

NEW ALIPORE PRAAJAK DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

POLICY ON CONSULTANTS

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of these Guidelines, which will be an integral part of the Human Resource Manual of New Alipore Praajak Development Society is to define the broad policies and procedures of New Alipore Praajak Development Society for selection, contracting and monitoring of consultants when needed for undertaking financial, programmatic, grant, legal and other professional services financed from resources raised by the Society or available from Donors for particular projects and specific purposes.

When New Alipore Praajak Development Society requires professional assistance it is within the purview of the Governing Body at their discretion or at the request of the Director to hire consultants for a variety of needs that are unmet by staff or for which staff are not available or in the situation that hiring staff will require more resources than at the command of the Society.

The specific purpose and the specific rules and procedures to be followed for employing Consultants depend on the circumstances of the particular case. Payment for consultant services should be comparable to the normal or customary fees charged and received by the consultant for comparable services.

In determining the allowability of recruiting a Consultant in a particular case, no single factor or any special combination of factors is necessarily determinative.

However, the following factors among others, are relevant:

- (a) the nature and scope of the high quality service rendered in relation to the service required considering the organization's capability in the particular area and the absence of required expertise in-house;
- (b) the past pattern of such costs and whether the service can be performed more economically by consulting rather than by employment;
- (c) the impact of donor grants on the organization's total activity;

(d) whether the nature of the total activity is such as to influence the organization in favour of incurring the cost, particularly where the services rendered are not of a continuing nature;

(e) the qualifications of the individual or concern rendering the service and the normal/customary fees charged and received by the individual for comparable services, especially on non-government contracts; and

(f) adequacy of the contractual agreement for the service (e.g., description of the service, estimate of time required, rate of compensation and termination provisions).

In addition, retainer fees to be allowable must be supported by evidence of bona fide services available or rendered.

The Society may hire consultants not identified in any grant proposal or award approved by a Donor, provided:

(a) it is in accordance with written Human Resource Policy;

(b) funds may be reallocated in accordance with the Society's policies; and

(c) it is within the limits of available funding, whether own resources or grants provided by a Donor.

DEFINITION

For the purpose of this Policy, the term Consultant(s) includes a wide variety of private and public entities, including consulting firms, procurement agents, auditors, universities, research institutions, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals/experts.

These organizations as consultants could be used for help in a wide range of activities – such as policy advice; institutional reforms; project supervision/management; technical services; studies and research: financial services; procurement services; identification and preparation of projects; development of software services etc.

Consultants can be hired on a temporary, short-term or medium-term basis for any number of days to any number of months as required by the particular service and circumscribed by the donor contract period, in case the financial liability comes from a grant.

When hiring consultants, the Director or any other person designated by the Director will adhere to rules and regulations set forth in this document.

Employees of other government or non-government agencies may be utilized as Consultants on a project and may receive compensation and/or expenses if they obtain prior approval from their agencies to participate, and if services to the project are performed outside their regular working hours or while they are on leave status from official duties.

Under no circumstances may employees of agencies that give sponsored support to the Society receive compensation from a project supported by their agency.

The Director or any other person designated by the Director will be responsible for soliciting bids and interviewing and hiring potential consultants.

RULES FOR CONSULTANCY

1. Agreement for the Provision of Services

The relationship between internal consultant (hereafter referred to as Consultant) and New Alipore Praajak Development Society (hereafter referred to as Praajak) is stipulated in the Agreement for the Provision of Services (hereafter referred to as Contract).

2. Remuneration System of calculation

The calculation of remuneration for all international staff is based on the following factors:

The salary scale approved by Praajak management and the per diems' rate as stated in the Human Resource Policy of Praajak

Years of experience in the relevant sector, seniority and the position's responsibilities. In some cases, a special amount reflecting the hardship of a particular senior role might be included in the remuneration calculation.

In line with the above-mentioned, when changing the type of position and/or place of posting the remuneration should be recalculated, hence, in some cases it might mean decrease.

The calculation must correspond to minimum wage laws of India and will be paid in Indian Rupees only.

