NUTRITION INTERNATIONAL

Nourish Life

Request for Proposals for a

CONSULTANCY

Scoping Review of state and opportunities for advancing Nutrition-Sensitive Social Protection in the Asia Region

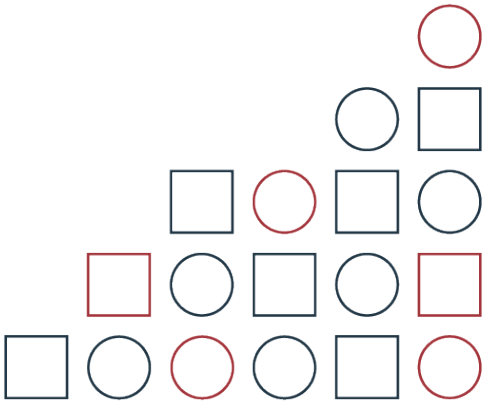
Issued by Nutrition International

Deadline for receipt of proposals:

22nd May, 2023

11:59PM EST Ottawa Time

Submit to: RMORGAN@NUTRITIONINTL.ORG



1. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RPF) NOTICE

Nutrition International, a global technical leader in nutrition specific interventions, micronutrient integration, and adolescent, women, and girl's nutrition, invites proposals from competent individual Consultants, or small Teams of Consultants, to support a Scoping Review of the State of and Opportunities for advancing Nutrition-Sensitive Social Protection in the Asia Region.

About Nutrition International

An International Development organization based in Ottawa, Canada, Nutrition International (NI) has a commitment to eradicate global 'hidden hunger' by implementing global interventions that focus on women and children in developing countries. It aims to generate innovative and sustainable solutions to reduce malnutrition among women, newborns, and children. It builds on robust evidence-based research and evaluation in order to demonstrate excellent return on investment in scaling-up highly cost-effective nutrition interventions. NI aspires to position itself as a global center of excellence in generating scientific research in the field of nutrition. It provides quality assurance for research and programmes while disseminating and translating new knowledge to influence and improve national and global policies and programmes.

Background

Social Safety Net Programs. Social safety net programs, also known as social welfare/protection programs, are services provided by governments, organizations, or groups of individuals at the national/sub-national levels. These are generally geared towards addressing poverty, and protecting families from the impact of economic shocks, natural disasters, and other crises.

Social protection floors comprise of nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees that should ensure, as a minimum that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essential health care and to basic income security, which together secure effective access to goods and services defined as necessary at the national level.

Ensuring social protection for children, adolescents, women and other vulnerable groups is essential to reducing poverty and vulnerability. Well-designed and implemented social protection systems have the power to shape countries, enhance human capital and productivity, reduce inequalities, build resilience, and end inter-generational cycle of poverty. To be effective, such systems and the programs they deliver need to be gender-responsive and inclusive. The efforts in extending social protection in many developing countries have underlined its key role in reducing poverty and vulnerability, redressing inequalities and enhancing inclusive growth. Their potential for addressing and reducing problems of malnutrition among priority groups such as women and young children is considerable, as demonstrated by emerging evidence and recent country examples. It has not yet however been fully explored.

With its particular mandate, **Nutrition International** has established a new Practice Area for Social Safety Nets (Social Protection) with the aim of identifying strategic opportunities to promote and advance nutrition-sensitive, gender-responsive programmes in key countries which have the potential, based on evidence, to leverage and maximise the positive impact of these programs for better nutritional outcomes.

Therefore, **Nutrition International** is seeking a **consultant or small consultancy team** to undertake a Scoping Review to *identify and understand existing good examples* and documented innovations in the Asia Region, and to *identify opportunities for Asian countries to further integrate nutrition* as part of their Social Protection platforms and programmes, based on evidence and good practice, including with potential future NI collaboration.

General instructions and considerations

- These instructions should be read in conjunction with information contained in full RFP below and the enclosed Terms of Reference (ToR) at Annex A.
- NI is not bound to accept the lowest priced, or any, proposal. NI reserves the right to request any (or all) Respondent(s) to meet with the NI to clarify their proposal(s) without commitment, and to publish answers to any questions raised by any Respondent (without identifying that Respondent).
- Respondents are responsible for all costs associated with the proposal preparation and will not receive any reimbursement by the NI.

RFP Timetable

The estimated schedule for the RFP and contract approval is as follows except for the Closing Date and Time, which is a Mandatory Requirement.

Activity	*Date Required*
RFP available for distribution	**25th April, 2023**
Deadline for Receipt of Questions	**15th May, 2023**
Closing Date and Time for Proposals – Mandatory	**22nd May, 2023, 11.59pm EST Ottawa time**
Evaluation and Selection Process Completion	**6th June, 2023**
Projected Contract Award Date	**12th June, 2023**

Proposal Communications

For the purpose of requesting information and clarification or for any other purpose relating to this RFP including the RFP process, Respondents are to contact only the Contracting Authority for this RFP.

Correspondence via e-mail shall be sent to: **rmorgan@nutritionintl.org**

All communication concerning this RFP is to be in writing, clearly marked with the title of this RFP. The request will specify the RFP section and page number as applicable.

All communication concerning this RFP is to be sent to the Contracting Authority by e-mail at the above noted e-mail address. NI will not be responsible for the delivery of any communication. NI recommends the Respondent confirm receipt of all communications with the Contracting Authority.

Proposal Preparation and Submission Process

Questions from Respondents

a) All inquiries regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing by the date specified above.

