Terms of Reference

Timeframe: July/August 2015 - November 2015

Duration: 20 days over 5 months

Closing date for application: 15th July 2015

**Assessment of research gaps through literature review, qualitative interviews, and human studies ethical review committee inquiries**

1. **Background**

HelpAge Internationalis an international development NGO that helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives. Demographic and epidemiological transitions have acted together to accelerate population ageing and is increasing the burden of chronic and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Alongside policy engagement, HelpAge and its partners deliver health and care services directly to older people and their families, in collaboration with government and other stakeholders. HelpAge’s health work addresses a number of risk factors and diseases which span people’s physical, mental and psychosocial wellbeing through health and care services.

This project has been designed following a series of consultations about the emerging challenge of chronic and NCDs in Myanmar and the strategic responses required across the health sector. HelpAge International has a 4 year strategic grant with the European Commission to strengthen the University of Public Health (UPH) and wider health stakeholders to support evidence-based policy and improved health services, particularly in preparation for the transition towards a rising burden of NCDs in Myanmar.

1. **The outputs**

Information on the burden of NCDs is essential for planning and policy, but currently the health surveillance system in Myanmar is weak and national evidence on determinants and the burden of NCDs is very limited.

There are four outputs which include a **literature review** on separate but interconnected issues related to the burden of NCDs and risk factors in Myanmar; a **report based on the findings from qualitative interviews** carried out by a National Consultant, with the Ministry of Health and other key stakeholders, including WHO, INGOs, academic institutions planning NCD health research studies, and Human Studies Research Review Boards. Third, is a consolidated **final report** which willinclude the information from the first two outputs, in addition to a **detailed list of current or planned health research** that is directly or indirectly related to NCDs, which the project team will produce. The final output is the **manuscript** **of the literature review for publication** in an academic journal.

1. **Target audience**

The target audience for the first two outputs (i.e. the literature review and results from the qualitative research), will be policy and decision-makers including within government, civil society, donors and international agencies and the private sector. This is an opportunity to influence a wide range of actors, encourage inter and multi-sectoral action and a ‘health in all policies’ approach for the prevention and control of NCDs.

1. **Specific Tasks**

The consultant will be responsible for three pieces of work under this activity, the literature review, the qualitative research report and a final report with all outputs. The desk-based literature review should be conducted prior to the interviews (to be conducted by the national consultant) so that it provides clear evidence of the gaps in academic and grey literature.

1. Literature review

The literature review will be a thorough summary and critical analysis of the relevant available research. The review should identify available evidence on morbidity and mortality due to major NCDs (e.g. cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes, mental illness, neurological disorders) in Myanmar as well as evidence of both upstream and downstream risk factors. Evidence on the behavioural/lifestyle risk factors (i.e. downstream) should also be reviewed, such as high blood pressure/hypertension, overweight and obesity, diet, smoking, alcohol consumption, and physical activity. In addition to reviewing the literature for any evidence of the potentially modifiable population level factors (i.e. upstream) including environments (e.g. household air pollution), policies, trade, education, agricultural etc. The literature should lastly be reviewed for comparison and fit to the WHO Package of Essential NCD Interventions for low resource settings, which incorporates tried and tested prevention and treatment strategies. Further, recommendations should be made for future research, keeping in mind the *health systems requirements and capacity to address NCDs in similar contexts to Myanmar*, and policy opportunities at different stages of the causal pathway from system-wide changes to disease management.

1. Qualitative Research Report

The International Consultant will also compile a report drawing on the results of qualitative interviews conducted with the Ministry of Health and other key stakeholders by a National Consultant. This will explore the existing research gaps in relation to NCDs.

1. Final report

The International Consultant will write a final report that includes an executive summary and three annexes: Literature review summary with annotated bibliography, qualitative research report, and summary report of current research.

1. Manuscript of literature review submitted for publication

The International Consultant will write a narrative literature review manuscript and submit for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

1. **Output format and style**

The outputs include:

* Literature review

A list of all databases used is to be included, including all search terms used. The number of sources examined is to be recorded for each database. An annotated bibliography of the literature is to be created, organized according to the WHO prioritized research agenda for prevention and control of NCDs.

* Qualitative research report

The length and format of the qualitative report is to be developed and will be agreed by the consultant and HelpAge.

* Final report

The format of the final report, including the literature review, qualitative research report and current research, is to be discussed with the project team in Myanmar and the Health Policy Officer.

The consultant will need to ensure all outputs are in line with HelpAge branding.

1. **Action plan**
2. Literature review

Note: HelpAge technical staff have already started this activity. The responsibilities of the International Consultant are to continue and finalise these tasks. The National Consultant will review the literature which is only available in Myanmar language.

* Identify the topic/question for review (e.g. mortality or prevalence/incidence data for a specific disease)
* Identify sources to search – databases (e.g. PubMed, Medline, Google Scholar, the databases used by IHME at University of Washington for the Global Burden of Disease study - Myanmar-specific etc.)
* Identify key words and search literature
* Manage references with software (already set-up by HelpAge)
* Compile an annotated bibliography of pertinent references
* Critically analyse and evaluate the state of NCD research in and about Myanmar, using all results of this activity (literature reviews in English and Burmese, qualitative research, and current research report)
* Synthesise recommendations for future research
* Write the literature review
* Publish results of the literature review[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Qualitative research report

Note: a National Consultant will be responsible for conducting the interviews and producing the material for the qualitative research report.

* Write the qualitative research report summary with data produced from the interviews by the National Consultant

1. Final report

* Consolidate the literature review, qualitative research report, and current research report into one final report summary

1. **Timeframe**

The consultancy duration is estimated at 20 days over four/five months, to be discussed with HelpAge. The final report will need sign off from the HelpAge project team before payment for the consultancy will be made.

It is not absolutely necessary to travel to Myanmar; however, 5 working days in-country would be useful for working with project staff/the National Consultant and meeting with one key partner in the project (i.e. UPH).

Travel time to and from Myanmar will not be included in the 20 days but the travel days can be included in the agreed daily rate.

1. Literature review

* International Consultant to complete tasks between July and September 2015, including finalising paper for publication
* National Consultant to complete tasks between July and August 2015

1. Qualitative research and report

* National Consultant to complete task by September 2015
* International Consultant to complete report by October 2015

1. Final report

* International Consultant to complete consolidated report by November 2015

1. **Management**

The consultant will be managed by the Health Policy Officer based in London. The tasks will require him/her to work with the HelpAge project team and the National Consultant.

1. **Person Specifications**

* Master’s degree in Public health, health policy, epidemiology or other relevant degree
* Medical or health professional
* Demonstrated clinical or health research experience
* Significant health research publications in peer-reviewed literature
* Good communication skills in English
* Preferred: affiliation with WHO or globally-recognised public health university

**Selection process**

Selection of the consultant will be awarded on the basis of the experience and competencies of the consultant, the quality and relevance of the expression of interest, and the proposed budget.

Interested consultants are invited to submit an expression of interest for carrying out this assignment. The short expression of interest (no more than 4 pages) should include:

1. Proposed methodology
2. Outline of the literature review report
3. Clear work plan and timeframe required for completing each component of the consultancy
4. Costing of each aspect (including day rates and any additional costs)
5. Appendixes (not included in 4 pages)
   1. Curriculum vitae
   2. Contact information for 1 professional reference
   3. 1-2 relevant examples of previous work

1. Using guidance for narrative reviews, for example: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2647067/> or <http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/article?id=10.1371/journal.pcbi.1003149> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)