3. Components of the remuneration

The consultant is paid either a monthly remuneration, in case of medium term contract not exceeding one year or a one-time payment for a specific output, in cases where the contract period is less than a year.

Monthly remunerations consist of two components:

- A fixed monthly fee
- A subsistence allowance as per the regulations laid out in the Human Resource Policy unless the Contract builds the same into the fixed monthly fee in accordance with the nature of the service provided and/or donor requirements.

One time remunerations consist of two components:

- A fixed one-time fee, of which not more than 20% can be paid in advance, if the nature of the services so demands. The fixed one-time fees can be staggered for more than once reflecting various stages of completion of the output mentioned in the Contract
- A subsistence allowance as per the regulations laid out in the Human Resource Policy unless the Contract builds the same into the fixed monthly fee in accordance with the nature of the service provided and/or donor requirements

4. Payment of the remuneration

The Consultant regularly issues invoice for contractual amount which covers the particular calendar month or any period not less than 30 days as informed to the Consultant in writing (the usual invoice's issue date is the last day of the respective calendar month; the invoice shall not be issued later than 5 working days after this deadline).

The remuneration (in the currency specified in the contract) will be paid directly to the Consultant's bank account.

Any advance payment to the Consultant will be based on an issued advance invoice. The advance will be settled in the monthly invoice and reflected in a due amount.

Work related expenses (e.g. transportation, accommodation) are reimbursed based on relevant documents (receipts) providing they were approved by the line manager following procedure outlined in the Human Resource Policy.

For each issued invoice a Report or Reports, as relevant, on rendered services (hereafter referred to as – Report/s) must be attached based on the instructions provided. The monthly report summarizes in points services provided by the consultant.

In general, the consultant does not have to submit any other kind of timesheets, i.e. not recording number of working hours per month, although a standard eight-hour working time is followed (40 hours of work per week).

Both documents: the invoice and the report must be signed by the consultant. Furthermore, the report has to be approved by the line manager. Afterwards both documents have to be sent to the stipulated Finance Desk Officer for payment processing and archiving.

The template of the invoice and the report is annex to the contract, which each consultant receives during the hiring period. The Finance Desk Officer can be consulted regarding the payment processing and related documents completion.

The Support Finance Desk Officer will be responsible for archiving of the Report in Consultant's personal folder

As per the tax laws of India, the payment on this contract will be made to the Consultant after required statutory deductions.

Consultants are advised to consult a tax specialist in this regard, if they feel necessary.

5. Changes in remuneration

Remuneration may undergo changes if a Consultant deployed in one is to be deployed to another city. The remuneration will be recalculated and hence it might mean increase or decrease.

This is not applicable for short-term assignments under 6 months. If, in the unlikely scenario of a change in city of deployment on a short-term assignment means an increased cost, the increased costs are compensated through the per diem as per regulations of the Human Resource Policy.

A remuneration raise shall be related to the performance and upon suggestion of the consultant's line manager. It must be approved by the Director.

In general, no increase of remuneration is done automatically – even in case of successful completion of probation period. Any increase needs to be discussed and isn't guaranteed without relevant justification.

The increase is always in line with allocations in Donor budgets in a particular grant and mid-term and annual appraisals.

If a tentative increase is agreed during the hiring period, it shall be mentioned in the Offer form.

6. Leave

All leave will follow Praajak's leave policy as stated in the Human Resource Policy.

7. Travel and Transportation - Flights/Trains/Vehicle Hire and Hotel/Guest House Bookings

In all cases of transport arrangement, the consultant must coordinate the booking, purchase and payment with Logistics Desk sufficiently in advance in order to prevent significant losses caused by cancellation fees, change fees, etc. and for the purpose of keeping record of his/her flights, trains, cars and other means of transport provision.

Flight/train tickets may be purchased only by Praajak Logistics Desk based on written requisitions, approved in writing by the line manager, to the above mentioned Desk.

Similarly vehicle hire requests may be sent in the form of written requisitions to the Praajak Logistics Desk after written approval by the line manager.

