

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS

Title: National consultant to support the initial phase of the Nutrition Cash Plus programme in Gia Lai.	Funding Code: Grant: GC-RR WBS: 5200/A0/06/884/002	Type of engagement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individual Consultant (01 national consultant)	Duty Station: Viet Nam
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Purpose of Activity/Assignment:

The purpose of the assignment is to support the initial phase of the Nutrition Cash Plus programme in Gia Lai, including conducting a formative assessment to inform the design of nutrition cash plus programme and developing an operational manual to guide the actual implementation of the model.

Background

Within social protection, social transfers are defined as predictable direct transfers to protect and prevent individuals and households from being affected by shocks and to support the accumulation of human, productive and financial assets. Cash transfers protect families and communities from shocks and climate change risks. Cash transfers are important not only to help families escape poverty, but also to protect families from economic shocks such as those caused by unemployment, illness, natural disasters or pandemics. When families lack the capacity to cope with shocks, children can suffer from immediate as well as long-term consequences when they have to drop out of school, work in hazardous conditions or lack access to nutrition at critical development stages.

Evidence shows that cash transfers can help address the underlying determinants of malnutrition. For example, cash transfers can increase household access to a diverse range of nutritious foods for children and women. Cash transfers can also facilitate access – to essential nutrition and health services in these contexts – by covering cost of transport for example, including for life-saving treatment for child wasting. Cash transfers can also improve food intake and dietary quality and prevent children with severe wasting from relapsing following recovery in treatment programmes. Over the longer-term, if cash transfers are adequate, sustained and combined with quality nutrition programmes, they can have a positive impact on nutrition outcomes, such as reduction of stunting and wasting.

When combining cash transfers with complementary interventions and links to essential services, it can maximize the effectiveness in addressing long-term well-being and multi-vulnerabilities of children and households facing. The so-called ‘cash plus’ programmes whereby cash transfers are combined with one or more types of complementary support through behaviour change communication, counselling and psychosocial support, supplementary feeding, parenting, case management or strengthening the quality of existing services and facilitating linkages to these.

Over the past decade, the reform agenda of social protection in Viet Nam has seen significant progress. In 2021, the Government issued Decree 20/2021 replacing Decree 136/2013 serving as the most important decree on cash assistance in Viet Nam, with the renewed focus in the first 1,000 days of life. As of 2023, about 3.5 million people received a regular benefit (about 3.5 per cent of the population) of which about 379,000

children receiving monthly cash transfer, accounting for about 1.45% of all children in the country. The Decree 20 reflects an expansion in social assistance coverage for only a small group of children under 3 years old from poor households living in ethnic minority communities in mountainous areas¹. Three years later, Decree 20 was replaced by Decree 76 effectively since 1 July 2024 with minor revision made to increase the assistance rate from VND 360,000 to VND 500,000 and retain the article allowing provinces and cities with an existing and potential fiscal space to have the flexibility to make decisions on the expansion of coverage and value of the benefits to be transferred to beneficiaries. However, the Decree 76 is still categorical, narrowly targeted and without a roadmap for a progressive introduction of universal social assistance for children nor the inclusion of emergency and shock responsive cash assistance for children. Finally, the Decree does not provide guidance to strengthen the linkages between social assistance beneficiaries and access to essential services.

Gia Lai is one of poorest provinces in the central highland of Viet Nam with the high population of EM people (46.23%), the high rate of stunted under-5-year-old children 31.5%; and the mortality rate of under-1-year-old children at 15.3 per 1,000 live births. Gia Lai issued Resolution 10/2021/NQ-HĐND which stipulated the rolling out of Decree 20 on social assistance policy following the same beneficiary coverage and support value as of Decree 20 from central government. According to this resolution, only a small proportion of children under three living in poor households in ethnic minority communities are eligible for monthly cash assistance, leaving many of those who are malnourished but are not qualified for receiving cash assistance. With enormous global evidence on the linkage between cash and nutrition interventions, UNICEF would like to conduct a formative assessment to inform the design of nutrition cash plus project which will help to address child poverty and vulnerability with particular focus on most vulnerable segments of the population in Gia Lai.

