

# SENIOR (INTERNATIONAL) TECHNICAL ADVISOR STRENGTHENING MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT OF MYANMAR'S NATIONAL NETWORK OF RURAL WOMEN



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| <b>LOCATION:</b>             | Yangon (with travel to remote areas within Myanmar) |
| <b>APPLICATION DEADLINE:</b> | 9 June 2017   |
| <b>TYPE OF CONTRACT:</b>     | Individual Contract (IC)                            |
| <b>Post Level:</b>           | International Consultant                            |
| <b>Languages required:</b>   | English   |
| <b>Duration of Contract:</b> | 50 working days (June-October 2017)                 |

## 1) Background

UNDP has been working with women's Self Reliant Groups (SRGs) and their federations in different ways for the past two decades. Under its earlier Human Development Initiative (HDI), UNDP supported the formation and training of SRGs as women's community/village-based savings circles to promote livelihood initiatives, access to credit, and improved skills and strengthening of social capital particularly of poor and disadvantaged rural women.

A typical SRG is comprised of approximately 10-15 women with close affinity, who contribute weekly savings to establish group owned 'common funds', which are then built up to a sustainable level and leant out for livelihood investments (e.g. purchase of tools), urgent family consumption needs (e.g. health or education). In addition, and given sufficient funds and consensus in the group groups also support small community development projects (e.g. building access roads). At the height of the HDI initiative, over 8,000 villages in 63 townships across Myanmar received assistance and more than 5500 SRGs were formed.

UNDP during the closing of the HDI program, provided the groups with additional sensitization and support for registration as cooperatives and for the process of SRGs to connect across villages to establish Cluster Leading Groups (CLGs) and for the Clusters to federate up to Township Leading Groups (TLGs). The leaders of the CLGs and TLGs (who were elected from SRG level) received additional capacity development support to begin to fill roles of leadership, guidance, and other support to the SRGs such as outreach to others to offer their members requested vocational extension

training and develop market linkages, or to mediate or negotiate to help resolve difficulties that had arisen for certain groups. They continued to promote further SRG strengthening and formation through member training and refreshers in the "SRG concept" and related processes and skills. By 2014, 31 Township-level TLGs had formed voluntarily, involving almost half of the original 5500 SRGs.

At present there are 31 TLGs serving 1800 SRGs in 8 States/Regions across Myanmar, including Ayeyarwady (8), Chin (6), Kachin (3), Kayah (1), Magway (4) Mon (2), Shan (4), and Rakhine (3). The individual TLGs provide ongoing guidance and support to between 20 and 140 SRGs each, working through Cluster Leading Groups of SRGs, sustaining and promoting new SRG formation and also beginning to act as women-led, women-focused local Civil Society Organizations for their areas..

In 2014, UNDP undertook an independent review to define a package of development assistance to sustain TLGs and the SRG movement on the long run. The review included participatory capacity assessment, capacity development exercises, and detailed analysis of the institutional development

needs and short to medium term interventions that could be undertaken by UNDP to assist TLGs/SRGs to better interact with local authorities and other stakeholders to become active participants in the development processes in their communities and townships and to fully take over UNDP's role to support member SRGs in their mission. The review emphasized the potential of TLGs to play a role in Myanmar's democratic transition process, and recommended a series of institutional capacity development interventions including a grants scheme, management trainings for TLG leaders, peer-learning and experience sharing among TLGs, and the formation of a National Network of federated SRGs initially hosted within UNDP. (Report on *Enhancing Capacity Building Support to the Federations of the Self Reliant Groups* (April 2014)).

Since 2014, UNDP has implemented a support program for the TLGs and their member based on these recommendations. In October 2015, a participatory process of networking across the TLGs and SRGs nationwide culminated in the inaugural convention and formal establishment of Myanmar's National Network of Rural Women (*May Doe Kabar*) as the representative national association of all the federated TLGs/CLGs/SRGs.