Submission of Proposal

a) Respondents' complete Technical and Financial Proposals must be received no later than the date and time specified above.
b) Submissions must be sent electronically via email as per indications above.
c) All the attachments must be labeled and referenced corresponding to the document type and Annexes accordingly.
d) Proposals must be clearly marked in the subject line as follows:
- RESPONDENT'S NAME: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL
- RESPONDENT'S NAME: FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

e) Late proposals will not be accepted under any circumstances. Proposal submissions received after the deadline stated above will be disqualified.

Modifications and withdrawals

a) All modifications to proposals must be received by NI prior to the submission deadline. The Respondent must clearly state the changes from the original proposal and indicate that the revised proposal supersedes the earlier version.
b) A proposal may be withdrawn by email by the Respondent prior to the submission deadline.
c) Negligence on the part of the Respondent confers no right for the withdrawal of the proposal after it has been opened.
d) Modifications and/or withdrawals of proposals must be sent by email as per indications above.

Conflict of Interest

- Respondents must disclose in their proposal details of any circumstances, including personal, financial and business activities that will, or might, give rise to a conflict of interest. This disclosure must extend to all personnel proposed to undertake the work.

- Where Respondents identify any potential conflicts they must state how they intend to avoid any impact arising from such conflicts. NI reserves the right to reject any proposals which, in NI's opinion, give rise, or could potentially give rise to, a conflict of interest.

General Disclosures

Respondents must disclose:

- If they are or have been the subject of any proceedings or other arrangements relating to bankruptcy, insolvency or the financial standing of the Respondent including but not limited to the appointment of any officer such as a receiver in relation to the Respondent personal or business matters or an arrangement with creditors or of any other similar proceedings.
- If they have been convicted of, or are the subject of any proceedings, relating to:
    - Criminal offence or other offence, a serious offence involving the activities of a criminal organization or found by any regulator or professional body to have committed professional misconduct.
    - Corruption including the offer or receipt of any inducement of any kind in relation to obtaining any contract, with the Nutrition International, or any other contracting body or authority.
    - Failure to fulfil any obligations in any jurisdiction relating to the payment of taxes.

Submission of proposal

The Consultant, or Lead Consultant in the case of a Team proposal, is expected to submit a short Technical and Financial proposal (not more than 6 pages, plus the Resume(s)) which should have the following outline:

First: Project description containing:

- Background.
- Demonstration of a high-level understanding of the scope and purpose of the assignment.

Second: Proposal: the proposal should describe:

- Specific objectives of the work.
- A narrative of the activities to be conducted to achieve each objective and proposed methods to be used.
- Proposed deliverable(s) for each activity.
- The competencies and experience that the Consultant would bring to the objectives.

Third: Workplan with a timeline: Workplan that includes the proposed and envisaged deadlines for each of the activities, milestones, and deliverables. *Include* Annex A in the Proposal.

Fourth: Financial Proposal: the Consultant shall submit a financial proposal detailing:

- Breakdown of expected activities and deliverables.
- Proposed cost disaggregated by the number of days.
- Dates when progress reports and invoices will be submitted
- *Include* Annex B in the Proposal.
- Note: all amounts need to be quoted in the home currency of the Consultant.
- Note: proposed fees should be inclusive of all insurance, tax, and standard business overheads.

Cover-Letter and Declaration

- Proposals must be accompanied by a Letter of Offer as per the format in Annex D, showing address of the Respondent. The letter must be signed and must quote the RfP title.

Profile

A full Resume(s) (CV[s]) must be submitted together with the Technical Proposal, with 3 current referees who may be contacted for references. Citations, examples and/or accessible electronic links to examples of relevant recent written work by the Candidate(s) should also be submitted as part of the CV(s).

Individual candidates, or teams of candidates should have the following:

At least 8 years of relevant experience in policy and program analysis and development research in a range of Asian country contexts.

Demonstrated ability to analyze policy and programs in both the social protection and health and nutrition sectors in Asia, with particular reference to social assistance (cash and food transfers) and nutrition-specific services.

Demonstrated competencies in evidence review based on secondary sources including literature search, key informant interviews, pro-active identification of illustrative examples, and document presentation and communication, including use of Power Point and graphics.

Prior track record in producing cross-country analytical reports including short country case studies.

Clearly-documented familiarity with Gender Equality, gender-responsiveness and inclusive approaches in social development and their application in practical programming contexts.

Familiarity with existing global evidence and best practice examples of gender-responsive, inclusive Nutrition-Sensitive Social Protection programs an advantage.

Strong writing and presentation skills and fluency in written English.

Submission

The technical and financial proposals shall be put into a covering E-mail specifically indicating with subject line **'Consultancy: Nutrition-Sensitive Social Protection in Asia".**

Proposals to be sent to:

Richard Morgan, Practice Area Lead, Social Safety Nets, Nutrition International

Email: **rmorgan@nutritionintl.org**

Cc: takintunde@nutritionintl.org

- Proposals must be submitted in English.
- Only E-mail bids will be accepted.
- Only those short-listed will receive an acknowledgment.

- Late proposals will not be accepted in any circumstances. Proposals received after the due date and time will not be considered.

2. RECEIPT, EVALUATION AND HANDLING OF PROPOSALS

Once a proposal is received before the due date and time, NI will:

- Log the receipt of the proposals and record the business information.
- Review all proposals and disqualify any non-responsive ones (that fail to meet the terms set out in these instructions) and retain the business details on file with a note indicating disqualification.
- Evaluate all responsive proposals objectively in line with the criteria specified below and inform respondents of the evaluation decision being made on a timely basis.

