

Azerbaijan Pension and Social Assistance Project
Monitoring of Targeted Social Assistance (TSA)
Terms of Reference

Background

After almost two years of preparation, Azerbaijan introduced targeted social assistance (TSA). Eligibility for TSA benefits is based on a means testing mechanism. Approximately 50,000 families are currently receiving assistance. It is expected that in 2007 about 170,000 families will benefit from the TSA. The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of Azerbaijan (MLSPP) is making monitoring and evaluation an integral part of the TSA program.

Purpose

The purpose of the proposed activity is to help the MLSPP in its monitoring and evaluation of the TSA program. A rigorous impact evaluation will be used as a managing-by-results tool by testing features of the program to modify design and improve effectiveness over time. The evaluation will focus inter alia on: (i) the TSA coverage (a fraction of the target population—the very poor—receiving the TSA); (ii) targeting mechanism and how to improve it; (iii) the implementation mechanism and how well it works; and (iv) the impact of the TSA on household welfare. In order to accomplish these, a nationally representative household survey will be conducted. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected.

The main objective of this consultancy is to carry out a nationwide Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) in Azerbaijan and prepare the final dataset.

Activities

Working in close collaboration with, and under the overall technical supervision of, the MLSPP and with a technical support of the World Bank, the consultancy firm is expected to perform the following tasks:

Questionnaire Preparation

The firm will translate, format and print the LSMS questionnaire which will be provided to the firm in English by MLSPP. The LSMS questionnaire will be prepared by MLSPP, in cooperation with the World Bank and the State Statistical Committee (SSC). The LSMS questionnaire will contain a number of modules, including household demographics, income, expenditures, consumption, labor markets, assets, housing conditions, health, education, social protection, self evaluation of household conditions, coping strategies and other modules typical of a standard LSMS instrument. The relevant modules should contain questions on the coverage, targeting and the impact of the TSA to enable rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the program.

Sample Selection

The firm will select and develop the sampling frame, draw the primary sampling units (PSUs), conduct the listing of households in the selected PSUs and undertake the final

selection of the Secondary Sampling units (SSUs). At a minimum, the sample will be representative for the following domains of inference: 1) urban and rural; 2) the 9 economic regions of Azerbaijan plus Baku; 3) beneficiary and ineligible households of the TSA program to allow an in-depth evaluation of the TSA and its benefit awarding process.

In order to have representative samples of the TSA beneficiary households as well as those households who applied but deemed ineligible for TSA benefits, over-sampling of these two groups of households will be necessary, as no enough observations can be expected from a national random sample. The firm will propose a strategy for the over-sampling.

The overall sample size, including the over-samples of the TSA beneficiary and ineligible households, will be about 7,000 households. Out of these, 6,000 households will be randomly selected nationally using a sample frame based on the latest population census, 500 households will be the over-sample of the TSA beneficiaries and the remaining 500 households will constitute the over-sample of those who were declined the TSA benefits due to their ineligibility.

The total number of selected households will also include a number of replacements, to be clearly identified and ranked, to be used in case of non-response. Calculation of the number of replacement households should be based on previous experience with similar types of surveys in Azerbaijan.

Pilot Survey

Under the supervision of the WB and MLSPP team, the firm will organize a field pilot test of the draft questionnaire. Approximately 25 households will be purposively selected and administered the household questionnaire by a small team of interviewers (3-5 persons). The field pilot is expected to be carried out in January 2007.

Fieldworkers' Selection and Training

The firm will select and train a team of enumerators and supervisors to carry out the fieldwork. In view of the foreseen length of the questionnaire, each enumerator should be expected to administer an average of 10 interviews per week. The training, including formal classroom training and mock interviews, will last a minimum one week. Audiovisual training tools will be prepared by the firm and used to facilitate the training. The firm will also be responsible for preparing and printing the fieldworker and supervisor manuals, which will be reviewed by MLSPP and the World Bank team prior to printing.

At least 5 percent more fieldworkers will be trained to account for possible turn over and absenteeism during the fieldwork. The proposal should also outline the field supervision structure and procedures to ensure data quality control. In order to raise the effectiveness of the training and improve on data quality, it is desirable to reduce the number of enumerators to a maximum of 70 enumerators and increase the duration of the fieldwork to up to 10 weeks.

