

# **Terms of Reference**

## **to**

### **Prepare Project Audit Framework to Assess the Performance of National Pride and Transformative Projects**

<b>Type:</b>	National Individual Consultant
<b>Location:</b>	Kathmandu, Nepal
<b>Project:</b>	Accelerating Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal
<b>Starting Date:</b>	25 April 2021
<b>Duration:</b>	30 person days spread over 60 days

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

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The National Planning Commission (NPC) is the apex advisory body of the Government of Nepal for formulating a national vision, development policy, periodic plans and sectoral policies for overall development of the nation. It also serves as a central agency for monitoring and evaluating development policy, plans and programs. NPC has introduced number of significant programs and policies to steer the national development vision aligned to attain 2030 agenda. The 15<sup>th</sup> Plan (2019/20-2023/24) has listed national pride programs and projects as well as transformative projects which are supposed to be game changer for overall economic growth of the country contributing to attaining national vision of 'Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali'. As an apex body of national development, NPC is focusing not only on the policy formulation but also developing a system of monitoring and evaluation of such programs and projects so that the implementation process and outcome are monitored and evaluated on time with expected deliverables.

To this effect, NPC has developed a number of tools such as national monitoring and evaluation framework, national reporting framework which are useful in tracking the progress of the programmes and projects and help to feed into the policy making process. National Development Action Committee (NDAC) chaired by prime minister and Ministerial Level Development Action Committees chaired by respective ministers are also in place to track the progress and discuss issues and challenges the projects/programmes are facing. However, the delivery of the projects/programmes in terms of costs and time are not satisfactory. Most of them are still behind the time frame and facing cost overruns problems. Thus, NPC is in the process to identify such implementation issues and fix them on estimated time and cost so that projects could be completed on stipulated time and estimated cost and also with required quality standard.. For this purpose NPC is planning to prepare a project audit framework for such projects/programmes

to ensure the projects/programmes meet the standards of project management through supervision, monitoring and evaluation. The project audit framework will serve two basic functions. First, it identifies both good practice and where practice needs to improve through a systematic approach and the second is that it provides senior management with assurance as to the quality of their work through;

- maintaining quality standards reviewing outputs/products throughout the project cycle
- reviewing the policies, processes and procedures including the quality of the personnel assigned to the projects/programs
- identifying the projects/programs risks assessing feasibility, budget availability and external factors

## **2. RATIONALE**

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In general, majority of the national pride and transformative programs and projects are below expected standards (due to the factors/reasons such as no timely completion and consequent time/cost overrun, high cost of the projects and low quality of the finished products). The review meetings at different level has identified below concerns;

Projects are delayed due to multiple reasons such as contracts to lowest bidder which do not have sufficient fund to complete work, change of management/leadership and officers, undue political influences, community conflict, unrealistic cost estimation, defective design of the infrastructures, and absence of effective monitoring system during the period. Such delays have significant impact on project/programmes that lead to cost overrun to complete the projects/programs.

NPC has realized a need to standardize the project audit in order to expedite the timely and quality completion of the projects/programmes. So, this terms of reference (ToR) is prepared to detail out the work (assignment task) to onboard an expert to develop a project audit framework that will be applicable across all projects/programmes. This proposed framework seeks to demonstrate how to plan and undertake a comprehensive audit of the projects/programmes, thereby providing that assurance.

## **3. OBJECTIVE:**

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The main objective of this assignment is to develop a standard project/programme national audit framework that will identify issues and lessons learned that can help improve the performance of the projects/programmes or improve the performance of future projects/programmes by undertaking a forensic review to uncover problems to be solved. The specific objectives of this assignment are;

- To develop a comprehensive checklist for the review/monitoring of a project/programme that will identify key issues for timely and effective completion/delivery of the project/programme.
- To identify critical point of review across the projects/programme so that framework will guide all projects/programmes to mandatorily follow the review/monitoring timeline.
- To propose key stakeholders who must be involved in the audit/review process to make the process participatory.
- To suggest a review/audit matrix that could be used by the project management to report to higher level. The matrix should mention the ways to identify key issues and suggesting possible ways forward to resolve the issues on time.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

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NPC will hire an expert consultant to prepare this framework for NPC. The consultant will work closely with the Research and Evaluation Division of the NPC while preparing this framework. The consultant will be hired through Accelerating Implementation of SDGs in Nepal (AISN), a UNDP assisted project which is supporting NPC in implementing SDGs in Nepal. UNDP will award contract on behalf of NPC/AISN.