NI reserves the right to:

- Accept or reject any and all proposals, and/or to annul the RfP process, prior to award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Respondents or any obligation to inform the affected respondents of the grounds for NI's actions prior to contract award.
- Negotiate - with Respondent(s) invited to negotiate - the proposed technical approach and methodology, and the proposed price based on the Respondent's proposals.
- Amend this RFP at any time.

Submitted proposals will be shortlisted and the successful proposal will be identified based on the below selection criteria (See *Table 1*). The selected Respondent will be contacted and will be expected to enter in a Contract with NI for the duration of the consultancy. The terms and conditions of this current RfP will normally form part of the Contract.

The objective of the Evaluation and Selection Process is to identify the Proposal that effectively meets the requirements of this RFP and provides the best value to NI. A Proposal may be deemed non-compliant if it is not submitted in the requested format or if requested information is not submitted. All determinations are made at the sole discretion of NI.

Table 1: Scoring Criteria for Proposals

Consultancy : Scoping Review NSSP Asia		
Item	**Assessment Category**	**Weight**
Profile	The required qualifications and key competencies (education and work experience) to carry out the assignment are met by consultant (as per the presented resume(s))	30%
Project description	The project description provides a high-level understanding of the project scope	15%
Proposal	The proposal clearly indicates: 1) the proposed objectives of the work, 2) the activities to be conducted to achieve each objective, 3) the deliverable(s) for each activity.	20%
Workplan	The workplan includes a timeline with specific deadlines proposed for each of the activities, milestones, and deliverables.	10%
Financial proposal	The financial proposal captures all critical components, any expenses, and justification summaries	25%
TOTAL		**100**

The Evaluation Stages

Stage 1: Review of Mandatory Requirements

Stage 2: Review of Technical Proposal

Stage 3: Review of Financial Proposal

Stage 4: Overall Ranking and Final Selection

Review of Mandatory Requirements: each proposal first will be evaluated for completeness of the submission. Failure to comply with any of the terms and conditions contained in the RFP including, but not limited to, failure to provide all the required information or documentation, may result in disqualification.

Once confirmed that the Respondent has met the mandatory submission requirements of the RFP, Technical Proposals will be evaluated by NI based on their compliance with the requirements set out in this RFP and the Terms of Reference in Annex A below.

Financial Proposals will be evaluated based on their compliance with the requirements as set out in this RFP. Evaluation considerations may include but are not limited to:

a) competitiveness of pricing;
b) compatibility of delivery schedule with needs;
c) prior performance (for previously contracted Respondents);
d) risk assessment and identification; and
e) managerial ability to complete the tasks set out in the RFP.

Respondents may be requested to correct errors or inconsistencies identified by NI during the proposal evaluation process. Respondents that do not comply with such requests within the timeframe communicated will be disqualified.

All the terms and conditions of this RFP and its Annexures, including the Respondent's response to this RFP, will form a part of the award unless otherwise negotiated. The Respondent understands that if it proposes an amendment or additional terms to the award, these must be clearly detailed in the proposal and may affect the evaluation of the proposal.

3. MANDATORY SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Mandatory Requirements

Mandatory Requirements must be met by all Respondents, failing which their Proposals will be disqualified. Where requested, the Respondent must demonstrate compliance to the Mandatory Requirement or submit the substantiating information requested.

Preparation of Proposals

In response to this RFP, Respondents will prepare proposals composed of two proposals: a) Technical Proposal in accordance with the requirements as stated in this RFP and the Terms of Reference; and b) Financial proposal, in accordance with the requirements as stated in this RFP.

All proposals and required documentation must be provided in English.

Respondents must indicate the validity period of their proposals. Proposal must be valid at least 60 days from the submission deadline.

Respondents are responsible for all costs associated with proposal preparation and submission.

Where any certifications submitted as part of this RFP expire before or during the period of the award, the Respondent will be required to submit renewed certificates. Any costs associated with this will be borne by the Respondent.

Respondents must disclose any circumstances, including personal, financial, and business activities that will or might give rise to a conflict of interest. This disclosure must extend to all personnel proposed to undertake the work should the Respondent receive an award. Where Respondents identify any potential conflicts, they must state how they intend to avoid any impact arising from such conflicts.

Respondents must disclose if they are or have been the subject of any proceedings or other arrangements relating to bankruptcy, insolvency, or the financial standing of the Respondent including, but not limited to, the appointment of any officer such as a receiver in relation to the Respondent's personal or business matters or an arrangement with creditors or of any other similar proceedings.

Respondents must disclose if the company or key personnel have been convicted of, or are the subject of any proceedings relating to a criminal offence or other office, a serious offence

involving the activities of a criminal organization, found by any regulator or professional body to have committed professional misconduct; corruption including the offer or receipt of any inducement of any kind in relation to obtaining any contract with NI, or any other contracting body or authority; failure to fulfil any obligations in any jurisdiction relating to the payment of taxes.

Letter of offer

Respondents are required to submit a letter of offer **as per the format in Annex D**, expressing:

- **a)** Interest in participating in the RFP
- **b)** Confirming that all information submitted is true and correct,
- **c)** The Respondent meets the technical requirements for this RFP, and can adhere to the timeline of the Work Plan.
- **d)** The proposal (Technical and Financial) has been arrived at independently and without consultation, communication, agreement or understanding (for the purpose of restricting competition) with any other Respondent to or recipient of this RFP from NI.
- **e)** All the financial information submitted in the proposal is true and correct
- **f)** Any required disclosures or conflicting interests have been fully described in the proposal
- **g)** The person submitting has authority to submit this proposal and to clarify any details.

