

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



Ministry of Finance
Male', Maldives

Terms of Reference

Systems Analyst

“Assessment of Information Systems and Capacity to Implement Targeting and Direct Transfer Mechanisms”

Maldives Competitiveness and Growth Project (P179286)

[Consultancy No: MV-MOF-MV-397412-CS-INDV]

Loan No./Credit No./ Grant No.: IDA-73050, IDA-E1690

A. Background

The Maldives Competitiveness and Growth Project (MCGP, “the project”) is a new 5-year investment project financed by the World Bank for the Government of Maldives (GoM) through Investment Project Financing (IPF) with Performance-Based Conditions (PBCs), declared effective on 23 June 2023 and to be implemented by the Ministry of Finance (MoF). The overall Project Development Objective (PDO) is to strengthen private participation in and financial sustainability of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), and the support mechanisms for the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The project comprises of three components which are as follows:

Component 1: Accelerating SOE Reforms

- i. Sub-component 1.1: Increasing Private Participation in Ownership of Select SOEs
- ii. Sub-component 1.2: Improving Governance of SOEs at the Program and Corporate level
- iii. Sub-component 1.3: Reforming SOE Public Service Obligations

Component 2: Fostering SME Competitiveness

- iv. Sub-component 2.1: Digital Financial Infrastructure
- v. Sub-component 2.2: SME Growth Acceleration Program

Component 3: Project Management

SOEs form a significant part of the Maldivian economy and many of them are among the largest commercial entities in the country, and engaged in infrastructure, financial services, tourism, fishing, petroleum, retail, construction, and property development among other sectors. There is considerable potential to strengthen the governance mechanisms of SOEs, enhance the accounting and financial reporting quality, and optimize resource utilization. Currently, SOEs are heavily reliant on capital contributions indirect subsidies provided by the Government. Electricity, fuel, staple foods and sanitation subsidies are estimated to account for approximately 90 percent of

expenditure on total indirect subsidies in 2023, and these expenditures have been rising consistently along with the global market prices of fuel and staple foods.

The National Social Protection Agency (NSPA) is mandated to administer and oversee social protection programs identified by the Government to protect Maldivian citizens from the effects of poverty. At present, NSPA administers multiple targeted and blanket financial assistance programs including medical welfare, allowances for disability, single parents and foster parents, and food assistance. In addition, the GoM directed an Emergency Income Support Program with assistance from the World Bank in response to the COVID-19 crisis, to mitigate the income loss faced by workers.

In order to stabilize Government spending on subsidies to sustainable levels and to increase the efficiency of the social protection system, MoF is exploring a proposal to reform the current indirect subsidy regime with targeted, direct cash transfers. This reform is the major policy change proposed in the Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy 2024 – 2026 submitted to the Parliament.

Officials from MoF led by the Fiscal Affairs Department (FAD), NSPA, and other relevant Government agencies are working on finalizing the design of the proposed direct transfer mechanism, the overall subsidy reform program and the administrative set-up required to implement this. The World Bank is currently providing Technical Assistance (TA) support through multiple avenues other than MCGP to the GoM including MoF and NSPA on subsidy reform and targeting mechanisms.

The MCGP will support the proposed subsidy reform program through financing consultancies and TA aimed at supporting better targeting and accountability of subsidies, and providing advice on drafting a subsidy reform policy, as part of the broader project objective of strengthening financial sustainability of SOEs. The project will utilize the services of multiple international and local expert consultants in subsidy reform and other SOE reforms, in addition to a dedicated communications team to develop and implement a strong communications program for private participation and subsidy reform.

In this context, the project is looking to hire a short-term Consultant to undertake an assessment of the existing information systems, IT infrastructure and human capacity at NSPA and other relevant agencies to implement the proposed targeting and transfer mechanisms, and recommend measures on strengthening existing systems, and develop technical specifications on any new IT systems or upgrades as required.

B. Objectives

1. Assess the readiness of existing information systems of NSPA and identify gaps in data collection and design to implement the proposed targeting and direct transfer mechanism.
2. Develop technical specifications to upgrade existing or develop new information systems, if required, incorporating both the functionality of the existing NSPA systems and the requirements for the proposed direct transfer mechanism.
3. Assess and strengthen the capacity of GoM and NSPA to utilize information systems to design and implement targeting and direct transfers.

