

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS

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Title of Assignment	<i>National COVAX Cold Chain Consultant</i>	
Requesting Section	<i>Health Section</i>	
Location	Place of assignment: Lilongwe, Malawi	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Home Based <input type="checkbox"/> Office Based:	
Contract Duration	8 months	
Number of working days	160 days during the contract period	
Planned Start and End Date	From: 1 September 2021	From: 30 April 2022

BACKGROUND

The Government of Malawi has been receiving support in the management of vaccines significantly from GAVI and other Donors for a long period of time. This support is expected to continue flowing with Malawi government also making some contributions.

The above notwithstanding, the proportion of children who are fully immunized at 12 months of age has remained relatively low. In 2005, only 59% of children aged 12–23 months were fully vaccinated by 12 months of age. Over the years, Malawi has sustained high routine immunization coverage of over 80% for childhood antigens, achieving a non-polio acute flaccid paralysis rate of 2.7% and a measles rate of over 2%. In 2010, there were outbreaks of measles countrywide. The major challenges faced by the programme include mobilization of resources for responding to outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases and for introduction of new vaccines. MOH has plan to conduct nationwide Measles Rubella Campaign in early 2017 which required to initiate the plan at least nine months ahead of the campaign. Malawi conducted a cold chain assessment in 2011 and not only came up with an inventory of cold chain equipment but also identified capacity requirements that needed to be strengthened. The report made recommendations on a number of programme components that need strengthening at both national and district levels, including the development and implementation of the cold chain rehabilitation and expansion plan for 2011–2015. As part of the plan, Malawi is constructing a national vaccine store and renovating the regional vaccine stores. The plan also addresses transportation and cold chain training as a way of strengthening immunization systems.

With significant support the vaccine cold chain system is enjoying, there is a likelihood of noteworthy wastages which are not recorded and attended to. Ordering system between the health centres and the district hospitals is porous and likely to provide ways of leaking the vaccines from the system, defeating value for money. Introduction of the Solar Direct Driven fridges in 2016 will ease the challenges of power cuts and therefore maintain right temperatures for vaccines. It is worthwhile to conduct a study to determine the impact these fridges are towards cold chain management.

In order to sustain quality vaccine management for effective immunization coverage in Malawi, provision of continued technical assistance to Ministry of Health (MOH) is crucial. UNICEF country office has plan to recruit a national cold chain consultant to support EPI team of MOH to monitor, assist and improve the bottlenecks in the Cold Chain system. The national consultant will assist Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) unit of MOH to improve the quality of cold chain management that will ultimately contribute to the reduction of vaccine wastage and improvement of effective immunization coverage.

JUSTIFICATION

Malawi has one of the most successful EPI programmes in the Africa Region. For many years now, the programme has sustained a high coverage of immunization above 80%. This has greatly reduced the burden of infectious disease. With support from donors, the programme has organized localized immunization campaigns to ensure that immunization coverage in low performing areas is boosted and herd immunity is assured.

The gains from this support may not be sustained if the cold chain system is not fully maintained. The country currently does not have a maintenance plan for which the government endorsed its full support. This resulted in lack of spare parts for maintenance of the refrigerators and breakdown of fridges with little or no attention.

Data visibility is another challenge the immunization supply chain has suffered. In many cases, this has resulted in poor decision making in the planning and distribution of vaccines. This is a risk in that some facilities may experience stock-out of vaccines if such trends are not addressed.

In addition, the biggest challenges the country is facing is to have sufficient capacity in the EPI programme to strengthen planning and management of immunization supply chain management, capacity transfer to central and local EPI focal officials, and monitor implementation of activities at national and district levels. The EPI programme has insufficient capacity in coordinating and managing routine immunization, distribution and managing vaccines, cold chain equipment, and records and registers. On top of the introduction of new vaccines, new fridges and new record registers requires more capacity building for health staff in the country. The insufficient capacity has resulted in improper distribution and management of vaccines and the cold chain in districts and inadequate record registers by data managers. There is also a need for UNICEF, in close collaboration with MoH and other implementing partners to systematically organize joint monitoring and supervision and provide mentoring on efficient vaccine and cold chain management to district officials as and when needed for.

The introduction of COVID – 19 vaccines pose another challenge towards the cold chain management. Currently Malawi is using AstraZeneca type of COVID – 19 vaccines. However, more other vaccines are

expected to arrive in-country, including Johnson and Johnson plus Pfizer vaccines. these vaccines need a very strong and functional cold chain to maintain potency.

It is for this reason therefore that a Cold chain technician will be recruited for 11.5 months to support maintenance and improvements of the cold chain system in the country to deliver on the activities.

PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Responsible for providing technical support to EPI unit of Ministry of Health (MOH) for cold chain equipment (CCE), provide support in the installation of CCE under CCEOP GAVI Grant.

