

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Vientiane, Lao PDR

**Individual Consultancy: International Consultant
National MICS Consultant**

Terms of Reference

1. Background

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) is an international household survey programme developed and supported by UNICEF. MICS is designed to collect estimates of key indicators that are used to assess the situation of children and women. Over the past 20 years, MICS has evolved to respond to changing data needs, expanding from 28 indicators in the first round to more than 200 indicators in the current sixth round, and becoming a key source of data on child protection, early childhood education, and a major source of data on child health and nutrition. In addition to being a data collection tool to generate data for monitoring the progress towards national goals and global commitments for promoting the welfare of children, MICS provided valuable data for MDG monitoring as a major source of data for the UN Secretary General's Final Millennium Development Goals Report.

Since the inception of MICS in the 1990s, over 300 surveys have been carried out in more than 100 countries. As part of the global effort to further develop national capacities to generate and analyse high quality and disaggregated data, UNICEF launched the sixth round of MICS in October 2016, with results of first surveys expected to be available by the end of 2017. This new round is in accordance with the list of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2016, following the global adoption of the 17 SDGs and 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The final SDG indicator framework currently includes 230 global indicators, of which around 30 per cent are household survey-based. Today, MICS, covering almost half of the SDG indicators that are household survey-based, is well positioned to play a central role in this new Agenda alongside other key demographic, health and socio-economic surveys and to complement data from administrative sources and censuses. The MICS questionnaires have undergone rigorous methodological and validation work to broaden the scope of the tools and include new topics that reflect SDG indicators and emerging issues in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development context, including: rapid water quality testing, social transfers, foundational learning skills (children age 7-14), child and adult functioning, migration status, use of clean fuels and technology, and victimisation.

As governments develop national frameworks to monitor progress towards the SDGs and establish baselines, strategic planning and investments will be required to collect robust, more frequent, and timely data. This round of MICS presents a unique opportunity to support this process.

The Lao Social Indicator Survey III (LSIS III) will be based on the MICS modules. This will provide an opportunity for continued monitoring of the trends and for planning of the new UNSDCF and CPD cycles as well as the Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (VNR Report).

The LSIS I and II were the national survey that provided ranges of social and living condition information that fed into planning, advocacy, updating the status of many core programme interventions. Specifically, the LSIS I & II provided baseline data for the 7th and 8th NSEDP and data for several SDG indicators. The LSIS provides good data sources for continued monitoring of progress towards the SDGs. LSIS I & II provided a wide range of statistics/information on the socioeconomic situation of children, women, men, and households. It covered multiple indicators on health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation, marriage and sexual activity, fertility and mortality, contraception, HIV/AIDS, child protection, and use of mass media and information technology.

Under the Strategy for the Development of National Statistics System 2016-2025, every five years, the government of Lao PDR is committed to conduct follow up surveys. Based on the Statistics Law, this

survey will be led by LSB with the support of implementation by MoH and MoES. UNICEF Lao Country Office will support a MICS as part of the 6th round of the survey programme in 2022. To ensure that the implementation of the MICS survey runs smoothly, specific deadlines are met and that the implementing partner, the Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB) receives the technical assistance necessary to produce statistically sound and reliable data, the UNICEF Lao Country Office will hire a full-time consultant to oversee the MICS process from preparatory work to release of results. The LSIS III is planned to be implemented in 2022 to generate majority of baseline for the National M&E Framework of 9th NSEDP, support the monitoring of SDGs and the LDC graduation.

The LSIS III/MICS6 will be implemented using CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) in which the interviewer uses a tablet to record data. CAPI data collection can reduce the time needed to collect and process survey data, facilitate real time monitoring, improve the quality of the data and reduce survey costs.

2. Purpose of the Job

Under the overall supervision of the Chief of Social Policy and guidance from the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, the National MICS Consultant (NMC) will support and provide guidance to UNICEF Lao and the LSB for the preparation, implementation and completion of the MICS survey in Lao PDR. The NMC will advise the LSB, especially the Survey Coordinator and sampling and data processing experts, during survey planning, questionnaire design, sampling, training, fieldwork, data processing, data analysis, dissemination and archiving, ensuring that MICS protocols and recommendations are being followed at all times. The NMC will communicate effectively between the UNICEF CO and LSB, responding promptly to MICS related needs and issues as they arise.

The NMC will be responsible for coordinating and supporting the work of other resource persons hired by UNICEF to provide technical assistance to the MICS process. The consultant will work in close collaboration with the survey team, the stakeholders, and Steering and Technical Committees and will represent UNICEF in meetings and workshops in relation to the survey as needed. The NMC will also work in close collaboration with the Regional MICS Coordinator at the UNICEF Regional Office (RO) and the MICS Team at UNICEF Headquarters (HQ), as well as expert consultants assigned to support the Lao PDR MICS (collectively labelled “The UNICEF MICS Team”).

