United Nations Children's Fund

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS

Consultancy Title: National Consultant – Child Wellbeing Advocacy	**Funding Code (Grant and WBS):** SC240342 (50%) SC250206 (50%) 2460/A0/06/880/004/010	**Name of the requesting business area & Section:** UNICEF Lao PDR Country Office – Communication & Advocacy Section	**Duty Station** Vientiane, Lao PDR, with travel to Khammouane and Bolikhamsay provinces

Number of Consultants Required (To be filled only if multiple consultants are needed):
1

Purpose of Activity/Assignment

UNICEF Lao PDR requires dedicated, time-bound capacity to develop two advocacy strategies: one on child marriage and one on nutrition.

Both areas are priorities under the Country Programme 2027–2031. Ending child, early and forced marriage is a key focus within the adolescent empowerment and inclusion outcome area, reflecting the scale of the issue in Lao PDR, where 33 per cent of young women are married before 18, and rates are considerably higher among girls with no education, from some ethnic groups, and from the poorest households. Nutrition is similarly central to the programme's child survival and development results, with around one in three children under five affected by stunting, and wasting having risen from roughly 5 to 11 per cent over the past fourteen years. Achieving the shifts in policy and budget allocation that the country programme is aiming for in both areas calls for a clear advocacy position, with priorities, target audiences and a plan for reaching them.

The timing is helpful. Lao PDR's graduation from Least Developed Country status in November 2026 is expected to bring a greater emphasis on domestic financing over the life of the country programme, which matters for both agendas. At the same time, the National Assembly and Provincial People's Assemblies elected in February 2026 are the bodies with oversight of budget decisions in these areas, and building strategies around them now, while the two are still fairly new, offers a natural opening.

There is also a good base of evidence to draw on. On child marriage: the Political Economy Analysis validated in August 2026; the cost-of-child-marriage analysis with the Lao Academy of Social and Economic Sciences, estimating annual losses of around US$40 million; the localized investment case on adolescent pregnancy and child marriage; and the social and gender norms study, due to complete later in 2026. On nutrition: the nutrition landscape and expenditure analysis, the nutrition-responsive budgeting work carried out with the SUN Movement Secretariat, and LECS7 child poverty data. On the policy side, the National Plan of Action on Ending Violence against Women and Children (2026–2030) includes child marriage as a priority chapter, and the National Nutrition Strategy 2026–2035 and its Action Plan 2026–2030 are currently being developed with UNICEF's technical support.

The consultant will develop two advocacy strategies, each setting out a prioritised advocacy agenda and a costed action plan aligned with the Country Programme 2027–2031, and will begin putting them into practice through the advocacy products due in this period under the TUSIP CEFM programme and the Child Nutrition Fund. The assignment is temporary and deliverable-based, and concludes once the products listed in the work assignment table below have been delivered, approved and handed over.

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Scope of Work:
Under the direct supervision of the Chief of Communication & Advocacy, the consultant will develop two advocacy strategies and deliver the advocacy products that apply them. Each strategy is to be a concise, operational document — a prioritised advocacy agenda and a costed action plan, not a literature review — aligned to the Country Programme Document 2027–2031.

Deliverables run partly in parallel; the input days shown in the work assignment table represent total effort, not consecutive blocks. Materials for National Assembly, Provincial People's Assembly and line-ministry audiences are to be produced in Lao and English.

1. Child marriage advocacy strategy

- Develop UNICEF Lao PDR's advocacy strategy on ending child, early and forced marriage. Lao PDR has the highest child marriage rate in East Asia and the Pacific, with 33 per cent of young women married before 18 and rates above 50 per cent among girls with no education, some ethnic groups and the poorest households.
- Build the strategy on the available evidence: the Political Economy Analysis, the cost-of-child-marriage analysis, the localized investment case, and the social and gender norms study.
- Map audiences and asks across the Government and Mass organisations, donors, media and communities.
- Anchor the strategy in the policy hooks available: the National Plan of Action on EVAW/EVAC (2026–2030), the 10th NSEDP, obligations under the CRC and CEDAW, the ASEAN regional work plan on ending violence against women and children, and the endorsed national life skills guidelines.
- Address known sensitivities and guide communication and engagement activities.
- Draft the advocacy products identified in the strategy, such as the ministry-facing budget brief linked to the NPA on EVAW/EVAC and briefing materials for NCAWMC coordination meetings.

