

**Appendix A – Subgrantee Scope of Work**  
**Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR)**  
**Project Period Year 1: 12/01/20 – 11/30/2021**

**A. Background**

Excess mortality due to the pandemic of COVID-19, i.e. how many more deaths there are compared to a recent pre-COVID-19 past, appears as a robust measure of the magnitude of the epidemic and its health impact. Indeed, this measure embraces the indirect effect of the pandemic and is not too dependent on testing coverage. This is particularly true in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) where testing coverage is low and civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) are not too functional. In these countries particularly, mortality estimates are mainly derived from censuses and large-scale surveys such as Demographic Health Surveys (DHSs) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICSs) to circumvent the bad performance of CRVS. Unfortunately, due to pandemic of Covid-19, most of these surveys have been postponed to protect the population against contamination. Face to face interviews that were commonly used are then suspended for the moment. In this context, it is crucial to develop innovative strategies to capture mortality estimates and assess the impact of COVID-19 in terms of mortality.

**B. General Objectives**

The objective of the **Rapid Mortality Mobile Phone Surveys (RAMMPS)** project in Malawi fits in the overall objective of the RAMMPS project that will be implemented in different settings in LMICs. It is to produce data in order to capture excess mortality due to COVID-19 epidemic in Malawi. Specific objectives include:

- 1) Improved use of RAMMPS for estimating excess mortality during COVID-19 in Malawi;
- 2) Evaluate RAMMPS as a cost-effective approach for mortality surveillance beyond COVID-19. These specific objectives are presented in detail in the broader project proposal.

**C. Project Methods and Activities**

This project entails the collection of primary data using mobile phones surveys. Trained interviewers will contact respondents by phone to collect information related to socio-economic characteristics and mortality. Mortality data will be collected using standard instruments such as full birth histories, sibling survival histories, parental survival, and recent household deaths. An attention will also be paid to COVID-19 attitudes, behaviors, and healthcare utilization during the pandemic. For the case of Malawi, as in other countries, either Random Digit Dialling (RDD) or mobile phone numbers obtained from providers will be used to set up the representative sample of repeated cross-sectional surveys. The target sample is 20,000 completed over a period of 12 months, or 1,667 interviews per month. The length of each individual interview is expected to be around 20 minutes on average and should not exceed 30 minutes.

In summary, key activities include:

- Select and recruit a team of CATI interviewers

- Training of interviewers on the RAMMPS questionnaire developed by LSHTM and MEIRU colleagues
- Pilot questionnaire on a small sample of 50 interviews
- Liaise with ‘Survey Solutions’ (or equivalent) to develop a sample of working phone numbers using a set of pre-specified quota (sex, broad age groups, region)
- Conduct 1,667 mobile phone interviews per month (on average) to complete 20,000 interviews over a 12-month period
- Liaise with colleagues at MEIRU/LSHTM and NYU for data management, data integrity checks and data documentation
- Conduct periodic refresher training with interviewers to ensure compliance with data collection protocols
- Monthly data transfers to MEIRU/LSHTM are to be done on the 10th of every month comprising data collected in the previous month.
- Employ two demographers from Chancellor College at the University of Malawi, to conduct analyses of data collected during the pilot questionnaire and during the survey. These demographers will conduct their work under the direction of colleagues at MEIRU/LSHTM/NYU.

#### **D. Expected Outputs**

For the first year of the implementation of the project, the key outputs to be delivered will include a methodological report highlighting fieldwork protocols and procedures, a report on the results from the pilot questionnaire of 50 interviews, a fortnightly questionnaire completed by interviewers on data quality and workflow issues, and regular transfers of data for processing, cleaning and analysis.

## E. Timeline of Activities and Deliverables

**Table 1. Timeline of activities in Malawi**

Year 1 (01 December 2020-11/30/2021)	2020		2021		
	4	1	2	3	4
Contract signature					
Start-up & staff meetings(coordination)					
Instruments and fieldwork protocol					
Ethics submission					
Sampling					
Implementation of instruments on tablets					
Recruitment of fieldworkers					
Training and pilot survey					
Fieldwork					
Data cleaning					

The timeline of activities presented here fits in the overall timeline of the project in the different countries in order to facilitate the implementation of the project as a whole. However, depending on constraints, it could be adapted.

The mains deliverables of year 1 are a report on sampling procedures and fieldwork protocols. The datasets will also be made available on an ongoing basis as data are collected and cleaned.

**Table 1 deliverables during year 1 of the RAMMPS**

1	Methodological report describing research infrastructure, instruments, fieldwork protocols and sampling procedures	30 April 2021
2	Report describing results and experiences from the pilot questionnaire of 50 interviews.	30 June 2021
3	Interviewer questionnaires submitted fortnightly outlining any data quality or workflow issues	Fortnightly beginning 1 month after the start of data collection.
4	Preliminary datasets for cleaning, processing and analysis	Submitted on the 10th of each month, beginning 1 month after the start of data collection.