For all flights the necessary boarding cards have to be submitted for each flight to the Praajak Logistics Desk on completion of the trip.

Each Consultant is obliged to look after the expiration date of his/her flight ticket. If for objective reasons, it is not possible to use the ticket, it is necessary to inform the Praajak Logistics Desk to find an alternative solution.

If the Consultant fails to inform the Praajak Logistics Desk in advance and the unused ticket is not refundable, he/she is obliged to cover the alternative transportation cost him/herself.

The limit on the luggage weight is defined by the specific conditions of the flight company for each of its flight. However, if the total weight does not allow bringing an adequate amount of things needed for the stay during the assignment, Praajak can cover up to 5 kg transported as cargo. Overweight luggage will be covered by Praajak only in case of Praajak material transportation to and from the city of deployment (computers, documents, etc.).

At all times Consultants are encouraged to use public transport for local travel the costs of which will be reimbursed as per regulations of the Human Resource Policy.

Praajak will cover the cost of fuel (if a relevant receipt is provided) for work-related travel If the travel amount claimed is for a work-related purpose (induction training, debriefing, meeting, sharing, etc.) if the Consultant uses her/his own vehicle as per existing regulations of the Human Resource Policy

Praajak covers the accommodation for the work-related period as per regulations of the Human Resource Policy. No extra per diems are paid for occasions where meals are covered by Praajak during the work-related period.

8. Emergencies and Psycho-social Care

All Consultants are strongly encouraged to register their contact details with the Praajak Logistics Desk and to comply with its instructions in order to be notified in case of an emergency during the trip or a personal emergency at home.

Psychological (psychosocial) counselling services required by the Consultant for any emotional or psychological discomfort in the workplace, any situation when you are struggling with your role in the team, having difficulties to adapt to a culturally different environment, or for instance having complicated relationship with your teammate or manager, will be available to all Consultants.

The Logistics Desk will help to select a professional consultant trained for providing the services after the request by the Consultant is approved in writing by the line manager and after a written sanction by the Director.

The Praajak Logistics Desk will have to be informed of this as soon as the Director's sanction is available. Praajak will cover the cost of the first 4 days of Counselling with an institution or a private counsellor on the basis of a bill invoice generated by the Consultant just as in case of other reimbursements.

Kindly note, in a situation like this, when you don't feel comfortable enough to contact the Praajak Logistics Desk, you can ask some of your colleagues to whom you feel to be close enough to communicate on your behalf. All content of the above-mentioned sessions is confidential and the fact, that someone has required such support and/or is using it is not shared within either the organisation or the project team.

However, when the counsellor comes to a well-founded conclusion that the staff member may suffer serious psychological problems or mental health issues threatening the person's health, the counsellor can provide this feedback to the Praajak Logistics Desk with relevant recommendation for corresponding measures.

Also in this case, the entire issue is treated as confidential and the information is shared only within relevant Praajak management members.

The only purpose of this arrangement is protection of the Praajak Consultant's health and life.

9. Professional capacity development

Praajak supports professional development and education of all Consultants.

Trainings, other capacity development activities, and their reimbursement by PIN should follow these principles:

- The capacity development activity corresponds to development goals agreed upon within the adaptation/evaluation process with the line manager.
- The capacity is relevant for current position and will bring benefit not only to the individual but also to the relevant department or programme.
- The request(s) should be given in advance.

The Praajak Logistics Desk, which addresses capacity development issues in the absence of a separate Human Resource Desk, along with specific senior staff

associated with capacity development will provide Consultants with guidance which tools are suitable, relevant and available for various capacity development needs and requests.

The tools can be for example:

- E-learning modules, both internal and external
- Internal trainings (held internally as per donor requirements or on need to learn basis)
 - External trainings
 - Mentoring, coaching
 - Exposure visits, exchange with other NGO's, exposure to different projects.
- Self-study, self-management

10. Review

The existing rules and regulations stated in this document will be reviewed by the Governing Body on request of the Director every three years since the promulgation of this policy or whenever such a need arises.