Purpose and Objectives

The overall objective of the consultancy is to support the initial phase of the Nutrition Cash Plus programme in Gia Lai, including conducting a formative assessment to inform the design of the model and developing an operational manual to guide the actual implementation.

Scope of Work

The cash plus consultant will support UNICEF Social Policy and Governance section in the initial phase of the Nutrition Cash Plus programme in Gia Lai. This will include the review of the relevant documents related to social protection, health and nutrition and meetings and interviews with local authorities and key informants.

This assignment includes:

- Conduct the formative assessment including need assessment to identify target group, geographical selection, proposed components of intervention including cash transfer and plus, answering the 5Ws (what, who, how and where and why) to inform the design of nutrition cash plus programme
- Develop the concept note of nutrition cash plus model including concrete information on proposed components of model, targeting criteria of beneficiaries, location, proposed transfer value, frequency of transfer, duration of intervention, governance structure and human resources for implementation

¹ According to the latest report of MOLISA on implementation of Decree 20/2021/NĐ-CP, about 146,365 children under 3 from poor households living in ethnic minority communities in mountainous areas receiving monthly cash assistance

of model as well as a brief costing exercise; and facilitate consultation meetings with related stakeholders to finalize the concept note.

- Develop an operational manual with concrete guidance on the key steps of implementing the model.

Specific expected outputs include:

The consultancy is expected to be delivered by one national consultant with technical expertise on cash assistance and cash plus.

- 1. Output 1: Inception report: This report needs to present a workplan to carry out the consultancy including methodology, tools for field mission, timeline, expected deliverables and the outline of formative assessment.
- 2. Output 2: The formative assessment report including need assessment and geographical selection of intervention areas and proposed components of nutrition cash plus model.
- 3. Output 3: Availability of nutrition cash plus concept note on nutrition cash plus model in selected location of Gia Lai province for consultation workshop with related stakeholders.
- 4. Output 4: A draft Operational Manual on nutrition cash plus model which is sufficiently specific and detailed to be used by the intended local users for the practical rolling out of nutrition cash plus model in selected location of Gia Lai province
- 5. Output 5: The final Operational Manual which has incorporated the feedbacks received during the validation workshop and which has been discussed and agreed upon among related stakeholders.

Methodology

To carry out the consultancy work, it is expected that the consultant will use the following methods: (1) document review of the relevant materials including sample of cash plus models from other countries, and (2) conduct field mission to collect information and data through consultations and meetings with local stakeholders, (3) facilitate consultation workshops and meetings with related stakeholders to validate concept notes and draft reports and (4) regular meetings with UNICEF Viet Nam country office (SPG and CSDE section/Nutrition and C4Dteam) to consult about specific technical issues related to cash transfer and nutrition interventions.

Deliverables, payments and timelines

Activities	Deliverables	Timeframe	Corresponding payment
1. In consultation with UNICEF and related stakeholders to develop the inception report including workplan, methodology, tools, timeline, deliverables, and the outline of formative assessment.	Inception report to be endorsed by UNICEF	Oct 2024	

2. Conduct field mission for information and data collection and development of draft formative assessment report and nutrition cash plus concept note (1 st trip)	Draft formative assessment report	15 Oct-5 Nov 2024	
3. Develop nutrition cash plus concept note and present at the validation workshop (2 nd trip)	Draft concept note and materials for the validation workshop	5-25 November 2024	50% of total contract value
4. Develop operational manual providing detailed steps for rolling out the model for validation workshop (3 rd trip)	Draft operational manual and materials for the validation workshop	25 November-10 December 2024	
5. Finalization of the operational manual based on feedbacks of validation workshop	Final operational manual	10-25 December 2024	50% of total contract value