2. Nutrition advocacy strategy, with domestic financing at its core

- Develop UNICEF Lao PDR's nutrition advocacy strategy, organised around securing reliable domestic financing for nutrition and covering stunting, which affects one in three children under five, alongside wasting, which has risen from 5 to approximately 11 per cent over fourteen years, and maternal nutrition.
- Build the strategy on the CNF nutrition landscape and expenditure analysis, the nutrition-responsive budgeting and financial tracking work undertaken with the SUN Movement Secretariat, routine coverage data, and LECS7 child poverty data.
- Set out the financing asks and messaging with key partners.
- Align the strategy with the National Nutrition Strategy 2026–2035 and its Action Plan 2026–2030, the National Nutrition Committee, the National Nutrition Forum, the Essential Medicines List, enforcement of the national decree on breastmilk substitutes, and the national social protection registry.
- Set out how UNICEF advocacy complements the World Bank HANSA II and RRPM II programmes, the ADB BRRRP programme, SUN CSA Laos and other partners, so that advocacy reinforces rather than duplicates theirs.
- Draft the advocacy products identified in the strategy, such as an advocacy brief on including nutrition services and essential commodities in sectoral budgets.

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Child Safeguarding

Is this project/assignment considered as "Elevated Risk Role" from a child safeguarding perspective?

☒ YES	☐ NO

Direct contact role

Is this project/assignment considered as "Elevated Risk Role" from a direct contract role perspective?

☐ YES	☒ NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:

Not applicable. The consultant will not have unsupervised contact with children. Both planned provincial visits are undertaken together with UNICEF and implementing-partner personnel.

Child data role

Is this project/assignment considered as "Elevated Risk Role" from a child data role perspective?

☒ YES	☐ NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information (e.g. name, national ID, location data, photos) of children:

Approximately 5 days across the four-month assignment. The consultant will handle identifiable material about children (names, images, locations) when organising the CNF journalist field visit to Khammouane and when clearing evidence and story material from Khammouane and Bolikhamsay for use in advocacy products. Standard UNICEF informed-consent and data-handling procedures apply throughout.

More information is available in the Child Safeguarding SharePoint and Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates

Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan:

☒ YES	☐ NO

If No, please justify:

Not applicable. The advocacy products derive from the TUSIP CEFM Lao PDR Year 3 work plan (activities Lao 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.5), endorsed by the Technical Working Group on 21 August 2026, and from the CNF Lao PDR 2026 priorities under Component 4 (enabling environment, nutrition financing and governance) and the approved CNF Communication Plan. The three advocacy strategies sit within the Communication & Advocacy Section's rolling work plan as preparatory work for the Country Programme 2027–2031, and are deliberately scoped wider than either grant so that they remain the Section's advocacy position on child marriage, nutrition and child rights engagement after both grants close.

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Consultant Sourcing:

☒ National	☐ International	☐ Both

Note: Please select the option relevant to your consultancy assignment. If selected 'National', applications from international candidates will not be accepted and vice-versa.

Competitive Selection:

☒ **Advertisement**

Note: for open competitive selection process to publish consultancy on UNICEF TMS portal.

Two weeks is recommended as minimum for advertisement, however, hiring manager may adjust based on urgency/context while ensuring transparency and fairness. Please indicate below accordingly:

Advertisement duration in calendar days: 14

☐ **Roster**

By selecting this sourcing type, the signatory of this ToR certifies that the candidates listed below are sourced from a valid and approved roster established via a competitive and transparent process, and that the ToR falls within the scope of the roster. Listed candidates shall have a full TMS profile.
In the table below, provide a list of candidates from the roster (who are meeting this ToR requirements) to seek financial proposal:

Name of Candidates	Email Address as per Roster
Click here	Click here
Click here	Click here
Click here	Click here
Click here	Click here
Click here	Click here
Click here	Click here to add text or click the + sign to add more rows

☐ **Single Source Selection: (Emergency – Director's approval)**

Reasons why consultancy cannot be performed by staff:
Currently no national Advocacy Specialist in Post to deliver this work.