4. CONTRACT AWARD

Any contract award made pursuant to this RFP is conditional upon the Selected Respondent entering into a contract with NI and conditional upon formal approval by NI in accordance with NI's Decision Making Practices. The contract terms will be as per NI's standard contract. Once the Respondent has been selected, the agreement may be modified and the contract will be awarded at the discretion of NI.

NI shall advise the Selected Respondent once NI is ready to commence negotiations. The negotiations shall be concluded within a timeframe mandated by NI, acting reasonably. At the conclusion of negotiations, NI shall endeavour as expediently as possible to prepare and provide to the Selected Respondent the signed Execution Copy of the contract. The Selected Respondent shall sign the contract within a reasonable time frame.

In the event that one or more of the following situations occur,

- **a)** The negotiations with the Selected Respondent are not successful and NI, in its sole discretion, does not think that a contract on terms satisfactory to NI can be reached; or
- **b)** The Selected Respondent fails to employ best efforts to finalize the contract during the timeframe mandated by NI; or
- **c)** The Selected Respondent fails or refuses to enter into the contract within the timeframe mandated by NI.

NI without liability, cost or penalty, may, in its sole discretion:

a) Extend the period for negotiation or execution; or
b) Cease negotiations with the Selected Respondent; or
c) Exercise NI's rights to cancel the RFP; or
d) Enter into negotiations with another Respondent.

5. RIGHTS OF NUTRITION INTERNATIONAL AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nutrition International's Rights

NI's Right to Amend, Supplement or Cancel the RFP without liability, cost or penalty, may in its sole discretion:

a) Alter any dates in the RFP, as they relate to the RFP Process, at any time prior to or after the Closing Date and Time;
b) Cancel this RFP at any time, whether prior to or after the Closing Date and Time, and NI may, but need not, in its sole discretion, issue a new RFP;
c) Amend or supplement this RFP at any time prior to the Closing Date and Time.

This is a Request for Proposal to supply NI's needs for the requirements described in this RFP. NI is not bound to accept the lowest priced proposal, or any, proposal. While price is an important element in the selection process, Respondents should recognize that there are other criteria in this RFP that NI will consider in evaluating Proposals and in making its decision as to contract award(s).

NI, without liability, cost or penalty, may, in its sole discretion, waive irregularities in Proposals or in the submission of Proposals.

NI, through the Contracting Authority, without liability, cost or penalty, may, in its sole discretion and at any time after Proposal submission, seek clarification from any Respondent, either in writing or during an oral presentation, with respect to its Proposal. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, NI may, in its sole discretion, request a Respondent to confirm in writing any statement made by the Respondent during oral presentation in which case the Respondent will promptly provide such written confirmation to NI, within the time specified by the Contracting Authority.

Any written information received by NI from a Respondent in response to a request for clarification from NI will be considered as an integral part of the Respondent's Proposal.

Without prejudice to this right, NI may request clarification where any Respondent's intent is unclear, or may waive or request amendments where, in the opinion of NI, there is an irregularity or omission in the information that has been submitted in the Proposal. NI reserves the right to conduct negotiations on any portion of the Respondent's Proposal.

NI may verify any Respondents statement or claim by whatever means NI deems appropriate, including contacting references other than those offered by the Respondent, and may reject

any Respondent statement or claim if, in the judgment of NI, the statement or claim is unwarranted or not credible. The Respondent will co-operate with NI in its attempts to verify any such statement or claim.

NI reserves the right to accept a Proposal in whole or in part, and to split or divide the total requirement among Respondents at the sole discretion of NI.

NI may negotiate with one or more technically compliant Respondents and seek a best and final offer from technically compliant Respondents on any part of the technical or price/cost proposals submitted, as part of this RFP process.

NI may reject any proposal received from a Respondent that, in the sole opinion of NI, has previously failed to perform satisfactorily, or that NI believes is not in a position to meet the requirements of the RFP.

NI may reject any proposal that, in the sole opinion of NI fails to meet the requirements and instructions stated in this RFP.

NI may suspend negotiations or withdraw an award to a Respondent at any time. NI is not required to provide any justification, but will give notice prior to any such suspension of negotiations or withdrawal of award.

NI will exercise its discretionary rights under this RFP in a reasonable manner.

Disqualification of Proposals on Grounds of Faulty Submission

NI, without liability, cost or penalty, in its sole discretion, may disqualify any Proposal at any time during the RFP process if, in the opinion of NI, one or more of the following events occur:

- **a)** it contains incorrect information;
- **b)** it is unresponsive to this RFP;
- **c)** the Respondent fails to cooperate with NI in its attempts to clarify information or evaluate the Proposal;
- **d)** the Respondent misrepresents any information provided in its Proposal;
- **e)** it is incomplete;
- **f)** the Proposal, on its face, reveals a conflict of interest or unfair advantage; or
- **g)** a change has occurred in the management or ownership structure of the Selected Respondent.

Costs Incurred By Respondents

Nothing in this RFP, receipt by NI of a response to this RFP, or subsequent negotiations by NI of terms of a contract to supply, shall in any way impose an obligation on NI to reimburse any Respondent or to pay any compensation for costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP, presentations, or the negotiation of a proposed contract except to the extent that such obligation is contained in the formal written contract containing terms and conditions satisfactory to NI and executed by the Respondent and NI.