C. Scope of Work

1. Identify gaps in data collection, processing, and storage that may impede the successful implementation of targeting and direct transfer mechanisms.
2. Conduct a holistic readiness assessment encompassing the existing information systems, human resources (HR) and organizational capacity at NSPA and relevant government agencies
3. Evaluate the readiness of HR, data collection/sharing processes, and interoperability among Government agencies to support the proposed targeting and direct transfer mechanism.
4. Identify and consult with key stakeholders in the development of these assessments.
5. Evaluate the compatibility of existing databases and systems against the identified requirements to determine whether improvements to the existing system or the development of a new system would be more effective.
6. Develop detailed technical specifications for upgrading existing information systems or implementing new systems, ensuring they meet the functional requirements of both the current NSPA systems and the proposed direct transfer mechanism. A high degree of automation which minimizes discretion in determining eligibility is required.
7. Specify data security measures and privacy considerations in the design of new or upgraded systems.
8. Provide user manuals and documentation for any enhanced information systems.
9. Evaluate and recommend improvements to HR and organizational capacity for enhanced data sharing, interoperability, and overall system efficiency.
10. Collaborate with officials from MoF, NSPA, and other relevant government agencies to gather insights and align the proposed technical specifications with the broader goals of subsidy reform.
11. Coordinate with other consultants involved in the subsidy reform program to ensure synergy in recommendations and implementation strategies.

D. Deliverables

The Consultant will be responsible to responsible to deliver the following within the duration of their contract:

1. Gap and readiness assessment of existing information systems and organizational capacity to implement the proposed targeting and direct transfer mechanisms, covering areas including but not limited to IT infrastructure, HR, data management (collection, processing, storage, privacy and security), and interoperability between Government agencies.
2. Comprehensive technical specifications for upgrading existing information systems or implementing new systems, ensuring alignment with the functional requirements of both the current NSPA systems and the proposed direct transfer mechanism, with a focus on achieving a high degree of automation to minimize discretion in eligibility determination – if necessary.
3. Capacity enhancement roadmap with recommendations to enhance institutional capacity – if necessary.

E. Reporting & Working Arrangements

The Consultant will report to the Project Director of MCGP, and is expected to liaise with the Project Management Unit (PMU) and a working group of other consultants, and officials from MoF and NSPA in carrying out the necessary assessments.

The Consultant should hand over all reports and relevant data and information such as maps, diagrams, plans, databases, other documents and software, supporting records or material compiled or prepared by the Consultant for this Assignment, to the PMU at the end of the assignment.

F. Timeframe & Payment Terms

The Assignment will be for 1 month, of which the Consultant is expected to work at least 20 working days, successfully completing the assigned deliverables and concluding no later than 10th February, 2024.

The consultant is expected to work on-site (in the Maldives) for the duration of their Assignment.

Payment for the Assignment will be processed as a lump-sum upon completion of the deliverables in Section D.

G. Qualifications & Experience

- A minimum of a Master's degree or equivalent professional qualification in Information Technology, Computer Science, Data Management, or a related field with minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience in information systems analysis, with a focus on data collection, processing, storage, privacy, and security

OR Bachelor's degree or equivalent professional qualification in Information Technology, Computer Science, Data Management, or a related field with minimum of 10 years of relevant professional experience in information systems analysis, with a focus on data collection, processing, storage, privacy, and security.

- Proven experience in conducting assessments and developing technical specifications for information systems upgrades or implementations, preferably in the context of social assistance programs.
- Strong background in system analysis, including knowledge of software and hardware systems, data analysis, and process modeling, but does not necessarily need expertise in HR.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to assess complex information systems and provide strategic recommendations.
- Experience in evaluating and recommending improvements to organizational capacity for enhanced data sharing, interoperability, and system efficiency.
- Familiarity with the regulatory environment and governance structures related to social protection and subsidies in the context of Government agencies would be an added advantage.
- Previous experience working on projects related to subsidy reform, social assistance programs, or financial management systems would be an added advantage.