Contract Manager: Chief of Communication & Advocacy	**Start Date:** 31 October 2026		**End Date:** 28 February 2027 (Total: 4 months)

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Work Assignment Overview	Deliverables/ Outputs (SMART)*	Delivery deadline		Planned Travel* (For travel, please include destination, number of trips and days. This travel will be shared with the applicants to provide lump-sum financial proposal)	Estimated Budget for 1 consultant in contract currency included travel. (input days x estimated daily professional fee rate + estimate of planned travel) **
		Exact date to complete* the deliverable	Input days**		
Inception and advocacy landscape analysis. Review the available evidence across the three areas — the CEFM Political Economy Analysis, the cost-of-child-marriage analysis, the investment case, the social and gender norms study, the CNF nutrition landscape and expenditure analysis and the SUN nutrition-responsive budgeting work — and map the decision points, audiences and existing commitments in each.	Inception note of no more than 8 pages submitted and approved, comprising: the proposed structure and scope of each of the three advocacy strategies; an advocacy landscape analysis identifying the decision-makers, decision points and existing government commitments in each area; and a single advocacy calendar mapping every planned engagement to the National Assembly session cycle and the government budget calendar for November 2026 – December 2027.	17 November 2026	5	None	
Child marriage advocacy strategy — covering the whole child marriage agenda, with TUSIP as the principal but not the only delivery vehicle — together with its first application (TUSIP activities Lao 1.2, Lao 1.1.1 and Lao 1.1.2).	(i) Child marriage advocacy strategy 2027–2029 of no more than 15 pages, submitted and approved, comprising a prioritised advocacy agenda, audience and ask map, messaging framework, channel and tactic plan, risk assessment, monitoring indicators and a costed action plan, developed through at least one consultation with NCAWMC and UNFPA and aligned to the CPD 2027–2031; (ii) dissemination package for the Political Economy Analysis and the investment case, comprising workshop concept note and run of show, a four-page policy brief in Lao and English for line-ministry budget holders, talking points for the NCAWMC co-chair	18 December 2026	10	None	

	and for UNICEF and UNFPA principals, and a press and social media pack; (iii) policy brief and talking points on the cost of child marriage for the Social and Cultural Affairs Committee of the National Assembly.				
Nutrition advocacy strategy — organised around securing reliable domestic financing for nutrition and covering stunting, wasting and maternal nutrition, with the CNF as the principal but not the only delivery vehicle — together with its first application (CNF Component 4 and the approved CNF Communication Plan).	(i) Nutrition advocacy strategy 2027–2029 of no more than 15 pages, submitted and approved, comprising a prioritised advocacy agenda with the financing asks set out in sequence, audience and ask map, messaging framework, alignment with World Bank, ADB and SUN partner advocacy, monitoring indicators and a costed action plan, developed through at least one consultation with the Nutrition Section and the National Nutrition Committee Secretariat; (ii) one policy op-ed on nutrition financing drafted, cleared and placed in a national outlet; (iii) one journalist field visit to Khammouane organised and delivered, with resulting coverage tracked and reported; (iv) advocacy brief on including nutrition services and essential commodities (MMS and RUTF) in sectoral budgets, and advocacy positioning for the 2027 National Nutrition Forum.	23 January 2027	10	Khammouane Province – 1 trip, 3 days (journalist field visit)	
Cross-cutting application of both strategies — orientation of the National Assembly and the Provincial People's Assemblies elected in February 2026 on their oversight and budget role for	Orientation package approved and delivered, covering public finance for children, nutrition financing and the cost of child marriage, for approximately 40 National Assembly members and Secretariat staff and approximately 30	13 February 2027	10	Bolikhamsay Province – 1 trip, 3 days (Provincial People's Assembly orientation)	

children (CNF Component 4; TUSIP Lao 1.1.2).	Provincial People's Assembly members and secretariat staff. Package comprises session design and agenda, evidence pack, a four-page member-facing brief in Lao, facilitator guide, and a post-event note recording the commitments made and the follow-up owner for each.				
Total estimated consultancy costs (Consultancy Fees + Travel Costs) For multiple consultants indicate the total estimated budget (total budget for 1 consultant * number of consultants = total)			**35**	2 domestic trips, 6 days total	**Total in contract currency:**

- Add more line to the table as needed
- Costs indicated are estimated. Final rate shall follow the "best value for money" principle, i.e., achieving the desired outcome at the lowest possible fee. Consultants will be asked to stipulate all-inclusive fees, including lump sum travel and subsistence costs, as applicable.
- Payment of professional fees will be based on submission of agreed deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment in case the deliverables submitted are not up to the required standard or in case of delays in submitting the deliverables on the part of the consultant.
- In case of unplanned travel, register it in a separate deliverable line and reserve funds for potential future travel needs. Such travel will be reimbursed based on actual travel receipts. (This information is not shared with applicants for financial bidding.)
- Marked (*) information will be part of the financial proposal shared with the consultant.
- Marked (**) information will not be shared with the consultant.