No Obligation to Purchase

Nothing in this RFP, receipt by NI of a response to this RFP, or subsequent negotiations by NI of terms of a contract to supply, shall in any way impose a legal obligation on NI to make any purchases from any Respondent.

Additional Information, Clarification and Addenda

It is the responsibility of the Respondent to seek clarification on any matter it considers to be unclear in this RFP, including any attachments. NI will not be responsible for any misunderstanding on the part of the Respondent concerning this RFP, the RFP process or the attachments.

Respondents who wish to obtain further information and clarification about the RFP, the RFP attachments or the RFP process are to submit their questions in writing to the Contracting Authority at the e-mail address set out earlier in this RFP.

The Contracting Authority will accept written questions no later than the date and time indicated in the RFP Timetable (the "Deadline for Receipt of Questions"). The request will specify the RFP Section attachment and page number as applicable.

NI's responses to the questions will be provided or made available to all who requested or responded to the RFP, without identifying the source of the question.

Respondents are advised that the deadline for receipt of questions from potential Respondents is the final opportunity for Respondents to seek clarification with respect to this RFP.

If an addendum to the RFP is issued, the Proposal due date may be changed to allow additional time for Respondents to complete their Proposals. Respondents shall be advised of any new Proposal due date by addendum.

Communications - Contract Authority

The Respondent is put on notice that:

a) Only the Contracting Authority is authorized by and on behalf of NI to amend the requirements of this RFP, and that the Respondent is to rely only upon the information provided in writing by the Contracting Authority;

b) Any communication pertaining to this RFP with any employee of NI other than the Contract Authority will constitute a breach of NI's procedures and may result in the disqualification of the Respondent as a potential supplier.

Any amendments or supplements to this RFP shall be made only by way of addenda issued by the Contracting Authority in the same manner in which this RFP was issued, and any amendments or supplements to this RFP made in any other manner, including any oral or written statement made by NI, the Contracting Authority, or their respective employees, agents, consultants or advisors, shall not constitute an addendum to this RFP. Where there appears to be a conflict between the RFP and any addendum, the last addendum will prevail.

Addenda will not be used to answer Respondent's questions. Answers to questions will follow the process outlined above.

The addenda shall be binding on each Respondent, and NI has the right to assume that the Respondent in its Proposal has taken the information contained in the addenda into account.

The Respondent is solely responsible to ensure that it has received all addendums, if any, issued pursuant to this sub-section.

6. LITIGATION

If NI or any of its officers, employees, assigns, independent contractors, subcontractors, agents or representatives is made a party to any litigation arising out of or by reason of or attributable to this RFP, then the applicable Respondent(s) shall indemnify and save harmless NI and its officers, employees, assigns, independent contractors, subcontractors, agents or representatives in connection with such litigation, except to the extent that such litigation arose from the negligence or wilful act of NI, or any of its officers, employees, assigns, independent contractors, subcontractors, agents or representatives while acting within the scope of his, her or its employment or engagement. NI may, at its option, and at the expense of the Respondent, participate in or assume carriage of any litigation or settlement discussions relating to the foregoing, or any other matter for which the Respondent is required to indemnify NI and its officers, employees, assigns, independent contractors, subcontractors, agents or representatives. Alternatively, NI may require the Respondent to assume or maintain carriage of and responsibility for all or any part of such litigation or discussion, at the Respondent's expense.

This RFP, all referenced materials and all annexes constitute the entire RFP.

7. ANNEX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy for Scoping Review of state and opportunities for advancing Nutrition-Sensitive Social Protection in the Asia Region

Global Technical Services and NTEAM
Nutrition International

Background and Context

Asia continues to face high population growth rates and damaging rates of stunted growth among its youngest citizens as well as other widespread forms of malnutrition. Asia leads other world regions with not only the highest percentage of children under 5 who are underweight or wasted (21.9% and 11.2% respectively, as of 2011), but given the population density across the region, it is also home to the greatest total number of children under 5 who are stunted, wasted, or underweight (103.5 million, 39.2 million, and 76.6 million respectively, as of 20111) (Black et al. 2013). Of the subregions in Asia, South-Central Asia has the highest prevalence and absolute numbers of children who are stunted (37.8%, 71.5 million), wasted (16.1%, 30.4 million), and underweight (31.8%, 60 million) (Black et al. 2013).

Many Governments across Asia have established robust and far-reaching systems of social security, in the form of Social Protection Programs (SPPs) which provide food or cash transfers to highly vulnerable groups, such as mothers and young children, and families in poverty. Further SPPs include long-standing education-based support through school meals and stipends. Other Asian countries are in an earlier stage of establishing such initiatives. In most cases, existing SPPs provided flexible platforms through which to deliver emergency support in response to the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and in the event of natural disasters. Further, with increasing recognition of the nutrition challenges they and their vulnerable group populations face, countries in Asia are seeking to better optimize the effects of their investments in SPPs on nutritional progress. These expansions of national SPPs and their moves towards greater "nutrition sensitivity" represent widening 'windows of opportunity' to link health & nutrition, food sector and economic services more effectively with programs which provide assistance to the most vulnerable populations and the poorest families.