#### **5. SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

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Below is a list of activities of consultant to take up in the process to prepare the framework.

- Consult NPC (Research and Evaluation Division in specific) and AISN project team for facilitation in process of preparing the framework
- Analyze of the existing review (monitoring and evaluation) practices of the national pride and Transformative Projects/programmes
- Review of the relevant literatures and national/global best practices that could be customized for the Nepalese context to prepare the framework
- Consult relevant ministries responsible in implementing national pride and transformative projects (and project management as appropriate) to discuss on how the framework could be designed to make it applicable across the projects/programmes
- Accomplish 3 case studies (of projects) in consultation with NPC as a sample for preparing framework.
- Prepare a draft framework comprising of all components for a project cycle management to prepare the review report to submit to higher authorities. The framework should also include a matrix /reporting format for each review to report to higher authorities including to NPC so that NPC could consolidate the issues and challenges of similar nature projects/programmes to present to the NDAC.

- Share the draft framework to NPC/AISN for its review and input to strengthen the contents. NPC may collect input from the respective line ministries.
- Present the draft framework in a key stakeholders meeting for instant feedback
- Prepare and submit final report to NPC/AISN incorporating relevant comments/feedback.

## 6. TIME FRAME:

This is a 30 person day's assignment to spread across 45 days. The day count will start from the date of signing the contract.

## 7. DELIVERABLES AND PAYMENT

AISN/UNDP will make the payment to the consultant as per the following deliverables and time-schedule.

S.N.	Deliverables	Timeframe	Payment
1.	<b>An inception Report</b> (in Nepali) with a detailed methodology and a time bound work plan with key deliverables in consultation with NPC/AISN project team	Within 7 days of signing the contract	<b>20 percent</b> of the contract amount upon approval of inception report
2.	<b>Draft Project Audit Framework</b> report (in Nepali)	Within 30 days of signing the contract	<b>40 percent</b> of the contract amount upon approval of the draft report
3.	<b>Sharing of study findings in the workshop</b> (organized by NPC/AISN project)	Within 40 days of signing the contract	None
3.	<b>Submission of final report</b> (in Nepali) incorporating comments/feedbacks from the consultation workshop	Within 45 days of signing the contract	<b>40 percent</b> of the contract amount upon approval of the final report

## 8. COMPETENCIES AND EXPERIENCES

The consultant will have competency and demonstrated experience and expertise in undertaking this assignment. The consultant shall possess following qualifications:

## **Education**

- At least Master's degree in economics or development economics, or applied economics, public finance management, or in any other related subject areas. A Ph.D. degree on the related themes (subjects) is preferred.

## **Experience**

- At least 15 years of general experience in the academia field or in policy research on economics or on development planning, with a focus on development policy analysis or economic policy evaluation research, as reflected through professional work experience.
- Specific skill and knowledge on monitoring and evaluation of large projects and programs in Nepal and elsewhere.
- Proven track record of preparing monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the large projects.
- Previous experience of providing consulting services to the Government and other development agencies in the areas of devising M&E system, program evaluation
- Demonstrated leadership, team building, and coordination skills, and association with national and international professional groups related to the work proposed.
- Proven record of preparing high level such documents specially monitoring and evaluation related reports.

## **Other Competencies**

- Excellent oral and written skills in Nepali with writing, communication and presentation skills
- Ready to work independently under tight deadlines
- Flexibility to work with the stakeholders

## **9. WORKING ARRANGEMENT**

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United Nations Development Program (UNDP) will issue the contract to the selected consultant. The consultant will work under the overall guidance of National Project Director (NPD), AISN project, and technical guidance of Chief, Research and Evaluation Division of the NPC. The consultant will work in close collaboration with the AISN project team based in NPC to administer the task in producing deliverables.

The consultant will identify and collect required documents on his/her own as appropriate for the execution of the tasks under this assignment. NPC will also provide available relevant documents upon request. The consultant will be responsible for managing his/her own working station and equipment to accomplish this assignment.

## **10. ESTIMATED BUDGET**

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The estimated budget should be included in the Offeror's Letter to UNDP, inclusive of all expenses required to accomplish the assignment.

## **11. EVALUATION METHOD**

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Applicants will be evaluated on the basis of educational qualification and his/her past work experience in the relevant field, demonstrated experience in undertaking similar types of assignments in the government or in other development agencies. Proven experience of working with government will be a strong asset.