<p style="text-align:center">Terms of Reference (TOR)</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Social Safeguards Risk Assessment for the Aswesuma Program Implementation in Sri Lanka</p>

1. Background of the Project

The Aswesuma Program under the Welfare Benefits Board (WBB) and Social Protection Project (SPP) is a transformative social initiative by the Government of Sri Lanka, designed to uplift the most vulnerable and marginalized populations due to economic crisis across all 25 districts of the country. By emphasizing social justice, inclusivity, and equitable resource allocation, the program aims to mitigate poverty while fostering sustainable development.

The Social Safeguards Risk Assessment is an important component of this initiative, ensuring that the aswesuma program aligns with established social safeguard policies, addresses potential risks, and enhances the program's responsiveness to community needs for future basis.

The Sri Lanka Social Protection Project (P178973) project's development objective is to support Sri Lanka in providing better-targeted income and livelihood opportunities to the poor and vulnerable and improving the responsiveness of the social protection system. The project supports the implementation of Aswesuma, the new Welfare Benefit Payment Scheme (WBPS), which replaces the existing poverty and categorically targeted programs in the country (Samurdhi and categorical programs).

The Aswesuma is implemented by the Welfare Benefits Board (WBB), as per the provisions of the WBB Act, 2002, with the mandate for coordinating the management of data on welfare applicants and on the design and implementation of Cash Transfers (CTs). At the divisional level, the WBB is primarily dependent on the existing Divisional Secretariat (DS) staff to provide support for the Aswesuma program. DS staff are responsible for enumerating and populating the social registry, validating data, selecting beneficiaries, addressing appeals and grievance, and monitoring. The selection of beneficiaries is made following the Welfare Benefit Payment Selection of Persons Eligible to Receive Payments Regulations No. 1 of 2022. According to the Regulation, beneficiaries are ranked and then selected using a Multi Deprivation Score (MDS) and district quota based. Following this methodology, WBB generates eligible beneficiary lists for electronic payments to beneficiary bank accounts directly from the social registry Integrated Welfare Management System (IWMS). Updated information about families who applied to the Aswesuma is available in the IWMS.

Key Features of the Project:

- **Name of PE**: Social Protection Project
- **Location of Assignment**: Represent All Communities and Ethnic Groups
- **Assignment**: To preemptively address social risks, promote inclusivity, and ensure that the program benefits vulnerable groups without exacerbating social disparities or conflicts

2. Objectives of the Consulting Assignment

The objectives of this assignment are designed to address the complexities of implementing social protection programs like Aswesuma while ensuring they remain fair, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of Sri Lanka's population. These objectives focus on practical solutions grounded in empathy, equity, wellbeing and a commitment to improving lives.

2.1. Risk Identification

Understanding and addressing social risks is at the heart of this objective. These risks might include the unintended exclusion of vulnerable groups, delays in benefit distribution, or the risk of certain groups exerting undue influence over resources. By carefully identifying these challenges, the program can take proactive steps to ensure that every individual, particularly those most in need, has an equal opportunity to benefit from the aswesuma program.

2.2. Policy Compliance

This objective ensures the Aswesuma Program aligns with both Sri Lanka's **National Social Protection Policy** and international standards, such as the World Bank's social safeguard frameworks. Compliance is not just about meeting technical requirements—it's about honoring a shared commitment to uphold fairness, human dignity, and the rights of all individuals. By embedding these principles into this program and future programs, we can ensure that it operates ethically and with respect for the diverse communities it serves.

2.3. Mitigation Planning

Challenges are inevitable in any program of this scale, but they are also opportunities to improve. This objective focuses on developing clear, actionable strategies to address the risks identified earlier. These strategies will prioritize inclusivity and fairness, ensuring that no one is left behind.

