

Terms of Reference (TOR)
Research assistant for Strengthening and expansion of service with care Compassion Initiative in Bhutan

Post Title: Research Assistant

Project Title: Strengthening and expansion of service with care Compassion Initiative in Bhutan

Organization: Faculty of Postgraduate Medicine, KGUMSB

Duration: December 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Project Title: Strengthening and expansion of service with care Compassion Initiative in Bhutan

I. Background and Rationale:

Background

Bhutan strengthened Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) service delivery nationwide at the primary health care level by adapting the WHO PEN interventions in 2015. The PEN clinical audit conducted in 2016 noted salient gaps in care delivery that affected the quality of services. The common gaps identified included lack of follow-up of patients by providers, inconsistencies in adherence to standardized protocols by prescribers, performance measures of control rates of hypertension and diabetes were not collected at health facilities, inadequate coordination and interaction between health facilities on care and poor coordination of patient referrals for consultation.

WHO supported MoH to implement PEN HEARTS package in four districts of Punakha, Wanduephodrang, Tsirang and Zhemgang in 2019-2020. The project known as the people-centred PEN HEARTS introduced simple interventions in care delivery for NCD patients known as 7 R and 3 C approaches. The seven R's interventions included: care delivery through Robust teams, assuring continued Refill of medicines, ensuring Reliable laboratory services, setting up Recall and reminders and patient tracking, responsive Referrals and contra-referrals, reaching out to homebound patients and instituting Real-time monitoring and supportive supervision for care improvement. Through these actions, comprehensive, continuous and coordinated (3 C) care was expected.

In 2021, the interventions were scaled up to 5 additional districts under the MoH's new brand known as the "The Service with Care and Compassion Initiative" or the SCCI. By the end of

2021, nine districts were covered. In addition to screening and early detection of common NCDs (hypertension, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases) the SCCI digs deeper into the spectrum of chronic care by further strengthening the integration of stroke, cancer early detection and palliative care services meeting the existing care gaps.

Ensuring access to quality healthcare services in remote and rural communities continues to be a challenge for Bhutan. It is noted that lack of utilization of health outcome information constraints efforts to improve healthcare services at different levels. Reporting on performance measures, monitoring and enabling multi-disciplinary teams to discuss challenges and course of actions have been aggravated by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Regular mentoring, peer coaching, training and discussions are regular features of expanding SCCI in the districts.

Moving forward, recognizing SCCI as the priority of the MoH, a three-way partnership comprising MoH, District Health Authorities and KGUMSB, will be formed to accelerate efforts of expanding to 20 districts. Thus, APW is signed between WHO and KGUMSB aiming at strengthening NCD service delivery in the country.

II. Objectives

1. To adapt PEN and HEARTS technical protocols from the WHO SEARO Online course including stroke care, palliative care and early detection of common cancers, and support Ministry of Health in SCCI scale-up efforts in the districts.
2. To establish NCD Resource Center by establishing Skill Laboratory at KGUMSB and ERRH and will resource knowledge and skill needs of both the pre-service students and in-service health workers.
3. To develop the NCD courses for all cadres of health workforce as a component of continuing medical education in collaboration with the Bhutan Medical and Health Council and Ministry of Health.
4. To support Ministry of Health in organizing NCD service management for health care providers in the districts.

III. Deliverables

- Serve as Secretariat for the entire Project.
- Assist the project team and the TA in various activities related to Project to ensure all five deliverables are achieved at the end of the project.
- Liaise with Ministry of Health and Districts in compilation of all the reports and essential documents for the project
- Prepare 3 monthly progress report and disseminate to all relevant units and offices.

- Must be prepared to travel to various districts and field for data collection and reports when required.
- Must be prepared to write and compile numerous administrative and financial reports to be submitted as per the Project requirements.

IV. Required expertise and qualifications

- Minimum of undergraduate degree in any health domain of either in allopathic or Traditional medicine.

Note:

However, preference will be given to MBBS or BPH or BSc Nursing or BSc Pharmacy graduate due to nature the mandates associated with the position.

- Highly motivated to do literature review, scientific write up and coordinate between various offices of Ministry of Health, District Health, Teaching hospitals and the University. Additionally, with WHO office, when required.
- Demonstrated good aptitude in facilitating stakeholder/working group consultations.
- Interested in gaining knowledge and experience in NCD and health systems.
- Must be prepared to travel to various districts and field for data collection and reports when required.
- Must be prepared to write and compile numerous administrative and financial reports to be submitted as per the Project requirements.
- Must have good level of communication skills as this position will require to communicate, coordinate and liaise with various stakeholders.

V. Proposed payment Schedule

- **Position level:** PL 7 (P-4) with 30% contract allowance plus 20 % HRA for duration of 10 months (December, 2022 – September, 2023)
(Nu. 25,220 + Nu. 7,566 + Nu. 5,045= **Nu. 37,831**)

VI. Duration of work

Fixed term position (*10 months' duration*) and subject to renewal after 5 months upon successful delivery of Deliverable 1

Note: Technical activities to be carried under the supervision of the project lead Dr. Karma Tenzin.