Terms of Reference (ToR)

Research Associate – Consultant (8 Positions)

1. Background

Nurturing Health: A Life-Course Approach to Non-Communicable Disease (NCDs) Prevention in Nepal is being implemented by Helen Keller Intl with support from the World Diabetes Foundation (WDF), in collaboration with the Family Welfare Division (FWD) and the Department of Health Services (DoHS). The project aims to strengthen the prevention, early detection, and management of hyperglycemia in pregnancy (HIP), including gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM). Adopting a life-course approach, the project integrates NCD prevention into maternal health services while promoting healthy lifestyle practices.

Helen Keller Intl, in collaboration with FWD/DoHS, will conduct a baseline assessment of service readiness and HIP prevalence, alongside a mapping of private healthcare services for pregnant women, including key informant interviews and stakeholder consultations. Covering five districts of Lumbini Province (Banke, Bardiya, Dang, Kapilvastu, Rupandehi) and three major referral hospitals, the assessments aim to assess service capacity, identify gaps, and provide evidence to guide national strategies for timely, accessible, and quality maternal care.

2. Purpose of the Role

The Research Associate – Consultant will be responsible for conducting research activities, with a primary focus on qualitative data collection to support the assessment . The role includes implementing field-level research tasks, ensuring accurate and ethical data gathering, and assisting with transcription, preliminary analysis, and reporting under the guidance of the Research Coordinator.

3. Key Responsibilities

a. Data Collection & Fieldwork

- Conduct structured interviews with study participants following approved research protocols and guidelines
- Assist in health facility assessments using standardized tools
- Ensure accurate and complete data recording during field activities
- Map private healthcare providers to document types of services offered, capacity, and coverage for pregnant women.
- Engage stakeholders through consultations to gather insights on service provision, challenges, and gaps.

b. Quality Assurance & Ethical Compliance

- Follow ethical guidelines, including obtaining written informed consent from study participants
- Maintain confidentiality, privacy, and integrity of collected data
- Communicate with supervisor on field issues, inconsistencies, or challenges to the Research Consultant promptly

c. Coordination/communication

- Liaise with staff from public and private health facilities, community representatives, and study participants to facilitate research activities.
- Collaborate with the Research Coordinator and team members to ensure smooth workflow.
- Provide timely updates on field activities and overall progress.
- Timely report challenges and field issues promptly to the Research Coordinator.

d. Data Management & Reporting

- Conduct timely data collection (quantitative and qualitative), verification and ensuring data quality
- Transcribe qualitative interviews
- Submit data on time.
- Prepare field activity notes and submit regular progress reports to the Research Coordinator

e. Capacity Building

- Participate in training and refresher sessions related to research tools, methods, and protocols

4. Qualification & Experience

- Bachelor's degree in public health, Social Sciences, Statistics, or a related field.
- Minimum 1–2 years of experience in research, monitoring, or evaluation activities.
- Knowledge of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.
- Experience in health research and familiarity with health facilities.
- Understanding of ethical research principles and informed consent procedures.
- Proficiency in MS Office and data collection tools (e.g., ODK, Kobo) is preferred.
- Strong communication, interpersonal, and organizational skills.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively in a field setting.

5. Deliverables

- High quality datasets, audio recording, consent form and transcribed documents
- Field activity reports submitted as per the agreed schedule.
- Updates on challenges and progress to the Research Coordinator

6. Timeline and Level of Effort

- The consultancy engagement is expected to last approximately four months, commencing from the date of contract execution. The consultant will be based at a designated location in one of the study districts or hospitals, as assigned.

7. **Reporting and Supervision:**

The consultant will report to the Monitoring & Evaluation Team at Helen Keller International and work under the guidance of the Research Consultant.

8. Benefits and Remuneration

- Helen Keller will provide remuneration as per the organization's Norms.
- No additional benefits will be provided beyond the agreed consultancy fee.
- Helen Keller will reimburse approved travel and field-related expenses, if any, based on actual expenses incurred, per Helen Keller's travel policy, and upon submission of valid supporting documents.

9. **Payment**:

Remuneration will be disbursed in installments contingent upon the successful and satisfactory completion of the key deliverables, as outlined in the contract. The detailed payment schedule, aligned with specific deliverable timelines, will be mutually agreed upon and finalized upon the consultant's onboarding.