

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Welfare Benefits Board (WBB)
Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization & National Policies (MoF)

SOCIAL PROTECTION PROJECT (SPP)

COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST (CS)

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Context. Sri Lankans have been hit by a significant economic downturn over the past two years. The spread of the coronavirus pandemic, as well as fiscal and monetary indiscipline have shrunk the economy. Sri Lanka's gross domestic product contracted by 7.8% in 2022, while inflation peaked at 69.8% in September 2022, and the Sri Lankan Rupee (LKR) depreciated close to 80 percent against the US dollar in 2022. As a result, the poverty rate doubled from 13.1% to 25% (\$3.65 per capita, 2017 PPP) between 2021 and 2022. Around 75% of households were estimated to have experienced a reduction in their incomes, and 37% of households were facing acute food insecurity in November 2022. Moreover, women-headed households, which were already 60 percent poorer than male headed households, were pushed deeper into poverty.

1.2 The Project. The Social Protection Project (P178973), approved by the World Bank (WB) Executive Board, supports the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) in implementing key reforms that will increase efficiency and effectiveness of spending and improving the responsiveness of the social protection system. The Project Development Objective of the Project is to support Sri Lanka in providing better targeted income and livelihoods opportunities to the poor and vulnerable.

1.3 Project Components and Funding. The total value of the Project is US\$200 million. The first component of the Project is allocated with \$185 million to streamline and finance the new country welfare benefit payment Aswesuma. The second component is allocated with US\$7 million to pilot an economic inclusion program – which will be Sri Lanka's first comprehensive "Economic Inclusion Pilot" – using global experience, and the third component of US\$8 million is to strengthen the government's capacity to deliver the social protection programs.

1.4 Implementation Arrangements. The Project has two implementing agencies: Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization & National Policies (MoF) and Ministry of Women, Child Affairs, Social Empowerment (MoWCASE). The Welfare Benefits Board (WBB), under MoF, will manage the day-to-day operations for strengthening of the social registry and payments to beneficiaries for new cash transfer program Aswesuma, while the Department of Samurdhi Development (DSD), under MoWCASE, will manage the day-to-day operations for the economic inclusion pilot and integrated family support.

The Project Management Team (PMT) in WBB is looking for a qualified Communication Specialist (CS) to help WBB conduct financial management activities related to the above Project.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The overall objective of the assignment is to provide technical support to WBB in implementing Project's communication activities in line with Project Appraisal Document and/or Project Operations Manual. The Communication Specialist will be responsible for designing, implementing, and monitoring overall communication strategy.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

- Develop Communication Strategy, systems, and action plans to help achieve the Project Development Objectives;
- Assist the WBB to finalize the proposed communication/media strategy and action plans;
- Conduct frequent stakeholder consultations to receive feedback to improve communication messages.
- Closely monitor feedback on communication messages using field visits and other methods and issue rejoinders (if necessary).
- Measure, assess and report progress on communication that helped to achieve of results.
- Consolidate, review and report key findings (from evaluations) in a prior agreed format, detailing lessons learned and specify recommendations for future actions for improvements.
- At weekly intervals, systematically review the communication strategic plan to ensure continuing relevance to project objectives and direction;
- Conduct research to monitor outcomes;
- Provide overall guidance on social issues and social inclusion working in close collaboration with the social safeguard specialist;
- Assist implementation of communication activities indicated in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and Stakeholder Engagement Plan,
- Build communication capacity of key stakeholders (or counterpart agencies) to present communication messages and effective use of available media;
- Design and develop internal communication messages and monitor progress;
- Prepare monthly communication reports to be shared with the WBB Board members, MoF, and the World Bank;
- Any other task as assigned by the Project Director (PD).

4. REPORTING OBLIGATION

The Communication Specialist will report directly to the Project Director and work closely with other PMT and WBB staff.

5. DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

This shall be a full-time work assignment at PMT in WBB, MoF. The services of the Communication Specialist is required for a period of 1 year with possible extension for the Project duration.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The consultant undertakes to comply with GoSL's and WB's policies and rules with regard to corrupt and fraudulent practices, conflict of interest and confidentiality. The consultant shall maintain confidentiality on all sensitive information obtained during the assignment and shall not publish wholly or in part the findings or such information, without prior written consent by the WBB. Any draft reports and other documents produced by the consultant will be discussed and cleared by the PD before their final issue.

7. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

- Read web advertisement to find out Educational / Professional Qualifications.
- High degree of computer literacy, and intermediate to advanced knowledge of Microsoft Office Package (Excel, Word and Power Point), Internet;
- Experience in monitoring media (both traditional and social media) is an advantage;
- Excellent report writing and good command of both spoken and written English and local languages are required.

8. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

- Ability to read and write excellent English and produce project reports in English for regular and continuous presentations to World Bank staff.
- Ability to guide and deliver the range of monitoring and evaluation activities required by the project.
- Ability to interact with staff in the relevant agencies.
- Effectiveness in analyzing and resolving media/communication issues.
- Familiarity with the relevant Government procedures and regulations in use of communication.
- High level of computer literacy, including Word, Excel, email and the internet.
- Strong communication skills and good interpersonal relations.

9. METHOD OF RECRUITMENT

Placement of advertisement to select the best candidate

The procurement method - Individual consultant selection method using the World Bank Procurement procedures.