

**Hiring of the Firm**  
**For the**  
**Special Review of Cash Transfer Program**

**SOCIAL PROTECTION PROJECT**  
**(P178973)**

**Terms of Reference (TORs) for Special Review of Cash Transfer Program**

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## 1. Background

### Social Protection Project

The Social Protection Project (P178973) is a comprehensive initiative aimed at providing better-targeted income support to the poor and vulnerable in Sri Lanka and improving social protection delivery systems to respond to shocks. It seeks to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis on the poor and most vulnerable through the provision of income support and livelihood opportunities, while strengthening the robustness and adaptability of the country's social protection system. The project comprises three main components: Cash Transfers, Pilot to enhance opportunities for poor and vulnerable households, and Project Management and Strengthening the SP System.

### Project Goals

The goals of the Emergency Social Protection Project are as follows.

1. **Provide Better Targeted Income Support:** To deliver targeted cash transfers to poor and vulnerable households, ensuring that the most in need receive timely and adequate financial assistance
2. **Improve Social Protection Delivery Systems:** To enhance the efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness of social protection systems, including the establishment of a social registry and modern payment systems
3. **Respond to Shocks:** To develop and implement mechanisms that enable the social protection system to scale up and respond effectively to economic, climate-related, and other shocks.
4. **Enhance Opportunities for Poor and Vulnerable Households:** To pilot economic inclusion programs that provide training, asset transfers, and business development grants to selected beneficiaries, promoting sustainable livelihoods and resilience
5. **Strengthen Project Management and Capacity Building:** To ensure effective project implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, while building the capacity of government agencies to manage and deliver social protection program.

The project is implemented by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Ministry of Rural Development, Social Security, and Community Empowerment (MRDSSCE) (formerly, the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs, and Social Empowerment (MoWCASE)). The Welfare Benefits Board (WBB) under MoF manages Component 1, while the Department of Samurdhi Development under MRDSSCE (formerly MoWCASE) oversees Component 2. Under Component 3, Sub- component 3.1 is implemented by MoF and 3.2 by MoWCASE.

### Welfare Benefits Board (WBB)

The Welfare Benefits Board (WBB) is responsible for overseeing and managing the welfare benefit programs in Sri Lanka. The WBB aims to provide targeted relief to individuals and families facing economic hardships through various welfare schemes. The board ensures that the welfare programs are implemented effectively and transparently, with a focus on

identifying eligible beneficiaries through impartial and verifiable criteria. The WBB plays a crucial role in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of government welfare programs, including the “Aswesuma” Welfare Benefit Payment Scheme.

As per the project implementation arrangements, the WBB has established a project management team (PMT). The PMT handles all project implementation tasks, including Financial Management, Procurement, Communication, Training, Operations, Grievance Handling, M&E, and Environmental/Social Framework duties, with additional staff recruited and trained as needed. Under project component 1 - Cash Transfer Program, WBB has kept up the social registry. The WBB creates eligible beneficiary lists for direct electronic payments to bank accounts from the social registry (WBIS). A regulation guides the selection of beneficiaries. The payments are processed based on the approved WBPS.

In 2022, the Welfare Benefits Board registered 3.5 million applicants across 25 districts within the Welfare Benefits Information System. The applicants are selected using the Multi-Deprivation Scheme (MDS). The MDS classifies beneficiaries as Extremely Poor, Poor, Vulnerable, and Transient. The benefit amount and the duration of eligible period were approved by the Parliament. The WBB pays LKR 12.5 billion monthly to 1.8 million beneficiaries, with 15% reimbursed by the World Bank Social Protection Project. During the FY 2024, the WBB has made a total payment of LKR 147.8 billion (approx. \$492 million) to 1.8 million beneficiaries.

## **2. Objective**

This assignment aims to review the efficiency and effectiveness of the cash transfer mechanism by the Welfare Benefit Board (WBB) under the “Aswesuma” Welfare Benefit Payment Scheme (WBPS) and identify areas for improvement.