In 2016, the National Network's elected Board of Directors has advanced their constitutional objectives in various ways: They received official government registration under the Association Registration Law. They succeeded in raising operating funds (approximately \$30,000) from the member groups. With UNDP support, they promoted further development of TLG leaders' knowledge and skills to initiate engagement in local development and local governance (e.g. through joint training alongside elected female Village Tract Administrators). Capacities for local responses to Gender-Based Violence were built up. Members of the Board have participated in

The common vision of *May Doe Kabar* is to build a National Network that receives the recognition of the whole country and that can be relied on by the community, that can voice and respond to the current needs and long term aspirations of rural women; that promote the role and leadership skills of rural women in private sectors and in the law-making and peace-building processes; and contributes effectively to local development and gender equality, and builds linkages with national and international organizations to mobilize resources for the sustainable development of the network.

national-level workshops and meetings on Disaster Risk Reduction among other topics and are increasingly representing *May Doe Kabar* at other national-level policy consultations. The National Network has a strong social media presence and increasing visibility in traditional media, with multiple feature news broadcasts and reports on, e.g., MRTV, Mizzima, Channel News Asia, and the Myanmar Times. The National Network has also, with UNDP facilitation, extended its networks to initiate cooperation with UNFPA, UNWomen, INGOs and national CSOs, and private sector actors.

In March 2016, UNDP and the National Network publicly launched a mobile application for Myanmar, *iWomen-Inspiring Women* mobile app, which is supporting communications and peer support for women within the National Network, as well as reaching out to the wider community of rural women in Myanmar. Working with a volunteer force of Myanmar tech youth, UNDP has in addition supported the National Network to provide training on IT and mobile skills for TLGs and their communities in rural areas across Myanmar, reaching to date at least 3000 villagers.

*iWomen app* was prototyped through commitment to Human Centered Design and iterative user-guided co-design, and offers functions to "Be Inspired", "Be Informed", "Be

Together”, “Talk Together”, as well as individual and cooperative games. One year after its public launch, *iWomen* app is approaching 10,000 active users – approximately half of whom are rural village members of SRGs, more than one-quarter of whom are members of similarly situated rural women’s economic empowerment-based village groups supported by other development partners, and almost a quarter of whom are male. The highest concentration of users in a single state/region comes from Chin State—which is remarkable in that it is among Myanmar’s poorest and most remote areas with some of its least developed tech corridors. *iWomen app* continues to be refined with plans to expand users’ desired functionality including, e.g., additional market information and linkages, vocational and job information, and modernizing SRG financial management systems.

The National Network, after one year, has developed recognizable strengths and is facing challenges. Among its strengths is its well-organized and functioning federation structures through the TLGs, CLGs, and SRGs that impact directly on rural women’s lives, providing opportunities for rural women’s social and economic empowerment and increasing their exposure to information and participation in local governance and local development. The formation of the National Network and creation of *iWomen app* have significantly increased members’ interactions for information exchange, peer support and fellowship across Myanmar, and an organic and well-grounded national identity-formation process of the Network and the SRG movement is ongoing.

Among its challenges is a continued dependence on UNDP support and funding at the national and township level, including for technical support, secretariat, organizational and partnership development, communications and strategic support. Likewise, the introduction of leadership structures growing from within the SRGs (from Cluster Leading Groups to Township Leading Groups to National level Board of Directors) have begun to face strains in some places in operating in ways that provides the kind of transparent, accountable, listening, and responsive leadership that retains grassroots member trust, support and engagement.

The National Network also is in a process of refinement of its strategic path as an organization and is looking into the development of a long term vision for the direction and core of its institutional development. UNDP is contracting an organization to undertake an updated independent review to assess where TLGs and National Network have arrived at to date and to support the information gathering and 360 degree view of the strategic issues facing the National Network. This review is intended to assist the National Network internally, as well as UNDP and other potential partners externally, to understand the potential pathways and implications around the strategic questions above, and to define a set of options and related partnerships and assistance to sustain the National Network and develop its further potential. The timeframe for this review is approximately June-August 2017.

The National Network’s second National Convention of Rural Women will be convened on its anniversary in mid-October 2017. As such, beyond but related to the independent review and strategic planning process, UNDP also seeks to assist the National Network and its Board of Directors/TLG/CLG leadership structures and actors in their member engagement in the lead-up to and implementation of the National Convention of Rural Women in October 2017. Such engagement aims to support the National Network to better understand and to address their member needs and aspirations from the bottom-up, in ways that reaffirm the ‘heart’ in the organization that has motivated members’ voluntary joining and continued participation in these collective spaces at village, township, and national levels. It also seeks to ensure genuine

engagement of all the members in the Network's continue development and to realize the second National Convention as a celebration and reaffirmation of rural women.

**To this end, UNDP seeks the services of a highly creative and talented Senior Technical**

**Advisor**, with experience and orientation grounded in the realities of rural village women's lives, for strengthening member engagement and support of the National Network. The Senior Technical Advisor will support the National Network and its various levels of leadership to design and implement a series of activities and to develop a set of practical tools that build up a highly participatory and responsive process of member engagement, both preparing for and culminating in the successful accomplishment of the National Network's second National Convention in October 2017.

