**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Study of community-based social protection, Kayin State**

**1. Background**

The European Union is funding a project being implemented by a consortium of HelpAge International, the Karen Baptist Convention and Golden Plain Livelihood Development Service Cooperative in Kayin State called “Creating an Enabling Post-conflict Environment for Populations in Kayin State, and Facilitating the Safe Return of IDPs and Refugees”. The 4-year project is based on establishing and supporting Village Development Committees (VDCs) in three townships: Thandaunggyi, Hpapun and Kawkreik. VDCs are committees managed by an inclusive group of community members to promote village economic and social development, including sustainable livelihoods appropriate to the context. The VDCs will promote protection and reconciliation between residents and returnees; support livelihoods and food security; enhance health, water and sanitation services and practices; strengthen local schooling; and help communities prepare for disasters. The model has been shown to be an effective means of promoting inclusive development that embraces vulnerable members of the community.

One activity of this project is a study of informal community-based social protection arrangements in Kayin. It aims to expand understanding on the risks faced by vulnerable groups and available community assets in order to inform state and national level social protection discussions.

While there is no single definition of social protection, it generally relates to means of protecting people from the various risks and shocks they face throughout their lives. Poor and vulnerable households in Myanmar are often ill-equipped to deal with the variety of shocks and stresses they experience, including short-term emergencies (such as natural disasters), livelihood shocks (such as a failed harvest or losing a job) or the inevitable life-course stresses (such as raising a family, facing a disability or growing old). For example, shocks from extreme climate events or the death or serious illness of the family breadwinner may lead to children being removed from school or the sale of productive assets. In times of economic difficulty, households often reduce both the quantity and quality of food they consume. Particularly in Myanmar, families in crisis may also take on crippling debt at high interest rates, making it difficult for them to save and invest in improving their livelihood.

Many countries provide social protection through government-funded policies and schemes, including cash transfers to households. However, Myanmar still has very limited government-provided social protection systems. In the absence of such public systems, many communities over time have developed informal mechanisms and practices for coping, providing mutual assistance, and supporting vulnerable families or individuals during crisis and to prevent destitution. These are important to the smooth functioning of social relations and mutual obligations in a community, and may or may not be defined as social protection. These include religious bodies, social committees, youth groups, mothers groups or funeral associations. They may be permanent or informal groupings to address a short-term need. Such practices are crucial but may be characterised by several shortcomings such as a lack of sustainable funding; limited coverage, access and inclusion of all groups; and a lack of clear and accountable rules of operation. These existing mutual help, community-based mechanisms are the subject of this study.

**2. Purpose**

The purpose of this consultancy is to conduct a qualitative analytical study of informal mechanisms and practices in Kayin which provide forms of community-based social protection to local residents in vulnerable situations.

**3. Specific Tasks for Consultant**

The study will be carried out through initial desk review followed by qualitative field research in a sample of communities in Kayin. Specifically the tasks include:

* Hold initial discussions with HelpAge management and consortium partners to clarify the outline and scope of the task.
* Produce a more detailed design of the research study, including workplan, methodology, sample of locations/respondents, and tools, for agreement by HelpAge.
* Conduct a desk review of documents related to Kayin State culture/society, social protection, community-based social protection and the current Kayin situation as well as Myanmar’s new national Social Protection Strategic Plan.
* Talk to relevant experts in Yangon, Hpa-an or other cities.
* Conduct field research in Kayin villages. This is expected to be primarily through qualitative methods, including key informant interviews and household interviews, as well as focus group discussions. See below.
* Produce the Outputs, described below.

The consultant should also confirm willingness in principle to present the findings of the study at a workshop, although that workshop is expected to be held later and will not be included in this contract.

**4. Outputs**

The Consultant is responsible for producing the following two Outputs in English:

* Output 1: A study report according to an outline to be agreed with HelpAge.
* Output 2: A draft of a short publication summarising the main findings of the study.

Output 1: The report, *Community-based social protection in Kayin,* will be about 25 pages in length plus attachments as described. An indicative outline is in Attachment 1 to this TOR. The consultant will be asked to review and revise a more detailed report outline with the initial workplan, in consultation with HelpAge, detailing the sub-topics to be covered and estimating the length of each section. Attachments include those below plus possibly illustrative photos.

Output 2: The brief for publication will be about 2000 words and should highlight the main findings of Output 1 for lay readers. The consultant will be asked to review the final publication layout before printing but after editing after the contract period, without additional payment.

The consultant should write both outputs, but especially Output 2, in clear English so that they can be easily understood and translated, avoiding long sentences, jargon, and abbreviations as much as possible. Technical terms should also be clearly explained or else avoided when possible, without compromising the technical rigour of the analysis. The study may also contain numbered/bullet points, diagrams, or other visual materials to illustrate material and guide the reader. Detailed textual material should be annexed so that the main text is not overly long or intimidating to the reader.

**5. Sample**

The Consultant will visit a sample of villages in 3 townships of Kayin State: Thandaunggyi, Hpapun and Kawkreik. Roughly 15 villages total will be in the sample (to be discussed), which should be diverse to the extent possible, including:

* Villages reflective of the main religions of Kayin State
* Villages near and far from Hpa-an and main urban/peri-urban areas
* Some villages affected by conflict
* Villages of various socio-economic, cultural and educational profiles

The minimum number of villages to be visited and some indication of sampling criteria should be proposed by the Consultant in the Expression of Interest (see below). The precise villages in the sample will be selected later. HelpAge will arrange the community visits on behalf of the consultant after the sample is agreed and provide transport as well as interpretation by a member of HelpAge staff.

**6. Time requirements and duration**

The assignment is to be completed from October 2015 to December 2015. A timeframe will be refined and detailed during discussions with the consultant; here is an indication:

October: Design and preparations

Mid-October-Mid November: Field work in Kayin

December: Report writing

**7. Qualifications of Consultant**

HelpAge is looking for an international consultant, or highly experienced national consultant or team, to lead this study. The consultant will be paired with one or more members of HelpAge’s team to facilitate the work in Kayin.

Essential

* University degree in a relevant field
* Substantial practical and theoretical knowledge of rural community life in developing countries, preferably Myanmar and Kayin State
* Demonstrable expertise in social protection, community resilience or community development
* Qualitative research experience especially in conducting semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions and other information gathering
* Demonstrable experience producing similar studies
* Strong analytical and summarising skills
* An understanding of community development activities
* Strong writing skills in English with a clear, simple writing style
* Strong IT/computer skills

Desirable

* Master’s or higher degree in social sciences, anthropology or similar field
* Experience in conducting community research in Myanmar
* Substantial experience in social protection issues
* Development or NGO experience in Kayin State
* Experience in conflict or post-conflict areas
* Myanmar language skills

**8. How to apply**

Interested consultants are invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for delivery of the assignment. The short EOI (about 3-4 pages) should include:

1. Proposed methodology and any comments on TOR and Outputs
2. Work plan: Including outputs/deliverables and detailed time frames including any periods the consultant is not available, or uncertain about availability
3. Budget: Total costs including daily fee rates and any additional costs anticipated, excluding costs of travel to or within Myanmar and living costs in Myanmar (to be met separately).
4. Appendixes (not included in the 3-4 pages)
   1. CV of the consultant(s)
   2. Contact information for 2 professional references
   3. 1-2 relevant studies previously produced, if available

HelpAge is working within an indicative consultant budget of $10,000 to $13,000 to complete the full assignment in this TOR, depending on the consultant’s qualifications and experience and the scope of the proposal. The costs of travel to Myanmar, as well as living costs and field travel in Myanmar, will be met separately (according to HelpAge standards) and do not need to be included in the EOI budget. Selection of the consultant will be by a HelpAge project committee and based on the experience of the consultant, the quality and relevance of the EOI, and the proposed budget, keeping in mind value for money within the resources available. Final negotiated terms and fees will be specified in the consultancy contract.

The deadline for submission is midnight **27 September 2015.** Please contact Ms Chitlekar Parintarakul at **fon@helpageasia.org** for further information or to submit your EOI.

**Attachment 1: Tentative Outline for Study Report**

Executive summary

1. Background

2. Communities’ understanding of vulnerability and vulnerable groups

3. Communities’ understanding of local responsibilities for protecting vulnerable groups

* Responsibilities of the vulnerable individual (self)
* Responsibilities of households
* Responsibilities of extended families
* Informal responsibilities of community members
* Responsibilities of community-based institutions and mechanisms
* Responsibilities of the government (or quasi-government institutions) and local awareness of any protections guaranteed by the government
* Responsibilities of any other groups e.g. non-government external institutions

4. Current community institutions, practices and measures providing protection to vulnerable including analysis of:

* Types of practices and mechanisms (e.g. mutual support or charity/religion based)
* Target groups
* Nature, breadth and depth of assistance
* Structural description of the range of delivery mechanisms/organisations
* Nature and motivation of leadership of such mechanisms
* Financing, sustainability and accountability

5. Analysis: Coverage and gaps (and perceived gaps) in social protection, and in the functions of institutions and local mechanisms

6. Conclusions, including

* Assessment of community SP mechanisms
* Scope for expansion or improvement
* Potential linkages with new/strengthened community institutions including VDCs
* Potential linkages with future government social protection schemes and welfare

Attachments

* Methodology and places visited
* Data sheets (e.g. 1 page write-up of notes per major mechanism/practice documented per village) including for example:
* Type (by category) and brief history
* Target group
* Nature of assistance (cash/in-kind/service, frequency)
* Breadth of assistance (no. reached, geographic scope, inclusion/exclusion, overlap)
* Depth of assistance (extent to which assistance meets needs, short or long term)
* Structure (sponsorship/allegiance, leadership, motivation, volunteerism, membership, linkages, formality)
* Financing and sustainability (source and durability of funds, estimated intake/output)
* Accountability (financial and social)

*Note:* Each section should highlight cultural/contextual variations in community behaviour, practices and institutions, as well as any variations in protection by gender, age, disability or other characteristics of individuals or groups.