## **3. Scope of Work**

Audit period is 1 January 2024 to December 31, 2024

The review will cover the following areas:

### **A. Data Entry and Verification:**

- ❖ Review the accuracy and completeness of beneficiary data entered into the Integrated Welfare Management System (IWMS) including bank account details, beneficiary names, bank branch codes, and payment amounts.
- ❖ Verify the process undertaken by WBB to validate the beneficiary bank accounts (estimated 2 million accounts) with respective banks to ensure eligibility and minimize rejection/return of funds.

### **B. Confirmation of Cash Transfer Benefit Amount:**

- ❖ Assess the adherence to the WBPS Gazette notifications, cabinet papers, and circulars in determining the cash transfer payment amounts based on the “Aswesuma” social category.
- C. **Eligibility Duration:**
- ❖ Evaluate the process of reviewing gazette notifications, cabinet papers, and updates to the WBPS to confirm the eligibility duration for beneficiary payments.
- D. **Generating Payment List:**
- ❖ Examine the generation of the payment list by IWMS including the review and confirmation of newly added beneficiaries and the deletion of groups no longer eligible for payment.
- E. **Transfer of Beneficiary Payment Details:**
- ❖ Inspect the transfer of beneficiary payment details into a CD/electronic file and its handover to the prescribed bank for processing through the Sri Lanka Interbank Payment System (SLIPS).
- F. **Reconciliation Process:**
- ❖ Review the reconciliation process carried out by WBB in consultation with the banks to confirm beneficiary payments and address rejected/returned transfers.
- G. **Physical verification of beneficiary payments**
- ❖ Visit selected beneficiary groups to evaluate the efficiency and speed of “Aswesuma” payments to their bank accounts.
  - ❖ Verification of withdrawal procedures used by Banks for the beneficiaries
  - ❖ Review “Aswesuma” payment procedures at Bank of Ceylon, Peoples Bank, National Savings Bank, Regional Development Bank branches and some other commercial Banks. The review can cover withdrawal dates, methods, and customer handling mechanisms.

## 4. Methodology

The review will employ the following methodologies:

### a. Document Review

The document review process involves examining relevant documents to understand the project's context, goals, and implementation details. This includes:

- ❖ **Financing Agreement**, Review the Financing Agreement to understand the legal requirements, financial arrangements, commitments, and obligations related to the Social Protection Project
- ❖ **Project Appraisal Document (PAD)**: review the documents to understand the project development objectives, components, activities, beneficiaries, and implementation arrangements.
- ❖ **Project Operational Manual**, review this document to understand to overall control framework of the project and the sequence of activities related to the cash transfer mechanism, including data entry, verification of bank accounts, confirmation of cash transfer benefit amounts, eligibility duration, generating payment lists, transferring beneficiary payment details, and the reconciliation process.
- ❖ **WBPS Gazette notifications, cabinet papers, circulars, and updates**: to understand the legal and regulatory framework for the Welfare Benefit Payment Scheme (WBPS) and the cash transfer mechanism

## **b. Data Analysis**

- ❖ The data analysis process involves analyzing the beneficiary data entered into the Integrated Welfare Management System (IWMS) and the verification process undertaken by the Welfare Benefits Board (WBB). This includes:
- ❖ **Data Entry**: The data entry process begins with the newly set up social registry on a SQL IT platform called the Integrated Welfare Management System (IWMS), maintained by the Welfare Benefits Board (WBB). This system is the starting point where the data related to beneficiaries is entered. Special attention is given to entering accurate details related to beneficiary bank account numbers, beneficiary names, beneficiary banks, bank branch codes, and payment amounts
- ❖ **Verification of Bank Accounts**: Once the data entry is completed, a critical activity is undertaken to verify the beneficiary bank accounts (estimated 2 million accounts) and obtain the validity of the same from the respective banks. This verification process ensures that the intended beneficiaries identified and eligible will be able to get paid through the new system, avoiding or minimizing the rejection/return of funds.
- ❖ **Confirmation of Cash Transfer Benefit Amount**: As per the Welfare Benefit Payment Scheme (WBPS) Gazette notifications, cabinet papers, and circulars, the cash transfer payment amounts vary depending on the “Aswesuma” social category. All updates to the WBPS must be reviewed and applied before processing payments.