2.4. Stakeholder Engagement

The success of the Aswesuma Program depends on the meaningful involvement of all those it impacts. This includes not only beneficiaries—such as women, older adults, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups—but also the public officers and community leaders who play a critical role in its delivery. This objective is about creating spaces where everyone's voice is heard and valued, ensuring that decisions are shaped by those who know their communities best.

2.5. Capacity Building

Empowering the institutions and individuals responsible for the program is vital to its success. This objective focuses on equipping the PE and its partners with the tools, skills, and knowledge they need to manage and monitor social safeguards effectively. By strengthening institutional capacity, we can build a system that is not only effective today but resilient enough to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

3. Scope of Work

The assignment is divided into comprehensive phases, ensuring clarity, precision, and alignment with the program's objectives:

Phase 1: Preparatory Work

    I. Conduct a detailed review of program documents, past studies, and national policies on social safeguards.
    II. Develop a methodology for field assessments, surveys, and consultations.
    III. Prepare an inception report outlining the approach and timeline.

Phase 2: Social Risk Assessment

    I. Identify and categorize social risks, including:
        a. Exclusion of marginalized groups.
        b. Gender disparities and impacts on vulnerable populations.
        c. Risks of elite capture and corruption.
        d. Social tensions and conflicts due to resource allocation.
    II. Analyze the severity, likelihood, and potential consequences of each risk.
    III. Assess institutional and policy gaps contributing to these risks.

Phase 3: Stakeholder Analysis and Consultations

    I. Identify stakeholders at national, district, and community levels.
    II. Conduct participatory consultations with vulnerable groups, including women, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ and persons with disabilities.
    III. Facilitate focus group discussions to capture ground realities and grievances.

Phase 4: Mitigation and Capacity Building

    I. Develop a comprehensive Social Risk Mitigation Plan.
    II. Propose gender-sensitive, culturally relevant strategies to address identified risks.
    III. Design a training program for PE staff on social safeguards.
    IV. Develop tools, templates, and guidelines for ongoing risk management.

Phase 5: Reporting and Recommendations

    I. Prepare detailed reports, including:
        a. Findings from the risk assessment.
        b. Recommendations for risk mitigation.
        c. A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework.
    II. Present findings and recommendations to the Project Steering Committee and stakeholders.

4. Deliverables and Timeline

Deliverable	Description	Timeline
Inception Report	Detailed methodology, work plan, and key milestones.	One Month
Draft Social Risk Assessment Report	Interim findings, risk analysis, and initial recommendations.	Two Month
Final Report	Comprehensive assessment with actionable mitigation strategies.	Three Month

5. Data, Local Services, Personnel, and Facilities Provided by PE

- ❖ **Data**: Access to national statistics, program documents, and baseline studies.
- ❖ **Local Services**: Facilitation of district-level consultations and access to community leaders.
- ❖ **Personnel**: Designated focal points at the district level to support fieldwork.
- ❖ **Facilities**:

6. Institutional Arrangements

- ❖ **Supervision**: Social Protection Project
- ❖ **Coordination**: Social Protection Project– Safeguard Division.
- ❖ **Key Professionals for the assignment**:

Designation	No. of Position	Academic Qualifications	Experience in Relevant Field
Social Safeguards Specialist	01	Master Degree in the relevant field	Minimum of 10 years relevant field
Sociologist	01	Bachler degree in the social science	Minimum of five years of relevant field
Research Methodology Expert	01	Bachler degree in the relevant field	Minimum of 05 years' experience for data analysis and research methodology
Gender and Inclusion Consultant	01	Bachler degree in Social Science or relevant field	Minimum of 02 years of relevant field

7. Reporting Requirements

All reports should include an executive summary and follow the structure below:

    I. **Introduction**
    II. **Background**
    III. **Objectives**
    IV. **Literature**
    V. **Methodology**
    VI. **Findings**
    VII. **Recommendations**
    VIII. **Annexes** (e.g., consultation records, survey tools, Images).

Reports should be submitted in English, Sinhala and Tamil