Nutrition International (NI) is mounting a significant investment to help countries to embed nutrition in SPPs in situations with very high burdens of child and maternal malnutrition. Taking a 'no missed opportunities' approach and based on systems analysis and global evidence of the most powerful impact pathways, NI provides technical assistance to assessment and design, resource mobilisation for impact at scale, and the implementation of catalytic measures. NI's support is integrated in national and local delivery systems at the intersection of social protection, health & nutrition services and food security, in order to help Governments expand their investments for sustained impact on nutrition and the building of resilient lives.

This is a critical moment in which new policy measures adopted by Governments need to effectively mitigate the knock-on effects of COVID-19 and the global food crisis for millions of

vulnerable people in poor families – those who are already most nutritionally at risk - as part of sustained recovery and renewed development.

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

Social protection is defined as the set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labor markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income. Social protection is recognized by most governments, including across Asia, as an effective tool to improve the populations' well-being.

A widely used definition of Social Protection, from the global SP Coordination Body SPIAC-B, is:

"Social protection is a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, throughout their life cycle placing a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups. ...This protection can be provided through social insurance, tax-funded social benefits, social assistance services, public works programs and other schemes guaranteeing basic income security and access to essential services."

The term 'Social Protection" encompasses:

- **Social Safety Nets** (also called Social Assistance) – e.g. food and cash transfers, fee waivers, food subsidies, public works
- **Social Insurance** – e.g. contributory workplace pensions, unemployment benefits
- **Social Services** – e.g. access to basic health, education, nutrition services

Social protection consists of five major elements: (i) labor markets, (ii) social insurance, (iii) social assistance, (iv) micro and area-based schemes to protect communities and (v) child protection.

ADB had commissioned a scoping study in 2013 in four countries of Asia; Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Philippines. Another study was supported by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the research was co-led by International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and UNICEF teams. This mapped 215 programmes from 30 countries, of which 141 were profiled. Out of these, 135 programs were found to provide cash benefits, while 37 provide food, and 66 offer other types of benefits, which may consist of services or other in-kind goods.

Such SPPs have in most cases not been directly targeted to improving the diets and nutritional status of highly vulnerable groups. However, the potential for optimizing design, implementation, monitoring and other features of these programs in order to enhance their nutritional impacts is now more widely recognized, both in literature of evidence from SPPs in individual countries, including examples in Asia, and in policy forums such as the International Conference of Nutrition (ICN), Tokyo 2022.

However, the effectiveness of SPPs in Asia and globally for improving child nutrition has so far been mixed: while cash, food and other forms of transfer have consistently been shown to increase family food expenditure and consumption, and to some extent dietary diversification,

as well as boosting the use of health services by poor families, clear improvements in child nutritional status and outcomes have been less systematic[1].

A number of key challenges can be identified across Social Protection programmes:

- In some cases, national Social Protection frameworks were not built to include nutrition goals, objectives and targets.
- Often, inadequate linkages exist at some or all levels between cash and food transfers and health and nutrition services, and with other essential interventions such as clean water and better sanitation; as well as in providing information to families and caregivers benefiting from social assistance in areas such as maternal and young child care and feeding, food safety, hygiene and sanitation practices.
- Many opportunities may be missed for closer integration between the Social Protection and Health & Nutrition sectors and their goals, including through the distribution of fortified food, the promotion of improved diets, and the bundling, co-location, promotion or distribution of nutritional supplements and products through Social Protection platforms.
- Many designs are not yet nutrition-sensitive nor do they incorporate explicit aims for greater gender equality. And even where this is now the case, there remain significant practical challenges of multi-sectoral coordination, communication, and achieving the necessary convergence and synergies of local systems for women and children.

NUTRITION INTERNATIONAL's CONTRIBUTION

Nutrition International (NI) is supporting the introduction and embedding of micronutrient fortification through different food vehicles in the social safety net and SPPs of the national, state, provincial Governments in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. In India, NI has supported fortification of salt with iodine, double fortified salt (DFS) with iodine and iron, fortification of rice in different states. A large-scale effectiveness study of DFS has been completed in the state of MP with positive results in increasing the purchase, acceptability and consumption of DFS and a reduction in the prevalence in iron deficiency anaemia in the study population. In Bangladesh, NI is supporting the VGD program with rice fortification and is undertaking baseline surveys of the social safety net in one district of the country. In Indonesia, NI is supporting the fortification of wheat flour and in Pakistan, the fortification of oil is supported.

NI has extended the scope of its operations since 2021 to address the nutritional opportunities presented by Social Protection Programs and identify the most promising impact pathways through which Governments can seize these opportunities. In 2022, NI concluded a global evidence review of nutrition-sensitive Social Protection with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), which provided valuable insights from international experience on recommended SPP design and operations. The results of this review were presented in conjunction with the ICN in Tokyo. NI is working with a group of international partners, including WFP, FAO and UNICEF, to develop global guidelines and best practice examples in support of national efforts to design and implement SPPs which are impactful for the most vulnerable groups and those at greatest nutritional risk. On this basis, NI is expanding its technical support to Governments and collaboration with Regional organizations in support of

[1] Cash transfers and child nutritional outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis | BMJ Global Health

the design and implementation of SPPs, including to strengthen their synergies with the health, nutrition and food security sectors.

LANDSCAPE AND SCOPING REVIEW

It is planned to undertake a regional Scoping and synthesis Review of the policy and program landscape to understand the *current scope* of integration of nutrition into social safety net policies and SPPs by Asian governments, as well as the potential *gaps and further opportunities* for doing so.

