding the time the Lab will spend on each issue brought forward. Mr. Bakeer Markar explained that it cannot be a fixed amount of time as each issue and intervention would require varying amounts of time and resources. The team will reiterate and retest a prototype until all the pain points discovered through user journey mapping exercises have been fixed. It is at the end of these testing sessions that the Lab will hand over the prototype to the implementing body. Therefore, the nature of the issue will determine the time the Lab spends on it.

Furthermore, Prof. Fernando acknowledged the good work of Citra in the short period it has been working, and reiterated the need to work closely with SLIDA on the public sector engagement work, and to develop an effective selection criteria for the candidates participating in the residential programme. It was also agreed upon by a majority of the Board members that a newspaper advertisement would be the most effective way to reach the potential candidates within the public sector.

Dr. Molagoda suggested that Citra develop more transparent and clearer selection criteria by which the team will decide what issue/intervention to work on. While this was noted as a valid point, Mr. Bakeer Markar explained that as Citra is still at its early stages and a strong demand for its services has not yet been established, the team would opt to work on all viable projects presented. In the future, it was agreed that this selection criteria would be required. This was seconded by Mr. Lokanathan and others.

Finally, Mr. Thalagala noted that this Board meeting, which was supposed to be held earlier in the second quarter, was delayed due to the changes that took place within the Ministry. As a result, he mentioned that the next Advisory Board meeting will be held sooner within the next two months.

Recommended Ways Forward:

- Ministry of Science, Technology and Research to finalize lease agreement with ITI officials for the project period
- Ms. Wijayabandara to facilitate meeting with the new minister Hon Dr. Sarath Amunugama
- Request for the next financial allocation as per the pre-agreed quarterly budget allocation
- Collect information from Board members on the public sector engagement programme, including but not limited to, input on the current training landscape, areas requiring further development within the public sector, recommendations on best avenues to utilize when advertising for applications, etc.

- Further explore the replicability of a modified 'Fix My Street' solution for the CMC with LIRNEAsia and other relevant partners

Approved:



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