- ❖ **Confirmation of Eligibility Duration:** The eligibility duration for beneficiary payments varies depending on the beneficiary category. Therefore, gazette notifications, cabinet papers, and updates to the current WBPS must be reviewed prior to generating the payment list
  - ❖ **Generating Payment List:** The IWMS generates the list of beneficiaries eligible to receive the transfer and the amount to be received. The system reviews and confirms newly added beneficiaries and deletes beneficiary groups no longer eligible to receive payment
  - ❖ **Transfer of Beneficiary Payment Details:** The next step involves obtaining a CD/electronic file that has transferred the required data for identified fields in a prescribed format for beneficiary payments. This file is handed over to the prescribed bank (one of the Government of Sri Lanka state commercial banks, i.e., Bank of Ceylon (BOC), Peoples Bank (PB), or any other bank regulated under the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL)) to carry out the beneficiary payments through a Sri Lanka Interbank Payment System (SLIPS) transfer
- c. **Reconciliation Process:** Once the bank processes the transfers, a reconciliation process is carried out on the payments processed and returns, if any. This process is conducted by WBB in consultation with the BOC/PB or any other bank registered under the CBSL. WBB obtains and checks the confirmations received through the bank on the transfers that took place to beneficiary accounts. Only confirmed beneficiary payments can be documented as expenditure in the Interim Unaudited Financial Report (IUFR) submitted to the World Bank by WBB. WBB reviews rejected and returned transfers and may re-transmit cash transfers to beneficiaries as needed.
- d. **Beneficiary Banking:** Four commercial banks have been chosen for beneficiaries to open accounts to receive and withdraw payments. The firm will document the SOPs for bank account operations to determine consistency across selected banks, bank branches, and identify any differences. The review should cover “Aswesuma” beneficiary bank account rules, including opening, maintenance, and withdrawal procedures. Additionally, the review will check if SOPs are followed and report any hurdles.
- e. **Interviews**
- The interview process involves conducting interviews with key personnel involved in the cash transfer process, including WBB officials and representatives from the prescribed banks & beneficiaries. This includes:
- ❖ **Key Personnel Interviews:** Interviews with WBB officials and representatives from the prescribed banks to understand the processes and procedures involved in the cash transfer mechanism

- ❖ **Beneficiary Interviews:** Interviews with beneficiaries on a sample basis to assess if their records are accurately entered into the system and if the system is updated & to see the efficiency & timeliness of the process in getting “Aswesuma” benefits to their bank accounts

#### f. Field Visits

The field visit process involves performing field visits to observe the data entry, verification, reconciliation processes at WBB & selected Banks. Furthermore, field visits would be required to understand & assess the process from beneficiaries side by visiting beneficiary households on a sample basis. This includes:

- ❖ **Observation of Processes:** Field visits to observe the data entry, verification, and reconciliation processes carried out by WBB and the prescribed banks
- ❖ **Site Visits and Physical Verification:** Conducting site visits to physically verify the existence of beneficiaries, confirm their eligibility as per the selection criteria & the efficiency & timeliness of receiving “Aswesuma” payments into their bank accounts

#### g. Sample-Based Selection:

The sample-based selection process involves selecting a representative sample of beneficiary accounts for detailed review and verification using statistical sampling techniques. This sample will be chosen based on statistical sampling techniques to ensure it accurately reflects the overall population of beneficiary accounts. The sample will encompass the following areas, among others:

- ❖ Verify the accuracy and completeness of data entry.
- ❖ Confirm the validity of beneficiary bank accounts.
- ❖ Review compliance with Banking SOPs for beneficiary and Banks
- ❖ Assess the adherence to payment amounts and eligibility criteria.
- ❖ Assess the timeliness of the payments transfer by WBB to beneficiary Bank accounts and withdrawal by the beneficiary
- ❖ Review the reconciliation process for the selected sample

This sampling techniques will include:

- Stratified Sampling:** Stratified Sampling involves dividing the population into subgroups (strata) based on specific characteristics such as social category. Each stratum/social category is then sampled independently and has to represent a cross section of districts. This technique ensures representation of all subgroups and can provide more precise estimates by reducing variability within each stratum
  - ✓ Dividing the population into subgroups (strata) based on specific characteristics (e.g., social category,) and selecting 100 accounts from each stratum to ensure representation of all subgroups



- B. **Cluster Sampling:** Cluster Sampling involves dividing the population into clusters (e.g., regions or districts) and then randomly selecting a few clusters. At least 5% - 10% of beneficiary accounts (depending on the size of the members in each district) within the chosen clusters are reviewed. This method is useful when the population is naturally divided into clusters, and it can reduce costs and time by focusing on specific areas.
- ✓ Divide the population into clusters (e.g., regions, districts) and randomly selecting 9 clusters. Reviewing all beneficiary accounts within the chosen clusters.

The firm will develop a proposal for sampling that either follows both methods separately or combines them, based on the data analysis. However, the review will ensure that the selected samples represent all categories of beneficiaries, geographical locations, and the chosen banks.

## 5. Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the review are as follows:

- A. **Improved Accuracy and Completeness of Data:**
- ❖ Enhanced accuracy and completeness of beneficiary data entered into the IWMS, ensuring that all relevant details are correctly recorded.
- B. **Validated Beneficiary Bank Accounts:**
- ❖ Confirmation of the validity of beneficiary bank accounts, reducing the risk of rejection/return of funds.
- C. **Adherence to Payment Amounts:**
- ❖ Assurance that cash transfer payment amounts are determined in accordance with WBPS Gazette notifications, cabinet papers, and circulars.
- D. **Confirmed Eligibility Duration:**
- ❖ Verification that the eligibility duration for beneficiary payments is accurately determined based on gazette notifications, cabinet papers, and updates to the WBPS.
- E. **Accurate Payment List Generation:**
- ❖ Improved accuracy in generating the payment list by IWMS, including the review and confirmation of newly added beneficiaries and the deletion of groups no longer eligible for payment.
- F. **Efficient Transfer of Payment Details:**

- ❖ Enhanced efficiency in transferring beneficiary payment details into a CD/electronic file and its handover to the prescribed bank for processing through SLIPS.

**G. Effective Reconciliation Process:**

- ❖ Improved reconciliation process carried out by WBB in consultation with the banks to confirm beneficiary payments and address rejected/returned transfers.

**H. Verified Beneficiary Existence and Eligibility:**

- ❖ Confirmation of the physical existence and eligibility of beneficiaries through site visits and interviews.

**I. Accurate System Updates:**

- ❖ Assurance that beneficiary records are accurately entered into the system and that the system is updated as needed.

**J. Facilitation of efficient and effective Banking mechanisms for Beneficiaries**

- ❖ Improvement of Banking mechanism by creating ease in the Banking for beneficiary and enhancing efficiency

## **6. Deliverables**

The review team will provide the following deliverables:

- ❖ **Review Report:** A comprehensive report detailing the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for improving the cash transfer program during the FY 2024 (Jan to Dec)
- ❖ **Presentation:** A presentation summarizing the review findings and recommendations to the WBB and other relevant stakeholders
- ❖ **Progress Reports:** Periodic progress reports will be prepared and shared with the WBB and other relevant stakeholders. These reports will provide updates on the implementation of the review recommendations and any ongoing improvements to the cash transfer mechanism
- ❖ **Stakeholder Meetings:** Regular meetings will be held with key stakeholders, including WBB officials, representatives from the prescribed banks, and other relevant parties, to discuss the review findings and recommendations.

## **7. Review Team, roles and responsibilities and Qualifications:**

The review team will consist of the following members, each with specific roles and responsibilities and qualifications.