Fieldwork

The team of fieldworkers will carry out personal interviews on the selected households. The interview will be administered to individual respondents, as identified on the questionnaire. The use of proxy respondents will be allowed in a number of cases, including for small children, absentees for a period beyond the duration of the fieldwork, and other special circumstances to be agreed upon during negotiation of the contract. Absence of one or more of the designated respondents will render multiple visits to the households necessary. The enumerator will arrange for a second visit to interview the designated respondent, prior to deciding to use a proxy respondent. All partial or complete non-responses must be fully documented for the supervisor to review.

All household replacements are to be approved by the field supervisors, who will keep the list of replacements and will allow substitutions only after a minimum of three visits by the enumerator to the households.

Finally, the proposal should detail the procedures to be used to minimize non-response and proper identification of project beneficiary households.

Focus Groups

From each of the sub-sample of TSA beneficiary and ineligible households, 10% of the sampled households will participate in focus group discussions. The objective is to make a qualitative assessment of the TSA program. The firm will develop focus groups questionnaire and guidelines, select participating households, conduct focus groups discussions and prepare a detailed report from these discussions.

Data Entry

The firm will develop a data entry program to enter and clean the data collected, and prepare a final dataset in Stata (or SPSS) format, which will include complete and clear labels in English, data dictionaries and any other related data documentation. The data entry application will have, at a minimum, the following characteristics:

- The screens for data entry resemble the physical questionnaires as closely as possible to facilitate accurate and quick data entry;
- Built-in range checks, with out-of-range results flagged at data entry by the computer. Out-of range checks will be performed on individual variables as well as constructed variables average prices, average yields, etc. The option to override the range check is available and any over-riding of the check will be logged, on batch mode, in the output report of errors;
- Built-in, consistency checks both within records and between records;
- Built-in skip patterns, which also can be overridden – with any overriding tracked in the output error report;
- Error and missing data reports automatically generated whenever needed;
- Simple mechanisms for retrieving record in order to correct entered data and/or append data to records;
- Built in mechanism to avoid double entry of individual or household data and to check for missing data;

- Ability to enter all alphanumeric information in the “Other” categories. All descriptions in the “Other” categories will also be entered. Whenever possible, “other” responses will be classified in existing codes, or into new ones;
- System capable of moving among different units of analysis (household, individual, household enterprises, agricultural plots);
- Verification of questionnaires entered.

All office coding (e.g. occupation, industry, “other” categories, etc.) will be carried out by the firm prior to data entry.

It is envisioned for the data entry to start no later than 2 weeks from the beginning of fieldwork. This would allow an almost concurrent review of the errors and inconsistencies, and enable corrections during fieldwork.

Implementation Arrangements

The LSMS questionnaire will be prepared by the MLSP in cooperation with the World Bank and given to the firm. The sampling design and the list of households to be surveyed will be determined by a sampling expert, in cooperation with the State Statistical Committee. The firm will therefore work under the guidance and in close cooperation with the MLSP. The World Bank will provide the quality control.

Duration and Timing

The final draft of the questionnaire and pilot field testing of the questionnaire will be completed by end-January 2007. Sample design and selection of PSUs will be carried out by the firm, in close consultation with MLSP and the WB team, by the end of February 2007. Listing updating will also be completed by February 2007. The firm will conduct at least a one week training of field workers during the first week of March 2007, with fieldwork work starting soon thereafter. Fieldwork is expected to last approximately 10 weeks but not to exceed May 31, 2007. The final dataset in Stata or SPSS, adequately cleaned and labeled and documented, will be submitted to MLSP by June 30, 2007.

Expected Output

The consultant is expected to produce excellent quality LSMS data base (to be verified by MLSP and World Bank experts), cleaned and ready to be analyzed. The data base should be accompanied by appropriate documentation, including data base dictionary. The consultant should also generate cross-tabulations on all LSMS variables, including statistical errors. The focus groups discussions (each one of them) should be described in detail in a series of reports.

Reporting Requirement

The consultant will inform MLSP by-weekly on the progress in the task implementation, during the duration of the contract.

Qualification and Experience

The firm will have a proven track record in the design and implementation of large household surveys in Azerbaijan. Previous experience in working with the World Bank and MLSPP will be considered an asset.

Selection Procedure

Short-listed candidates may be invited for an interview to discuss the details of their proposal, including the proposed sampling frame, the training of the fieldworkers, supervision procedures, and the method of selection of the over-samples. Final selection of the firm will be done following the interviews.