Minimum Qualifications required*:

☒ Bachelors	☐ Masters	☐PhD	☐ Other

Enter Disciplines:
Communication, public policy, political science, development studies, social sciences, public health, law, or a related field. An advanced university degree is desirable (see Desirables).

*Minimum requirements to consider candidates for competitive process.

Years of Experience/ Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required*:

Work Experience:
A minimum of seven years of progressively responsible experience in advocacy, public policy, government relations or strategic communication, of which at least three years in Lao PDR. Demonstrated experience authoring advocacy, policy engagement or influencing strategies for an organisation or programme — not only implementing them. Demonstrated experience producing policy briefs, investment cases or budget advocacy materials for government audiences. Demonstrated experience designing and delivering orientation or capacity-building sessions for senior government or elected officials.

Language Requirements:
Fluency in Lao (native or near-native, written and spoken) and professional working proficiency in English. The consultant will draft in both languages; materials for National Assembly, Provincial People's Assembly and line-ministry audiences will be produced in Lao.

Knowledge/Expertise/Skills:
Demonstrated ability to structure an advocacy strategy: to set priorities among competing asks, to identify the decision-maker and decision point for each, and to express the result as a costed action plan rather than a list of activities. Working knowledge of Lao PDR governance structures, including the oversight and budget approval role of the National Assembly and the Provincial People's Assemblies, and of the redistribution of ministerial mandates under the 2025 machinery-of-government reforms. Demonstrated ability to convert technical evidence — costing studies, expenditure analysis, political economy analysis — into concise, decision-ready policy asks. Orientation and workshop design and facilitation. Stakeholder coordination across government, UN agencies and development partners. Excellent drafting and editing in Lao and English.

Desirables:
Advanced university degree. Prior working relationship with NCAWMC, the Lao Women's Union, the Lao Youth Union or the National Assembly Secretariat. Familiarity with public finance for children (PF4C) approaches. Prior UN or international organisation experience. Working knowledge of the child protection or nutrition sectors. Experience with multi-donor programmes and their visibility and recognition requirements.

*Listed requirements will be used for technical evaluation in the competitive process.

Evaluation Criteria (This will be used for the Selection Report (for clarification see Guidance)

A) Technical Evaluation (75 points) **Technical Evaluation Criteria:**	B) Financial Proposal (e.g. of 25 points)

1. Demonstrated experience authoring advocacy, policy engagement or influencing strategies, assessed against the strategy sample submitted – 25 points 2. Relevant advocacy, public policy or government-relations experience, including government-facing work in Lao PDR – 15 points 3. Demonstrated ability to convert technical evidence into policy and budget advocacy asks, assessed against the written samples submitted – 15 points 4. Knowledge of Lao PDR governance, National Assembly and Provincial People's Assembly oversight and budget processes, and line-ministry structures – 10 points 5. Lao and English drafting ability, and orientation and workshop design experience with senior government or elected officials –10 points Qualifying score in technical evaluation is 50 out of 75 points. Technical proposal requirement (if applicable): Applicants must submit (i) an advocacy, policy engagement or influencing strategy that the applicant personally authored, or an extract of no more than 10 pages from one, with a short note on their specific contribution; (ii) a policy brief or similar advocacy product of no more than four pages, in Lao or English; and (iii) a one-page approach note setting out how they would sequence the three strategies and their accompanying products across the four months. Shortlisted candidates may be asked to complete a short written exercise in Lao.	All Inclusive lump-sum cost including travel, accommodation cost and insurance with medevac for this assignment as per work assignment
Working arrangement: ☒ Remote ☐ Office Based	UNICEF email address required: ☒ YES ☐ NO
Prepared by (Contract manager): **Signature:** Click here	

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Approved by (as per the requesting Office's Table of Authority):

Signature: Click here

Name: Click here

Designation: Click here

Text to be added to all ToRs:

Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract 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 and Individual Contractors. Consultants and individual contractors 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, programme 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 afterwards in your assignment.