

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

National Consultant - Agriculture Advisor for School Meal Program in Western and Isabel Provinces, Solomon Islands

### BACKGROUND

Solomon Islands is grappling with the triple burden of malnutrition which are undernutrition (chronic and acute); micronutrient deficiencies (such as anaemia) and overnutrition (overweight and obesity). Undernutrition and iron deficiency anaemia are high among under 5 children with 32 per cent of them stunted; 8 per cent wasted, and 39 per cent anaemic. Overweight and obesity affect a significant portion of children (23 per cent) and adults (57 per cent) compounded by unhealthy dietary habits such as consumption of insufficient fruits (33 per cent) and vegetables (21 per cent) and high daily intake of carbonated soft drinks among school-aged children (45 per cent).

With agriculture being the primary livelihood for over 80 per cent of the population, optimizing agricultural practices becomes imperative amid land scarcity, environmental degradation, and climate change effects. Therefore, strengthening agricultural extension services and prioritizing subsistence farming can bolster local food production and mitigate price hikes. Furthermore, investments in subsistence agriculture including scaling of small-scale agricultural community or school initiatives are needed. This would better facilitate that the food supply chain for locally grown nutritious foods is sustained and further mitigate against localized hiking of food prices. There is a wide diversity of nutritious foods that are locally produced in Solomon such as sweet potato, cassava, yam, taro, banana, pumpkin, and vegetables. In particular, the production of high value nutritious food crops such as slippery cabbage, tomato, pineapple, peanut, ngali-nut, watermelon, sweet potato, taro, yam has the potential to be scaled up while also preserving climate resilience.

If such scale up is realised, this could be catalytic to realising provision of meals in schools. Children spend a significant portion of their day at school in which case healthy meals and snacks not only have a bearing on their overall health and wellbeing but also on their learning outcomes for instance on school enrolment, attendance, and overall school performance. There is evidence across the globe on the positive impact of meal provision in schools on education outcomes.

While in Solomon, schools typically have farming land, communities within the locality of schools can also mitigate the gaps in securing a consistent food supply if properly organised into cooperatives and linked to schools. Subsistence livestock production largely consists of local inbred and free-range pigs, backyard chickens, and cattle. This sub-sector equally has room for scale up to meet the potential demand which can arise, for instance school meal provision in this case.

Against the above background, with funding support from Japan, UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Health has launched a three-year school meal provision project in nine schools - six in Western Province and three in Isabel Province. The initiative aims to pilot the provision of healthy and nutritionally adequate school meals through a resource-efficient and sustainable approach. This will be achieved by optimising agricultural food production within schools and their surrounding communities, serving as a stop-gap measure to supplement food supply produced within schools. To date, assessments in WASH, agriculture and nutrition have been completed in the nine schools. The project is now at a critical stage of initiating agricultural activities, which form the backbone of the initiative. There is an urgent need for a consultant who can work with provincial agricultural teams to provide hands-on technical guidance for agricultural production in the targeted schools and the supplementary production in surrounding communities. The consultant will ensure that production is nutrition-sensitive and climate-resilient. UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Education is seeking a national consultant to fulfill this role.

## **OBJECTIVE / SCOPE OF WORK**

The consultant will provide technical guidance and sustained on-site support to strengthen agriculture production systems that supply targeted schools with locally grown and climate-resilient nutritious food. Furthermore, the role will focus on building sustainable links between schools and community-based agricultural activities, integrating agroforestry and ecological design principles to enhance biodiversity, soil health, and resilience. The consultant will work closely with school staff, students, and community stakeholders to co-develop practical, context-specific solutions.

### **Specific objectives:**

- Lead assessment of existing agricultural practices and food production systems in the nine schools and quantify required agricultural produce for sustainable daily nutritionally adequate meal provision in each school.
- Lead mapping of existing school farms and gardens, identify potential areas for expansion, and estimate expected yields from schools and surrounding communities (including farming cooperatives which would be set up to complement school-based production).
- In liaison with all the project stakeholders and implementing partners, develop a comprehensive, site-specific master plan/design map (including an agricultural calendar) for each school, integrating ecological design principles (e.g., crop diversity, soil health, water management, and integration of trees, crops, and small livestock).
- Provide technical support and oversight to develop model school gardens and farms for each of the nine schools, in alignment with local resources, climate, soil typology, and capacity of the schools.
- Promote agroforestry systems that enhance biodiversity, soil health, and resilience in school and community food production.
- Strengthen the capacity of provincial agricultural teams, school staff, and community stakeholders in sustainable agricultural practices.
- Provide technical support, guidance and oversight to organize and strengthen community farmer groups/cooperatives and their partnerships with local markets to complement school-based food production.
- Develop technical recommendations to integrate agriculture into school meal planning and implementation.