No	Position	Responsibilities	Qualification
1	Audit Manager (1):	Oversee the entire review process and ensure that all review activities are conducted in accordance with the TOR, Coordinate with the WBB and other relevant stakeholders to facilitate the Review and approve the review report and presentation.	A minimum of 10 years of experience in audit management, with a focus on financial audits and compliance reviews, Professional certification such as Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or Chartered Accountant (CA), CIMA/ACCA, strong leadership and communication skills.
2	Financial Management Specialist (2):	Conduct a detailed review of the financial management processes related to the cash transfer mechanism, assess the accuracy and completeness of financial records and transactions, and provide recommendations for improving financial management practices. Review relevant documents, including the WBPS Gazette notifications, cabinet papers, circulars, and updates, ensure adherence to regulatory requirements and guidelines, recommendations for improving compliance with legal and regulatory standards. Review the reconciliation process carried out by WBB in consultation with the banks to confirm beneficiary payments and address rejected/returned transfers, provide recommendations for improving the reconciliation process and reducing the risk of errors.	A minimum of 5 years of experience in financial management and auditing, Professional certification such as CPA or CA, CIMA/ACCA Expertise in financial analysis and reporting. Knowledge of relevant legal and regulatory requirements, and Strong attention to detail and analytical skills. Expertise in bank reconciliation and financial reporting, Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.
3	Data Analyst (1):	Analyze the beneficiary data entered into the IWMS, and the verification process undertaken by WBB, perform statistical sampling and data analysis to ensure the accuracy and completeness of data, and generate reports and visualizations to support review findings.	A minimum of 5 years of experience in data analysis and statistical sampling, Proficiency in data analysis software such as Power BI, R Excel, SPSS, or SAS, Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.

4	Field Auditors including Supervisors (35)	Conduct site visits to physically verify the existence of beneficiaries and confirm their eligibility as per the selection criteria, interview beneficiaries on a sample basis to assess whether their records are accurately entered into the system and whether the system is updated, document findings and provide recommendations for improving field verification processes.	Pursuing an accountancy qualification A minimum of up to 3 years of experience in field audits and verification processes, Expertise in conducting interviews and site visits, Strong documentation and reporting skills
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## 8. Timeline for Each Review Phases

The review is expected to be completed within two months starting 06<sup>th</sup> April 2026 till 05<sup>th</sup> June 2026, with key milestones as follows:

### A. Initiation and Documents review: 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2026

- ❖ **Duration:** 1 week
- ❖ Activities: Initial planning, team formation, and kickoff meeting.
- ❖ Review relevant documents including financing agreements, Project Appraisal Documents, Project Operational Manual, WBPS Gazette notifications, cabinet papers, circulars, and updates.

### B. Data Analysis: 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2026

- ❖ **Duration:** 1 weeks
- ❖ Activities: Analyze beneficiary data entered into IWMS, and the verification process undertaken by WBB

### C. Interviews and field Visits: 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2026

- ❖ **Duration:** 1 weeks
- ❖ Activities: Conduct interviews with key personnel involved in the cash transfer process, including WBB officials and representatives from the prescribed banks.
- ❖ Activities: Perform field visits to observe the data entry, verification, and reconciliation processes.

### D. Sample-Based Selection, Site Visits, Physical Verification, and Reconciliation Process Review: 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2026

- ❖ **Duration:** 2 and half weeks
- ❖ Activities: Select a representative sample of beneficiary accounts for detailed review and verification
- ❖ Activities: Conduct site visits to physically verify the existence of beneficiaries and confirm their eligibility as per the selection criteria.

- ❖ Activities: Review the reconciliation process carried out by WBB in consultation with the banks to confirm beneficiary payments and address rejected/returned transfers.
- ❖ review the process of receipt of “Aswesuma” payments to their bank accounts on a timely basis

**D. Report Drafting:** 01<sup>st</sup> June, 2026

- ❖ **Duration:** 1 and half week
- ❖ Activities: Draft the review report detailing the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

**E. Draft Report Submission:** 05<sup>th</sup> June, 2026

- ❖ **Duration:** 1 week
- ❖ Activities: Submit the final review report and presentation to the WBB and other relevant stakeholders.

## **9. Communication of Review Findings**

The review findings will be communicated through the following channels:

**A. Review Report**

- ❖ The comprehensive review report will be shared with the Welfare benefits Board (WBB), and World Bank (WB). The report will detail the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for improving the cash transfer mechanism.