Under the direct supervision of Health Specialist (Community Health) of Health Section, the Cold Chain Consultant to ensure all refrigerators are fully functional and breakdowns are rectified in time. The Consultant will further be responsible for updating the Inventory Management Tool (IMT) every quarter to have up-to date database for ease of decision making. The Cold Chain Consultant will also work in liaison with Cold Chain & Vaccine Management Specialist and Supply Unit of UNICEF, in planning, procurement, contracting of cold chain equipment. In addition, the consultant will champion and ensure coherent and continues management of the cold chain management process and report on a regular basis the progression of against the agreed integration plan.

SCOPE OF WORK/OBJECTIVES

The Consultant will work closely with the EPI unit of MOH to strengthen planning, monitoring and maintenance of the cold chain system at zonal, district and health facility levels. He or she will organize monthly PMT meetings and capacity building with central, regional, zonal and district cold chain technicians (CCTs) and discuss on bottlenecks for geographic coverage, and cold chain status, etc. He or she will also provide joint monitoring visits with EPI officials and provide feedback necessary for strengthening the cold chain system. He or she will participate in Country Programme planning to advice on cold chain requirements to provide technical advice on specifications/Terms of Reference, facilitating efficient procurement. In liaison with Cold Chain & Vaccine Management Specialist, he or she will work with the supply section and maintain links with Supply Division on transnational shipments, deliveries, claims and appropriateness of cold chain equipment. The consultant is expected to present, in detail, their approach, methodology and tools, with an action plan and time frame that addresses the cold chain system, with reference to the overall and specific tasks.

Coordination

- Participates in the partnership between the MoH governance and key stakeholders to address key gaps identified in immunization cold chain management.
- Organizes and leads joint field visits for cold chain at sites with MOH teams.
- Team with the Health Section and other members of the Operations Section to facilitate procurement as well as efficient customs clearance, storage and distribution of the Cold Chain Equipment.
- Develop and maintain partnership and collaborative relations with UNICEF, Government, UN and bilateral counterparts in cold chain activities, including distribution, monitoring and inventory.

Update a cold chain inventory database and analyse the key findings on status of the cold chain equipment in Malawi.

- Provide support to EPI in quarterly updating the database either remotely or by organizing field visits.
- Make presentation during technical meetings including PMT, ISC, etc.

Develop a cold chain replacement and rehabilitation plan and provide technical advice including specifications for recommended cold chain equipment; and mapping of key stakeholders

- Review the current cold chain inventory and develop a replacement and rehabilitation plan in liaison with EPI.
- Ensure the plan is updated biannually
- Provide support to EPI by facilitating stakeholder mapping in Cold Chain Equipment to ensure equal support to districts, Regions and National cold chain stores

Ensure 80% functionality of cold chain equipment throughout the country

- Provide technical support to the EPI to improve functionality and operationalization of the cold chain including the zonal stores; strengthen maintenance and also strengthen mechanisms for dynamic inventory for cold chain and immunization transport.
- Provide technical assistance to EPI to develop training curriculum for corrective and preventive maintenance.
- Provide support to building capacities of EPI Coordinators, cold chain technicians, and end users in corrective and preventive maintenance.
- Regularly monitor the CCE functionality in liaison with EPI.

Support Installation of Cold Rooms and ILRs with support from Japanese Government

- Support EPI with installation of WICR and ILRs as a way of strengthening the Cold Chain System as the country continues to combat C-19 Pandemic.

Document country good practices throughout the process including related to challenges, lessons learned and critical success factors

- Facilitate reports and documentaries on the cold chain good practices in Malawi in liaison with the Communications team and Ministry of Health.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

To whom will the consultant/ individual contractor report (supervisory and any other reporting/communication lines):

The consultant will report to the Health Specialist and work closely with the Program Manager, EPI, Ministry of Health and Immunization Specialist of UNICEF Health & HIV Section.

What type of reporting will be expected from the consultant and in what format/style will the submissions of reports/outputs be done:

It is expected that the consultant prepares an implementation plan with timelines for the assignment, outlining planned tasks and concrete steps to be undertaken to accomplish the planned tasks within the scheduled time. Regular discussions will be held in person and virtually, the consultant is expected to stay in touch via telephone, e-mails and other means such as Zoom or Skype

How will consultant consult and deliver work and when will reporting be done:

Given the in-country situation of COVID-19, the consultant will be required to work mostly virtually and conduct all meetings and other engagements as such. However, where in person meetings will be required, the consultant will be expected to seek approval before undertaking in-person meetings.

The consultant will need to present the draft documents as well as the final report to UNICEF and MOH. At the beginning of the assignment, the consultant is expected to produce and agree with UNICEF and EPI Unit of MOH on work plan schedules for the assignment period.

EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

In alignment with the scope of work as described above, the consultant will be expected to perform the following activities and deliverables as per the schedule and estimated dates below:

Task/Milestone	Deliverable/Outcome (e.g. Inception, progress, final reports, training material, workshop, etc.)	Estimated # of days	Planned Completion date	% of total fee payable
Prepare and submit an Inception report with workplan of consultancy assignment	Consultant's work plan with timeline and deliverables	12 days	14 Sep 2021	10%
Conduct Cold Chain assessment and Prepare and submit activity report highlighting CC replacement	Cold chain replacement and rehabilitation plan, including recommended cold chain equipment updated biannually	30 days	26 Oct 2021	15%
Organise meeting with stakeholders to develop and update the CC inventory database	Updated Cold chain inventory database	20 days	23 Nov 2021	15%

Support installation of Govt of Japan supported Cold Chain Equipment in selected districts	Installation and commissioning Report of 2 WICR and 4 ILRs	33 Days	7 Jan 2022	25%
Map of key stakeholders involved in cold chain optimization implementation and their roles and responsibilities	CC and VM stakeholder mapping tool developed and populated	31 days	21 Feb 2022	15%
Prepare and submit final consultancy report and consolidated microplanning tools	Cold chain preventive and corrective maintenance guidelines and final report	34 days	8 Apr 2022	20%
	TOTAL	160		100%

However, as the actual starting date may impact the dates estimated in the TOR, a detailed workplan with exact timeframes and actual delivery dates will be jointly agreed upon between the consultant/ individual contractor and the supervisor upon contract signature.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR EVALUATION OF RESULTS

The performance of work will be evaluated based on the following indicators:

- Completion of tasks specified in TOR
- Compliance with the established deadlines for submission of deliverables
- Quality of work
- Demonstration of high standards in cooperation and communication with UNICEF and counterparts

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

All payments, without exception, will be made upon certification from the supervisor of the contract, of the satisfactory and quality completion of deliverables and upon receipt of the respective and approved invoice.

Costs associated with field travel (living and transport costs) will be reimbursed on actual expenditures and upon presentation of original supporting documents.

DESIRED COMPETENCIES, TECHNICAL BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

Academic qualification:

- First university degree from a recognized academic institution in one or more of the following areas is preferred: Engineering, Cold Chain or related to cold chain operations in UNICEF programme areas, or technical qualification in cold chain maintenance.

Work experience:

- Minimum five years progressively responsible professional work experience at national level in cold chain maintenance, vaccine and logistics management, EPI programming.
- Work experience managing large-scale projects, working with governments, working in resource-limited settings, monitoring and evaluating supply chains, and risk management, mitigation will be an asset.

Technical skills and knowledge:

- Product knowledge on cold chain equipment, new cold chain technologies and understanding of the principles of vaccine management, knowledge and experience with data collection, data management analysis and reporting are essential.
- Knowledge of procurement processes and good distribution practice could be beneficial.

Competencies:

- Strong analytical, negotiation, oral and written communication skills
- Effective presenter including ability to adapt the message and visual aids for multiple audiences to deliver concise, impactful presentations of primary health care interventions.
- Effective facilitator with proven ability to engage and train a group of individuals at national level and for front line health workers as well
- Ability to work in a multi-cultural environment

Languages:

- Written and spoken fluency in both the local language and English.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

UNICEF will regularly communicate with the consultant and provide feedback and guidance and necessary support so to achieve objectives of the work, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to the performance and quality of work.

As per policy on consultants and individual contractors, the individual will be expected to complete a list of mandatory training, including policies on Prohibiting and Combatting Fraud and Corruption; Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority and other relevant policies for their information and acknowledgment upon acceptance of the offer. Prior to the issuance of the official contract, the consultant is requested to complete the applicable mandatory trainings.

The assignment requires the consultant to actively engage with partners as well as the focal person in MoH (EPI), City Councils and NGOs.

The consultant will need to present the draft documents as well as the final report to UNICEF and EPI, MOH. At the beginning of the assignment, the consultant is expected to produce and agree with UNICEF and EPI, MOH on work plan schedules for the assignment period.

The consultant will work from home and attend meetings as and when required.

The consultant will use a personal computer, own data costs and phone to carry out the work.

CONDITIONS

- The candidate selected will be governed by and subject to UNICEF's General Terms and Conditions for individual contracts.
- The consultant may not commence with the assignment unless the UNICEF's General Terms and Conditions is signed by the individual
- The consultant will be based in Lilongwe
- The consultant will be paid an all-inclusive fee (stationary, communication and other miscellaneous expenses) as per the stipulated deliverable and payment schedule.
- The consultant is not entitled to payment for overtime, weekends or public holidays
- Travel expenses for official in-country trips, including living costs, will be covered in accordance with UNICEF's rules and tariffs, by the consultant and reimbursed against actuals, unless otherwise agreed.
- No travel should take place without an email travel authorization from section prior to the commencement of the journey from the duty station.
- Standard UNICEF procedures will apply for invoicing and all other financial management requirements set out in the contract.
- Standard penalty clauses will also apply for late and poor-quality deliverables. The supervisor will provide the individual with the criteria for the evaluation of the quality of each deliverable.
- Additional details of UNICEF rules, regulations and conditions will be attached to the contract.
- The Consultant will not have supervisory responsibilities or authority on UNICEF budget.
- 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 assignment is an on-and off site support.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested consultants should provide the following:

1. Curriculum Vitae
2. Brief technical proposal (no longer than five pages) demonstrating the consultant's understanding of the assignment and approach/methodology to the assignment
3. Financial proposal including a breakdown of their all-inclusive fees (including professional fees, travel, living cost, visa and other costs). Complete the attached form.



Financial
Proposal.xlsx

4. References details