Questions facing Network and its members:

- How to balance the role of the National Network in a way that continues to be responsive to both the finance/livelihood/vocational side of village-level SRG work, while deciding priorities among other potential roles for the organization (e.g. becoming a community-level project implementer for rural women's empowerment, rights awareness, participation in governance and development, women's ICT literacy, DRR and social protection, social cohesion and peacebuilding, etc.)?
- Can the National Network viably harness its potential to gather community-level information in rural remote areas, to engage in evidence-based research and potentially transform itself into an advocacy organization representing and promoting the interests and concerns of rural women in Myanmar?
- What role should the National Network play in supporting township level TLG operations and projects?
- What manageable strategy should the National Network prioritize in growing its membership? E.g., formation of new SRGs within existing TLG townships? federation of existing SRGs (or similarly situated women's village savings groups which may call themselves by different names) in additional townships? Should the Network, through iWomen app or otherwise, develop any line of membership with unfederated women's village savings groups that do not necessarily go through a township level TLG federation structure?
- How/should the National Network begin to differentiate among its members' needs and capabilities, to possibly develop differentiated strategies for members in different conditions, including possibly linking up with other existing actors?
- What is the continued relevance and effectiveness of the current SRG village savings group model for financial inclusion and for poverty reduction within Myanmar's current development situation? In what ways can the Network become integrated with the rollout of Myanmar's Financial Inclusion Roadmap and/or other national poverty and rural development strategies?
- Against the background of formal microfinance expansion, and as Myanmar's development of national and international market linkages and other forces transform its rural economy, how should the Network's village savings group model modernize its systems and financial products to address niche needs of its current and potential members?
- For all the above questions and strategic recommended directions, what additional capacities are needed for the Network to realize its goals?

## 2) Objectives

Objectives of the assignment are:

- Design an interactive plan/process in close collaboration with the National Network of Rural Women (May Doe Kabar) to engage with its members grassroots-up to effectively trigger

reflection on needs and interests, aspirations; to identify/assess skills, knowledge and challenges; and stimulate motivation for further engagement.

- Develop practical tools in close collaboration with National Network to capture the above information and to develop capacities to use these tools for participatory and interactive engagement with members.
- Assist the National Network in designing/planning and implementing its second national convention, which is anticipated to be held on its bi-annual anniversary in October 2017, in a way that is most responsive and affirming of the ‘heart’ of the organization that has motivated members’ voluntary coming together and continued participation in the SRGs, CLGs, TLGs, and National-level network. All the interactive plan/processes/tools mentioned above should culminate into this event (–a celebration).

The processes should feed into the National Network’s external review and strategic planning process where applicable.

### 3) Scope of Work

The Senior Technical Advisor will be responsible for the following scope of work:

1. Prepare an agreed plan and methodology outlining the major steps of how the objectives will be delivered, with an emphasis on ideas, approaches and tools/artefacts that are culturally meaningful and adapted to the local realities of village women members. Consult and refine as needed.
2. Prototype tools as per the plan/processes that the National Network (at its various levels) can use for both effective engagement and learning.
3. Support implementation of the plans and process of member engagement, including supporting the National Network with defining the associated milestones and envisioning, and guidance/trouble-shooting to address questions and challenges in implementation as it proceeds.
4. Assist the National Network in designing/planning and implementing its second National Convention in a way that successfully delivers on its members’ aspirations, and inspires members and leaders at the various levels going forward. Support creative (visual/video/audio) documentation of the process and convention.

The Senior Technical Advisor will work closely with UNDP staff and consultants within the team supporting the National Network, including in particular the “iWomen app” team (see [www.iwomenapp.org](http://www.iwomenapp.org)) and will be supported by a dedicated national program officer counterpart and a field facilitator (for logistics and interpretation/translation) to complete the assignment.

### 4) Deliverables, Timeframe and Levels of Inputs

| <u>Deliverable</u>  | <u>Deadlines</u> | <u>Estimated Level of Input</u> |
|---|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Prepare an agreed methodology outlining the major steps of how the objectives will be delivered, with an emphasis on ideas, approaches and tools/artefacts that are culturally meaningful and adapted to the local realities of village women members. Consult and refine as needed. | 30 June 2017     | 10 days                         |

|  |                   |               |
|--|-------------------|---------------|
| 2. Prototype Tools & Field Testing as per the plan/processes that the National Network (at its various levels) can use for both effective engagement and for effective learning.   | 20 July 2017      | 10 days       |
| 3. Support implementation of the plans and process of member engagement, including supporting the National Network with defining the associated milestones and envisioning, and guidance/trouble-shooting to address questions and challenges in implementation as it proceeds   | 15 September 2017 | 15 days       |
| 4. Assist the National Network in preparing for and implementing its second national convention in a way that successfully delivers on its members' aspirations, and inspires members and leaders at the various levels going forward. Contribute to creative documentation (visual/video/audio) of the process and convention, and develop a brief final report (1-2 pages) with forward-looking recommendations. | 20 October 2017   | 15 days       |
|  |                   | Total 50 days |