**B. Presentation:**

- ❖ A presentation summarizing the review findings and recommendations will be delivered to the WBB, and the World Bank. This presentation will provide an overview of the key findings and actionable recommendations.

**C. Stakeholder Meetings:**

- ❖ Regular meetings will be held with key stakeholders, including WBB officials, representatives from the prescribed banks, and other relevant parties, to discuss the review findings and recommendations. These meetings will facilitate open communication and collaboration to address any issues identified during the review.

**D. Progress Reports:**

- ❖ Periodic progress reports will be prepared and shared with the WBB, and WB. These reports will provide updates on the implementation of the review recommendations and any ongoing improvements to the cash transfer mechanism.

## 10. Confidentiality

During the course of this assignment, the Audit firm may have access to information that is confidential or sensitive in nature. The Audit firm shall treat all such information, data, and documents obtained from the Welfare Benefits Board (WBB), the Social Protection Project (SPP), or any other relevant stakeholder as **strictly confidential**.

The Audit Firm shall not disclose, reproduce, or use this information for any purpose other than for the proper execution of the assignment without the **prior written consent** of the WBB.

This obligation of confidentiality shall remain in force **both during and after** the completion or termination of the contract. The Audit Firm shall also ensure that any personnel engaged in the assignment are bound by the same confidentiality obligations.

## 11. Qualifications and Expertise of firms and Key Personnels:

The firm is expected to have International recognition or having international affiliation with a leading global with demonstrated experience of working in regional and specifically in Sri Lanka over the past 10 years and possessing the following technical expertise.

- A. **Experience in audit and assurance engagements:** The firm must demonstrate expertise in financial management, including experience in audit & assurance, transactions reviews, financial and physical verifications, and other assurance engagements.
- B. **Data Analysis Skills:** The firm must have experience in data analysis, including the ability to analyze large datasets, perform statistical sampling, and generate reports and visualizations
- C. **Review Procedures:** The firm must have experience in conducting audits of similar scope and complexity, including knowledge of audit procedures, standards, and best practices

The specific qualifications and experience for key personnel are detailed in the above table of team composition, but generally, they must meet the following criteria.

- ❖ **Relevant Experience:** The firm must provide a team of qualified professionals with relevant experience in financial management, data analysis, field audits, compliance, and reconciliation
- ❖ **Certifications:** The team must include professionals with relevant certifications, such as Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Chartered Accountant (CA), CIMA/ACCA or other recognized certifications in auditing and financial management
- ❖ **Specialists:** The team must include specialists in financial management, data analysis, field audits, compliance, and reconciliation

## 12. Methodology

- ❖ **Comprehensive Methodology:** The firm must present a clear and comprehensive methodology for conducting the special review of the cash transfer program
- ❖ **Detailed Plans:** The methodology must include detailed plans for document review, data analysis, interviews, field visits, and sample-based selection
- ❖ **Adaptability:** The methodology must demonstrate the firm's ability to adapt to the specific requirements of the review and address any challenges that may arise

## 13. Compliance with Regulations

- ❖ **Legal and Regulatory Compliance:** The firm must comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements
- ❖ **Ethics and Integrity:** The firm must adhere to the highest standards of ethics and integrity

## 14. Cost Estimate of Services

- ❖ The contract will be a lump sum contract.
- ❖ The cost of the services would cover all costs related to the deliverables, including travel and logistics.
- ❖ The firm must provide a competitive and transparent price structure and overall cost must be reasonable and within the budget allocated for this assignment.

## 15. Payment structure

Payment will be made against deliverables as follows.

- ❖ Inception Report - 10% of total contract Value - within one week of signing the contract agreement
- ❖ Progress Reports: Periodic progress reports will be prepared and shared with the WBB and other relevant stakeholders. These reports will provide updates on the implementation of the audit recommendations and any ongoing improvements to the cash transfer mechanism- 20% of total contract Value
- ❖ After accepting the draft audit report detailing the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for improving the cash transfer program during the FY 2024 (Jan to Dec) and presentation- 40% of the contract value
- ❖ Upon acceptance of the final report- 30% of the contract value