### **Scope of Work:**

#### **1. Assessment & Planning**

- Provide technical support and guidance for conducting mapping of local agricultural production in target schools and their surrounding communities.
- Support identification of priority climate resilient nutritious perennial crops, trees and small livestock that can be scaled up for school meal provision. Support food systems mapping to identify the barriers to production and access of these crops by the targeted schools.
- Guide development of school-community food supply plans, including the respective yield targets for both community and schools, crop calendars and delivery arrangements.
- Provide technical support and guidance for design a comprehensive site-specific master plan/design map (including agricultural calendar) for each school site, integrating ecological design principles and reflecting site-specific needs, with input from school and community stakeholders.

#### **2. Strengthening School–Community Linkages**

- Provide guidance and technical support to re-establish or revamp farmer groups /cooperatives to address the identified food supply gaps from school-based agricultural production.
- Facilitate agreements between schools and local farmer groups/cooperatives for regular food supply.
- Guide and support to establish routine, affordable, and sustainable food supply chains between community and schools.

### 3. Capacity Building & Extension Services

- In liaison with implementing partners & stakeholders, develop a relevant training module and provide training to farmers, school committees, and agriculture extension officers on:
  - Climate-smart farming techniques
  - Integrated farming system, including multi-layered planting, composting, water harvesting, irrigation and natural pest management
  - Sustainable crop and livestock production
  - Food safety, preservation and post-harvest handling
- Ensure that the productivity, efficiency and yields of school-farms are enhanced and maximized while promoting practical techniques for creating resilient, low-input food systems suitable for the local context
- Support schools in establishing/strengthening school gardens as demonstration sites for nutrition education.

### 4. Technical Inputs & Resource Mobilization

- Advise project stakeholders on procurement, deployment and use and maintenance of agricultural equipment/machinery provided under the project.
- Oversee the upgradation of school kitchens, kitchen services, cooking practices for improving quality of food for students
- Recommend climate-resilient practices (e.g., irrigation, composting, organic farming) suitable to local contexts and build capacity of school management and local farmers for their adoption

### 5. Coordination

- Maintain regular coordination with implementing partner to complete work plans and monitor implementation accordingly
- Support coordination between provincial and national agricultural teams to ensure timely deployment of agricultural inputs and materials
- Strengthen coordination of provincial agricultural teams (including school meal coordination committees) and implementing partners, other sectors as well as schools to ensure that agricultural plans are implemented in consultations with all relevant stakeholders (education, health, agriculture, school meal project team, and NGOs).

### 6. Quality Assurance, Monitoring, Learning & Reporting

- Develop simple quality assurance and monitoring tools to track agricultural production, adequacy of agricultural produce and planned food supplies into schools for nutritionally enhanced school meal provision.
- Develop and implement context relevant sustainability plans specific for each school on how schools can take up financial costs for the agricultural activities beyond the project timeline
- Identify good practices, challenges and lessons learned and develop recommendations which can offer smooth eventual takeover of the project by government and sustainability including national government funded scale-up of the school meal program.
- Provide monthly progress updates and a final consultancy report.

ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES, PLUS BUDGET PER DELIVERABLE			
ACTIVITY	DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE	PAYMENT
<b>Inception Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Based on a desk review and an initial inception with initial stakeholders prepare a brief outline of the workplan of the consultancy milestones</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A 2–3-page brief outlining the workplan the consultancy</li></ul>	5 days	15%

<p><b>Assessment and planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the existing agriculture assessments as well as related assessments on School Nutrition Environment Assessment and WASH; and undertake complementary primary agricultural assessments; to produce school-specific assessment reports, which provide a holistic plan for each school and its surrounding community, based on the findings from agriculture and the related components</li> <li>Undertake all primary Assessment and Planning works as detailed in the “Objective/Scope of Work” section, point 1,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidated School Assessment Reports for each of the nine schools</li> <li>Mapping report on agricultural production and farmer groups in target communities</li> <li>Comprehensive master plan/design for each school, including site layout, phased implementation steps, and resource recommendations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of priority climate resilient nutritious perennial crops, trees and small livestock</li> <li>School community food supply plans</li> <li>Farming agricultural calendars</li> </ul> </li> <li></li> </ul>	50 days	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop practical school garden and farm models that align with local resources, climate, and capacity.</li> <li>Undertake all works to strengthen school-community linkages as outlined in the “Objective and Scope of Work” sections 2 and 5.</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports/ minutes of meetings on coordination with provincial and national school meal task force committees including government counterparts and Implementing partners</li> <li>Consolidated overall school agricultural workplans (including target yield, proposed crop calendars and resource needs).</li> <li>Consolidated progress reports on school farms</li> <li>Community food supply targets and plans</li> </ul>	45 days	25%
<p><b>School-Community food supply linkage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redesign and strengthen the functionality of existing farmer group cooperatives to meet food supply gaps in school-based agricultural production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence from reports, minutes, confirming that farmer group cooperatives are organised and the community-school food supply chain is better organised and functioning well to meet the targeted food-supply chain for schools</li> </ul>	50 days	
<p><b>Capacity Building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake all works to strengthen capacity and extension services as detailed in the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training sessions of good standard delivered to school staff, farmers, communities</li> </ul>	50 days	20%