Travel

The consultant is expected to travel to Gia Lai (tentatively 3 trips, including trip 1: 5 days for information and data collection for formative assessment and trip 2: 2 days for the validation meeting of cash plus concept note, trip 3: 2 days for the validation of operational manual). The consultant will need to organize own travel, including ticketing and accommodation and transportation. UNICEF will pay the daily subsistence allowance as per UN-approved rate. The consultant must be fit to travel, be in a possession of the valid UN DSS Basic and Advanced Security certificates, obligatory inoculation(s) and have a valid own

travel/medical insurance with hospitalization and repatriation coverage. The dates for the travel will be determined in consultation with the Social Policy Officer and the Country Office.

Management

The consultancy is to be supervised by UNICEF Social Policy Officer under the overall guidance of Chief of Social Policy and Governance Section. The consultant will work in close collaboration with the colleagues from SPG and CSDE section/Nutrition and C4D team and Gia Lai PMU.

Child Safeguarding

Is this project/assignment considered as "[Elevated Risk Role](#)" from a child safeguarding perspective?

YES NO; If YES, check all that apply:

Direct contact role YES NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:

Child data role YES NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information of children (name, national ID, location data, photos):

More information is available in the [Child Safeguarding SharePoint](#) and [Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates](#)

Budget Year: 2024	Requesting Section/Issuing Office: Social Policy and Governance	
Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No, please justify: Under the signed workplan with Da Nang		
Consultant sourcing: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> Both Competitive Selection: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advertisement <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Roster Single Source Selection <input type="checkbox"/> (Emergency - Director's approval)		Request for: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New SSA – Individual Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Extension/ Amendment
If Extension, Justification for extension:		
Supervisor: Nguyen Thi Trang Social Policy Officer	Start Date: October 2024	End Date: 30 May 2025

Travel International (if applicable)	N/A		
Travel Local (please include travel plan)	3 trips * 1 people		
DSA (if applicable)	9 days * 1 people		
<p>Minimum Qualifications required*:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>Advanced degree in public (social) policy, development studies, economics, statistics, social work or social science-related field. Being part of academic or affiliate researcher is an asset</p> <p>*Minimum requirements to consider candidates for competitive process</p>	<p>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over 10 years of experience in undertaking cutting-edge policy-level research on social protection with focus on children. - Proven experience in developing formative assessment and operational manual on delivery of cash transfer programme - Knowledge of UNICEF’s organizational positioning on universal social protection / child grant, cash plus, child sensitive and shock responsive, is an advantage - Knowledge of Viet Nam’s socio-economic context as well as social protection framework and reform process would be an asset. - Excellent written and communication skills in English. <p>*Listed requirements will be used for technical evaluation in the competitive process</p>		
<p>Evaluation Criteria (This will be used for the Selection Report (for clarification see Guidance))</p> <p>A) Technical Evaluation (e.g. maximum 75 Points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational background (15 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Master’s degree, ideally in public (social) policy, development studies, economics, statistics, social work or social science-related field. • Relevant work experience (40 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimum 10 -years of working experience in doing research on social protection, social work, child protection and monitoring and evaluation ○ Have a good understanding of Da Nang’s socio-economic and partnership context. ○ Strong knowledge and technical capacity • Relevant skills and competencies (20 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Excellent research, analytical, writing, and communication skills; <p>B) Financial Proposal (e.g. maximum of 25 Points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All prices/rates quoted must be exclusive of all taxes as UNICEF is a tax-exempt organization. • Financial proposal should be all-inclusive lump-sum cost including consultancy fee, costs for domestic and international travels and communication. 			

Administrative details: Visa assistance required: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Home Based <input type="checkbox"/> Office Based:	If office based, seating arrangement identified: <input type="checkbox"/> IT and Communication equipment required: <input type="checkbox"/> Internet access required: <input type="checkbox"/>