The Scoping Review will search out and capture *dynamic initiatives, good practices and well-evidenced SP innovations* which have shown a proven or plausible impact for advancing nutrition among priority groups through pathways such as improved diets and household food security, better child health and the empowerment of women. This will include case study profiles of programs and innovations in Asian states.

The Review will *identify options* for scaling up evidence-based nutrition-sensitive social protection (NSSP) initiatives, including design, operational and monitoring measures, as well as multi-sectoral linkages and approaches, particularly where households and vulnerable groups are still vulnerable to shocks or are weakened due to huge impact of COVID-19 and food price inflation.

The Review will be based on the most relevant published country and regional documentation and other literature identified by the Consultant(s) and Nutrition International, as well as that available from partners within the Region. Background notes and information will be provided to the Consultant(s) by NI. A few selected Key Informant Interviews may be undertaken. The Review will use the framework of "plausible impact pathways" for better nutrition among priority groups identified by Nutrition International's 2022 global evidence review with IFPRI, as well as other recently published systemic reviews and evaluations.

The Review will identify opportunities for strategic and thought leadership at the Regional level in taking forward NSSP, based on the identified innovations, good practice and documented initiatives. It will also support the identification of further entry points for Nutrition International, multilateral partners and potentially-interested national Governments in the area of Social Protection within a multi-sectoral approach to advancing nutrition through Social Protection in a public health framework.

Consultancy Objectives

The Scoping Review will provide analysis and synthesized documentation to meet the following Consultancy Objectives:

- The scoping and identification of the most relevant and positively-impactful social assistance programs and innovations reaching nutritionally-vulnerable groups across the Region, and the supporting policy, legal, regulatory, economic and budgetary environments in which nutrition-sensitive SP programs and specific, evidenced interventions have been embedded.

- The identification and presentation of good practice and evidence-based examples of nutrition-sensitive SPPs, including specific innovations, by reviewing available literature and information from leading efforts in Asia and synthesizing these in highly accessible formats.

- Identification and outline of options and recommendations for the scale-up and inter-country spread of the identified evidenced good practices and innovations to improve policy design and implementation by embedding both nutrition-specific and nutrition sensitive interventions into SPPs. This will include (but not be limited to) a focus on: increased coverage among nutritionally-vulnerable groups, adequacy and reliability of transfers, improved composition of food distribution packages and meals, cross-sectoral linkages with health and other systems, building nutritional and dietary awareness through communication and messaging, including on care and feeding practices, strengthening the decision-making role of women, and/or bundling, co-locating, co-referral and distribution of nutritional products and services through Social Protection platforms.

- Provision of options and recommendations on cost-effective and potentially transformative pathways and strategies to strengthen the implementation of SPPs for improved nutrition across the Region into the medium term.

Follow Up

The Scoping Review will be used to support and enable strategic thought leadership and initiatives by NI with regional, global and national partners in the area of Nutrition-Sensitive Social Protection; as well as knowledge exchange and networking among Asian States, policy-focused institutions, other Governments and international partners; on 'what works' in optimizing national Social Protection programmes for healthy growth and nutritional development among nutritionally-vulnerable populations.

This initiative will also strengthen the analysis and evidence base for the work of Asian national and multilateral policy-makers with the aim of moving decisively towards achievement of the SDGs in health, nutrition, gender equality and poverty reduction and of global nutrition goals across all parts of the Region. In doing so, it will help identify and disseminate affordable, well-evidenced and relevant interventions to promote progress in developing human capital and life-chances from the earliest years of life that include the most vulnerable groups and "leaves no one behind".

Deliverables

1. Inception Report outlining the schedule of activities, working methods, proposed structure of the Report, issues to be discussed and resolved.

2. Full Draft Scoping Review Report including: i) narrative synthesis Report covering the Asia Region (35 – 50 pages); ii) 12x annexed draft Country Case Studies as per draft outline below; iii) short panel profiles of good practices and innovations in Nutrition-Sensitive Social protection, within the main narrative report; iv) references and bibliography.

3. 2 x Powerpoint presentations based on the Draft Report (roughly 20 - 30 slides each) – note, these may be required before deliverable 2, depending on the timing of external events

4. Final Scoping Review Report taking into account comments from NI and partners, with full and final format, tables, lists of examples, short panels, Annexed Case Studies, full references, etc.

Draft Outline for Annexed Country Case Studies (12)

[to include: Vietnam, Cambodia, PDR Laos, Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, plus a further 2 to be identified based on regional balance and available sources]

1. Country Overview and Background (including development and nutrition challenges)
2. Outline of the Main SSNP/Social Protection Policies and Programs (including historical evolution)
3. SP Programme Impact: Coverage, Effectiveness and Challenges
4. The Nutrition Dimensions of the SPPs: goals, intersectoral linkages, good practices, innovations and future opportunities [Note: this includes promotion of access and use of nutrition-specific health system services by SPPs, and instances of integration of nutrition-specific services with/within SPP platforms and delivery systems].
5. What did [Name of Country] do? Summary of Country Experience and Insights with Nutrition-Sensitive Social Protection

Annex: Key Country Data and References

Note: Innovation and Good Practice Case Studies: the format is to be proposed by the Consultancy as part of the Inception Report

Qualifications and Experience

(to be covered by an individual Consultant or a small Team of Consultants):

At least 8 years of relevant experience in policy and program analysis and development research in a range of Asian country contexts.

Demonstrated ability to analyze policy and programs in both the social protection and health and nutrition sectors in Asia, with particular reference to social assistance (cash and food transfers) and nutrition-specific services.