#### 4) Payment Terms

The contract anticipates a level of input of approximately 50 working days over June-October 2017, with 4 trips to Myanmar for 50 days of work in-country with UNDP and the stakeholders.

Payment will be certified by the UNDP Programme Specialist-Civil Society and Media (Output 2 Lead) based on review and acceptance of the completed deliverables presented with required IC contract paperwork. Full-day work and meetings on weekends will be counted as working days. **Costs for anticipated international travel to Yangon, and living allowance while in Yangon and on field travel, should be budgeted and included in all-inclusive financial proposal.** Since exact locations of field travel will depend on further consultation with the National Network and cannot be specified at this time, the costs and logistics of transportation between Yangon and field locations within Myanmar will be covered by UNDP.

Payment breakdown of the all-inclusive fixed contract total price is as follows:

|                                   |      |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Upon completion of Deliverable #1 | 20%  |
| Upon completion of Deliverable #2 | 20%  |
| Upon completion of Deliverable #3 | 30%  |
| Upon completion of Deliverable #4 | 30%  |
| Total                             | 100% |

#### 5) Institutional Arrangements



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The Senior Technical Advisor will work under the direct supervision of the UNDP Programme Specialist-Civil Society and Media (Output 2 Lead), and in coordination with UNDP staff and consultants within the team supporting the National Network. He/she will be supported by dedicated national program officer counterpart and a field facilitator (for logistics and interpretation/translation) to complete the assignment.

Based on an agreed methodology, steps, and tools/artefacts proposed by the Senior Technical Advisor to achieve the project's objectives, UNDP will provide logistical and financial support for event and participant costs for necessary surveys, meetings, workshops, materials design and production, and other activities as needed.

UNDP will facilitate the International Consultant's visa authorization letter(s).

## 6) Qualifications

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### Education

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- Master's degree in communications, anthropology, or other relevant area.

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### Experience

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- At least 15 years' post Master's relevant practical working experience at the national and international level; including multiyear working experience with organizational development of grassroots organizations through bottom-up participatory processes for engagement and mobilization, ideally with a focus on rural village women for voice and leadership, and their networking within larger state, national or regional groups;
- At least 10 years' experience in creative development communications, which includes the design and implementation of creative learning tools and audio or visual recordings and documentation.
- A good understanding of innovation, empowerment approaches and gender equality;
- Previous experience of working in Myanmar or South/South-East Asia is desirable.

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### Language Requirements

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- Full working knowledge of English.

## 7. Recommended Presentation of Offer

Applicants should submit:

- a) Signed P11 naming at least three (3) professional references
- b) Cover letter with brief description of most relevant experience against the Qualifications required, including description of previous creative work approaches relevant to the assignment.
- c) Financial proposal that indicates all-inclusive fixed total contract price, supported by breakdown of costs, as per template provided. Note that this includes fees, travel fare from home to Yangon (4 economy round trips), visa-related costs, and living allowance for Yangon. As noted above, since the mix and places of field travel outside Yangon cannot be exactly identified yet and will depend on further discussions between UNDP, the Consultant

and the National Network based on proposed methodology. As such, costs of transportation from Yangon to the field will be arranged by UNDP.



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### **8) Criteria for Selection of the Best Offer**

Combined Scoring method – where the Qualifications will be weighted 70% and combined with the Price offer which will be weighted 30%. Only candidates with passing score of 70 on Qualifications and Technical Proposal will be considered for Price offer.

Qualifications will be assessed as per following criteria: Education (10 points), Experience of grassroots-up participatory processes of engagement and mobilization, and of related capacity development particularly for rural women (40 points), Experience in creative development communications (30 points), Demonstrated use of innovation, empowerment approaches and gender equality (10 points); relevant prior Myanmar or South/South-east Asia working experience (10 points).

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Allison Moore'.

TOR Approved by: Allison Moore  
Programme Specialist- Civil Society and Media (Output 2 Lead)  
Date: 25 May 2017