<p>“Objective and Scope of Work” section point 3 and 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In liaison with partners, build capacity of farmers, agriculture extension officers, school committees/staff, students, and community stakeholders to locally manage and sustain the food supply for the school meals provision</li> <li>• Develop a monitoring system which schools can utilise to track and manage school-produced, and community solicited food-supply for school meal provision</li> <li>• Recommend climate-resilient practices (e.g., irrigation, composting, organic farming) and provide capacity building for their adoption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training tool kit provided to government provincial agricultural teams for continued trainings of schools</li> <li>• Monitoring tool and system established in schools to manage food supply for school meals</li> <li>• Evidence of enhanced productivity, efficiency of school farms</li> </ul>		
<p>Monitoring agricultural productivity in school gardens, farms and community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that there is efficient and improved agricultural productivity on both schools and communities meeting targeted yields</li> <li>• Advise on procurement, deployment and use of agriculture equipment/machinery provided under the project. Ensure that all agricultural equipment is well taken care of, well maintained and used appropriately</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-specific as well as consolidated project reports including community agricultural activities indicating planned execution of agricultural activities according to the calendars</li> <li>• Monitoring tool and system established and used in schools to manage food supply for school meals including</li> <li>• Standard Operating Procedure for guiding on proper storage, use and maintenance of agricultural equipment.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	30 days	10%
<p><b>Recommendations to integrate agriculture into school meal planning and implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress reports documenting outputs, challenges and lessons learnt for eventual take over and national scale-up as well as sustainability of the school meal program</li> <li>• Regular Monthly reports a</li> <li>• Final consultancy report.</li> </ul>	10 days	5%
<p><b>Final Report</b></p>		10 days	5%
<p><b>Total</b></p>		250 days	100%

Note: Actual payment schedule will be determined once the sequencing/timeframe of the deliverables is agreed upon prior to the contracting process.

**QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE, AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES**

Bachelors  Masters  PhD  Other

**Education:**

A university degree in an agricultural related field is required. An advanced degree (Master's) in a related discipline is an added advantage. Relevant years of experience may be considered in lieu of a higher degree.

**Experience:**

- Minimum of 3 years of professional experience in agriculture and food systems in the Pacific or similar contexts
- Demonstrated expertise in climate-smart agriculture, permaculture/agroforestry systems and participatory planning, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and community-based organization of farmers
- Experience in working with / through government ministries, schools, farmer cooperatives

**Skills:**

- Strong facilitation, training, coordination skills and community engagement skills.
- Proven ability to work independently under difficult conditions while meeting deadlines
- Able to work effectively with multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural teams
- Excellent pedagogical skills for training
- Communicates clearly and concisely
- Excellent analytical and conceptual skills

**Knowledge:**

- Government systems, Climate-smart agriculture, Nutrition, Farmer Cooperatives
- Advanced computer literacy including good working knowledge of data analysis packages/software

**Language:**

- Fluency in English is required. Knowledge of Solomon Islands Pidgin is an advantage

**The exercise will start as soon as possible, and immediate availability will be an added advantage**

**CONDITIONS OF WORK AND CLARIFICATION ON SUPERVISION****Management, Organization, and Timeframe:**

The consultant will be based in UNICEF Solomon Field Office but liaising with Ministry of Agriculture and mostly working through in-country field missions to Isabel and Western provinces (approximately 1 round trip to each province per month expected throughout the consultancy period). The overall monitoring and supervision of the consultancy will be provided by the Maternal and Child Health Specialist, while day-to-day support will be provided by the Nutrition Officer with the Nutrition Manager based in Pacific Multi Country Office in Suva providing remote support.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

- Individuals engaged under a consultancy will not be considered "staff members" under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF's policies and procedures and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants. Consultants are responsible for determining their tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.
- The selected candidate is solely responsible for ensuring that the visa (applicable) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected candidates are subject to confirmation of fully vaccinated status against SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) with a World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed vaccine, which must be met prior to taking up the assignment. It does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, program delivery locations or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts. UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants with disabilities. This may include, for example, accessible software, travel assistance for missions or personal attendants. We encourage you to disclose your disability during your application in case you need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and afterward in your assignment.
- No contract may commence unless the contract is signed by both UNICEF and the consultant.

- Consultant will be required to complete mandatory online courses (e.g. Ethics, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Security) upon receipt of the offer and before the signature of the contract.
- Deliverables that require payment within less than 30 days should be lumped together for ease of transaction.

*The below is to be included in the advert.*

**NOTE FOR CONSULTANTS:**

Please submit a **separate financial offer** along with **your application and technical proposal** on how the assignment will be conducted. The financial proposal should be a **lump sum amount for all the deliverables** but should show a break down for the following:

- Daily fees– based on the deliverables in the Terms of Reference
- Field Mission to Western and Isabel Province, approximately 12 missions to each province
- Miscellaneous- to cover health insurance, communications, and other costs.