Demonstrated competencies in evidence review based on secondary sources including literature search, key informant interviews, pro-active identification of illustrative examples, and document presentation and communication, including use of Power Point and graphics.

Prior track record in producing cross-country analytical reports including short country case studies.

Clearly-documented familiarity with Gender Equality, gender-responsiveness and inclusive approaches in social development and their application in practical programming contexts.

Familiarity with existing global evidence and best practice examples of gender-responsive, inclusive Nutrition-Sensitive Social Protection programs an advantage.

Strong writing and presentation skills and fluency in written English.

Timeline

The consultancy is expected to be conducted over a 4 – 5 month period (around 22 working days per month), with a target start date of 15 June 2023. All activities should be finalized by mid-November 2023 or before.

Consultancy Fees

NI shall pay the Consultant (or designed Lead Consultant in case of a Team) a daily fee commensurate with the number of days actually worked by the Consultant or Consultants, and in accordance with the workplan agreed upon between the NI and the Lead Consultant. Payments will be made upon invoices submitted following acceptance by NI of the contracted deliverables in satisfactory form.

In case of a Consultancy Team, NI will contract the designated and agreed Lead Consultant, who will be responsible for contracting other members of the Team in turn and invoicing NI on their behalf. NI will only make payments to the Lead Consultant. Payments will be made in Canadian Dollars unless otherwise agreed.

The proposed total fees and any or all associated expenses for this assignment should not exceed the equivalent of 80,000 Canadian Dollars *approximately*.

Consultancy Management

The Consultancy will be technically managed by the Practice Area Lead, Social Safety Nets, Nutrition International, in conjunction and close coordination with the Asia Regional Office designed lead and the Asia NTEAM Manager.

In case of a multi-person consultancy team, the Lead Consultant will be the accountable party and the main interlocuter with NI. However, all Team members will participate in planning and progress discussions and other technical meetings.

8. ANNEX B: WORKPLAN AND TIMELINE

Activities	Deliverables	Month 1				Month 2				Month 3				Month 4				Month 5				Month 6			
		W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4

9. ANNEX C: BUDGET TEMPLATE

	Particulars	Person-Days	Rate	Remarks
A	**SALARIES/PROFESSIONAL FEES**			
A1	Professional fee			
B	**Any other costs proposed**			
C	**Total (STATE HOME CURRENCY OF CONSULTANT)**			

10. ANNEX D - LETTER OF OFFER

To: NUTRITION INTERNATIONAL

180 Elgin Street, Suite 1000, Ottawa,

Ontario, K2P 2K3, Canada

Attention: Richard Morgan (rmorgan@nutritionintl.org)

Cc: takintunde@nutritionintl.org

Re: Letter of Offer - {INSERT TITLE of RFP}

I am submitting a Proposal in response to the referenced RFP, and hereby offer to provide the services as indicated in the RFP in consideration of payment by Nutrition International (NI).

The Respondent acknowledges that responses to the RFP must be stand-alone documents, complete and integral in their own right, containing everything necessary to allow NI to evaluate them fully, subject to any need NI may have for clarification in respect of any given response. Previously submitted information cannot be considered.

I have carefully examined the RFP documents and have a clear understanding of the requirements of the RFP and the RFP Process. By submitting the Proposal, I acknowledge that I have read and understood and will comply with all sections of the RFP and have submitted all substantiating information as requested. I understand that failure to submit requested substantiating information or if the substantiating information does not meet the Mandatory Requirements will result in disqualification of the Proposal.

I do not and will not have any conflict of interest (actual or potential) in submitting this Proposal or, if selected, with my contractual obligations as the vendor under contract.

I am not aware of any potential conflict of interest where an employee or family member of an employee of Nutrition International has an interest in my organization (the Respondent).

If I am in a Conflict of Interest (Actual or Potential), I have completed the Declaration of (Actual or Potential) Conflict of Interest document located in this Annex.

I have no knowledge of or ability to avail myself of Confidential Information of NI other than the Confidential Information which may have been disclosed by NI to the Respondents in the normal course of this RFP.

I am not involved in collusion or arrangement with any other Respondent in connection with this RFP. I have no knowledge of and have made no comparison of the information in my Proposal with the information contained in any other Proposal.

I certify that the submitted financial information is true and correct.

I understand that my submitted Proposal may be accepted by Nutrition International in whole or in part, within the Validity Period, and is irrevocable during that period.

In the event NI selects my Proposal, in whole or in part, I agree to finalize and execute the Agreement in accordance with procedures stated in the RFP.I understand that the Proposal must be a standalone document complete in its own right containing everything necessary to allow NI to evaluate this fully.

I hereby consent to NI performing checks with the references listed in the Proposal.

I acknowledge and understand that NI may disqualify the Proposal of any Respondent where the Respondent fails to provide information or makes misrepresentations regarding any of the information included in the Letter of Offer. Further, I acknowledge and understand that NI will have the right to rescind any contract resulting from this RFP with the Selected Respondent in the event that NI, in its sole discretion, determines that the Selected Respondent has failed to provide information or made misrepresentations regarding any of the information in the Letter of Offer of the Respondent, in addition to or in lieu of any other remedies that NI has in law or in equity.

SIGNED

_____

Name of Consultant (and organization if applicable)

_____

Print Name and Title

Signature of Respondent

Date

I have authority to bind the Respondent

Attachment to Letter of Offer

Declaration of (Actual or Potential) Conflict of Interest: