

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Assessment of cash transfer (disability grant) targeting process, Myanmar Dry Zone

1. Background

The LIFT donor consortium approved the “Dry Zone Social Protection Project” (DZSP), now being implemented in Myanmar’s Central Dry Zone. The three-year project will be implemented by HelpAge International in collaboration with the Mandalay YMCA. To help vulnerable households in the Dry Zone to cope and manage risks, this project aims to expand social protection. It will do this by enhancing informal community-based mechanisms and practices; strengthening government and community capacity to protect the poor; and delivering cash benefits to vulnerable groups – people with disabilities and older persons. The project activities will lead to two project outcomes: poor households have expanded access to community assistance in times of stress, and vulnerable groups have greater income security. The locations of the project are 30 villages in each of six target townships of two regions: Pakkoku and Yesogyo Townships (Magway Region) and Mahlaing, Myingyan, Taungtha and Natogyi Townships (Mandalay Region). The total number of target villages is 180.

The intervention of focus for this consultancy consists of a cash grant for people with disabilities (PWD), managed by the project team with local government collaboration. PwD are selected for the grant through community-based targeting – that is, the community selects those who qualify. There is no process of medical certification or examination. The targeted PwD are those with “severe” disabilities only, as determined through community assessment using simple tools based on the Washington Group questions. Severe generally means a response of “cannot do at all” to questions about functioning related to sight, hearing, mobility and so forth.

This intervention has a dual function. The first is to reduce vulnerability and income insecurity among the direct beneficiaries at community level. The regularity of such cash transfers is an important feature, even if the amount is relatively small. The predictability that income will arrive at certain times provides financial stability and gives households greater confidence to make small investments in their future and avoid risk-averse behaviours. Supporting PwD also benefits the whole family as cash received is often added to shared household resources.

The second function is to enable the government to improve its skills and expand its institutional experience in delivering public cash transfers at the ground level. The government approved 8 flagship schemes under its National Social Protection Strategic Plan, some of which target households through cash transfers. However, cash transfer delivery is new to the government, so HelpAge aims to generate experience for implementing the NSPSP on a wider scale. The project partnership takes responsibility for delivery of the cash transfers using its own team, but involves government authorities (local and national) in delivery to the extent possible. (Mothers and their children are targeted under the nutrition activities of other groups.)

In early 2017, the project supported communities to identify PwD who should receive the disability grant. The first transfers have already been given to PwD, and the payments to the target group will continue every two months for one year. There is no reliable data on

the number of PwD per community. A standard nature of verification will be important for a national cash transfer system that the Government may introduce in the near future.

For any cash transfer scheme, there is inclusion error (people who should not have received the payments, but did) and exclusion error (people who should have received the payments, but did not). HelpAge wants to address these two types of error in ways that will be useful for a future nationwide scheme by the Government. It also wants to know whether the targeting process itself was appropriate and easy for communities to use.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to assess the disability grant targeting process in a sample of the project villages, and analyse (a) the process and (b) the outcome – that is, whether community based targeting was appropriate and effective, and the extent and reasons for exclusion and inclusion errors. The ultimate question to answer is: How well did community based targeting work?

3. Specific Tasks for Consultant

Specifically the tasks for this assignment include:

- Hold discussions with HelpAge to clarify the outline and scope of the task if necessary and the history of project implementation. Understand clearly the type of information required from the field work and the research questions.
- Conduct a desk review of key documents related to the LIFT-funded project, including the project's Disability Grant Handbook, assessment questionnaires/tools, the requirements of eligibility, and project M&E documents, as well as relevant Government documents on social protection including the 2015 Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Assess lessons from international experience on targeting of disability grants, particularly community based targeting. The team is expected to be familiar with international literature.
- Produce Output 1 for comment, including the research plan and tools.
- Conduct qualitative research in a total of 15 villages: 5 villages in each of 3 project townships, tentatively the townships of Yesagyo (Magway Region), Myingyan and Taungtha (Mandalay Region). See Methodology below.
- Assess the results and produce Output 2, the report, seeking clarifications from HelpAge as needed.
- Incorporate comments/feedback and revise Output 2.

4. Methodology

The Consultant will gather data and other information by conducting qualitative research in the 15 villages. The key methods for gathering the information include document review, key informant interviews, beneficiary interviews and some focus group discussions to identify *potentially excluded persons* (focusing on PwD who never applied nor were assessed) and *inclusion error* (people who received the grant whose disability may not actually reach the level of severity as required for eligibility). Note: It should be very clear to people involved in the study that the results of the study will neither disqualify or qualify anyone in relation to the grants. The research is only for learning, not for the purpose of reassessing eligibility. The study will also assess the ease of using the assessment tools, the appropriateness of the tools, the extent of training provided to communities, and make

recommendations about the possible future use of community based targeting for such schemes.

The study will include interviews with potentially excluded people as well as a sample of included people, along with their families, and a review of their documentation for eligibility. These potentially excluded people include PwD who expected to receive the grant but did not. The sample of included people will assess verbally (without physical examination) whether the person truly met the grant criteria, in all likelihood. If a likely case of inclusion error is found, the reasons for the inclusion should be explored. The research questions will be reviewed and refined together with HelpAge, but are expected to include these:

- What was the source of information for any preliminary estimates of PwD in the community? Who made those estimates, and how?
- How accurate were those preliminary estimates? Was there any prior history of identifying PwD in these communities?
- What are traditional community definitions and perceptions of disability, and are there any variations with international definitions?
- How easy were the assessment tools (WG question) for communities to use?
- How appropriate and precise were those tools in identifying various types of disabilities? Were there any forms of disabilities that appeared to be over counted or under counted, and might the errors be due to the tools?
- Did community members receive adequate training in using the tools? Were the assessment teams prepared to use the tools?
- How many disputed cases were there in the village? That is, how many people *felt* potentially excluded during the selection process, or did were the assessment decisions questioned by a significant number of people in the community?
- Re exclusion: If some PwD did not apply to receive the grant or go through the assessment process, why? This will require analysis and a breakdown, for example: (a) they were ashamed to apply, (b) they didn't understand or hear about the programme, (c) they "self-selected" or assumed they would not qualify, (d) they were discouraged from applying by others, etc.
- Re inclusion: How justified were the decisions about registration vis-à-vis the project's eligibility requirements? Were there cases of persons qualifying for the grant whose disability clearly did not reach the level of "severe" according to the eligibility requirements?
- What were the reasons for any inclusion error? This will require analysis and a breakdown, for example: (a) the assessment committee felt sorry for the applicant and relaxed the requirements, (b) the assessment committee did not fully understand the requirements or the assessment questionnaires, (c) the person being assessed apparently provided false responses to the assessment questions, (d) an important person asked the committee to waive the requirements, etc.
- Were the disputed cases satisfactorily resolved and explained? How? Do some PwD continue to feel they were excluded unfairly? How did the community perceive the fairness of the process?
- In general, what feedback do respondents have that might help improve the targeting of the disability grant in the future?
- Is there any indication of negative or positive unintended consequences of the disability grants or targeting process (e.g. increase or decrease in stigma)?

5. Outputs

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

- Output 1: Research plan and tools. This will include a workplan/timetable, description of methodology, report structure, target audiences, and tools to use including main research questions.
- Output 2: Analytical report

The structure of the analytical report (Output 2) should be discussed with HelpAge as part of Output 1 but is expected to include sections such as:

- Background and purpose
- Description of targeting/selection process, eligibility requirements, tools (the plan)
- Assessment of the implementation of targeting/selection (the actual process including tools and training)
- Analysis of targeting statistics from the sample including inclusion/exclusion error
- Analysis of disputes including the reasons and justification for exclusion/inclusion
- Community/individual views including perceptions of fairness and inclusion/exclusion and feedback for improving the system
- Conclusion
- Recommendations for responding to error and community perceptions
- Attachments as needed including sample, tools, figures

International best practice should be referenced in the report. The consultant should write the Outputs in clear English so that they can be easily understood and translated, avoiding complex sentences, jargon, and abbreviations as much as possible. Technical terms should also be clearly explained or else avoided when possible. The study may also contain numbered/bullet points, diagrams, or other visual materials to illustrate material and guide the reader. Detailed textual material or forms could be annexed.

6. Time requirements and duration

The assignment is expected to start as soon as possible and be completed before end October 2017. The field work in August-September is expected to take no more than one day per village visited (about 15-20 days field work including travel), aside from preparation, analysis and reporting.

7. Qualifications of Consultant(s)

HelpAge suggests, but does not require, a team of one Myanmar consultant and one international consultant to carry out this assignment, both with expertise in disability. HelpAge is looking for a consultant or team with the following qualifications:

Essential

- Degree in a relevant field
- Extensive field experience in issues of disability, ideally including assessment of disability
- Familiarity of international literature within the team on disability assessment/certification systems, community based targeting and/or cash grants for PwD. (Expertise on related aspects such as rehabilitation or social services for PwD is helpful but not critical.)
- Demonstrable previous experience conducting similar assessments or analytical research work including experience in the team in rural areas of Myanmar
- Extensive experience with qualitative field work including proven skills in interviewing and leading FGDs in villages
- Expertise in social and cultural issues and challenges associated with Myanmar communities

- Exceptional analytical skills
- Strong English writing skills with a clear writing style
- Understanding of social protection
- Ability to analyse and present basic statistics
- Myanmar language fluency
- Appropriate IT skills
- Ability to conduct field work independently

Desirable

- Advanced degree (master's or PhD) and academic (university-level) research experience
- Good understanding of cash transfers
- Experience in cash transfer delivery
- Knowledge of the Dry Zone and its challenges

8. How to apply

Interested consultants are invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for carrying out this documentation by **20 July 2017** to Human Resources Department by email at hr.recruitment@helpagemyanmar.org. The short expression of interest (about 3-4 pages) should include

- (1) maximum 1-page cover letter highlighting experience and qualifications
- (2) comments on the TOR
- (3) proposed outline methodology for carrying out the study, suggested tools or approaches, and how the field days would be used
- (4) indicative workplan including key milestones and overall timeframe; confirm availability
- (5) budget to complete the work, including: daily rate(s) x no. of days, travel costs including accommodation and/or food costs. Any costs to be met directly by HelpAge outside this budget should be noted.

The CV of the consultant(s) and contact information for 2 professional references should be attached. Any relevant evaluations previously produced should also be attached (1 or 2 only). These documents are not included in the 3-4 pages.

The consultant is expected to carry out the research independently, following village introductions by HelpAge staff. Any costs or requirements not included in the budget should be mentioned. Selection of the consultant will be by a HelpAge project panel 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.