3. Main Tasks Related to the Job

1. Provide technical and managerial support to the MICS survey;
2. Present the MICS methodology, tools, and guidelines to partners/stakeholders (e.g. ministries, UN Agencies, etc.);
3. Finalise, in collaboration with national partners and UNICEF CO, the Survey Plan and Budget, including timetable and share with the Regional MICS Coordinator;
4. Ensure that the Ethical Protocol and other ethical recommendations are addressed in the survey implementation process and that all MICS related documents are shared with the national Ethical Committee on time for approval;
5. Oversee each stage of the survey process and ensure that the MICS protocols and standards are followed by the LSB, more specifically during training and field supervision visits;
6. Communicate regularly with the UNICEF CO and/or the UNICEF MICS Team responding to all MICS related issues in a timely manner;
7. Provide monthly updates on MICS activities to the UNICEF CO and Regional MICS Coordinator;
8. Coordinate the work of LSB specialists and the UNICEF MICS Team and other resource persons assigned by the UNICEF CO and/or the UNICEF MICS Team to support different survey stages;
9. Ensure that external technical reviews by experts (i.e., Sampling, Data Processing, and Household Survey expert consultants) are carried out at key survey stages and coordinate the feedback and response between the CO, the UNICEF MICS Team and the LSB;

10. Ensure that all survey related documents and deliverables are properly archived throughout the survey process (for example: Memorandum of Understanding, Survey Plan and Budget, questionnaires, manuals, sample design, training/pre-test reports, expert reports, CAPI application, output and tabulation plan tables, syntaxes, datasets, Survey Findings Report, Statistical Snapshots, dissemination materials etc.);
11. Participate in all MICS Steering and Technical Committee meetings;
12. Participate in, and contribute to, MICS Regional Workshops;
13. Organise, as required, and facilitate in the national Data Interpretation and Report Compilation Workshop.
14. Ensure that lessons learned, problems, and good practices are documented throughout the MICS process and rapidly shared with the MICS community (other MICS implementing countries and the UNICEF MICS Team) through all means available.

Specific Activities

In consultation and collaboration with the UNICEF CO and LSB, the NMC will be responsible for ensuring the following activities have been undertaken following the MICS guidelines and will contribute to the coordination of these activities:

1. Survey Planning:

- A Steering Committee is established and composed of all relevant national and international stakeholders, including National Ethical Committee;
- At least one Technical Committee comprised of all relevant technical experts is established;
- The Survey Plan and Budget, including timetable is finalised and shared with all stakeholders;
- A Memorandum of Understanding between UNICEF Country and LSB is signed before funds are spent on survey activities;
- Survey supplies are procured and distributed in time for training and data collection;
- Sample design:
 - The UNICEF Sampling expert consultant is provided with necessary information and visits are well managed and coordinated within survey plans;
 - Sample design is finalised by the sampling expert of LSB with the guidance and review of the UNICEF Sampling expert consultant;
 - Listing and Mapping materials and operations are reviewed by the UNICEF Sampling expert consultant and carried out on the field per MICS recommendations;
 - Geocoding (cluster centre points, multi-points or boundaries), either existing or collected during the mapping and household listing operation, is assessed by the survey team and communicated to the UNICEF MICS Team, together with the shapefile representing the sampling frame, at minimum including the boundaries of sample stratification.
 - Sample design is reviewed by the UNICEF MICS Team before finalisation;
 - The final selection of households is reviewed; and
 - The weights are reviewed.
- MICS questionnaires:
 - Appropriate UNICEF programme staff and the Technical Committee are involved in reviewing the customisation of relevant sections of the MICS questionnaire;
 - Selected Modules address country data gaps and address SGD data needs;
 - Questionnaires undergo translation and back translation process;
 - Questionnaires and manuals undergo an ethical review;
 - Questionnaires are pre-tested and a pre-test report is produced;
 - Questionnaires are reviewed by the UNICEF MICS Team before finalisation.
- Manuals:

- MICS Household Listing and Mapping, Supervisor, Measurer, and Interviewer Manuals are customised for the country specific context and translated.
 - CAPI application template:
 - CAPI application template is customised by the data processing expert of the LSB with the guidance of the UNICEF Data Processing expert consultant;
 - CAPI application template is reviewed by the UNICEF MICS Team before finalisation;
 - Secondary editing guidelines and Field Check Table syntax are customised by the data processing expert of the LSB with the guidance of the UNICEF Data Processing expert consultant.
2. *Listing and Mapping, Training and Fieldwork, and Data Processing:*
- Listing and mapping is planned and performed per MICS guidelines;
 - Training schedules are adequately adapted to the county context while following MICS guidelines;
 - Appropriate resource persons are identified to facilitate training (i.e. nutritionists for anthropometry training, survey experts for methodology, etc.);
 - Contribute to the fieldwork training;
 - Fieldwork and fieldwork monitoring visits are planned and performed according to MICS guidelines;
 - Field Check Tables are produced on a weekly basis, immediately analysed by survey managers, and main findings reported to field supervisors for action. Field Check Tables are immediately shared with the Regional MICS Coordinator;
 - Participation of UNICEF CO staff is organised to assist in monitoring data collection;
 - UNICEF Data Processing expert consultant is timely provided with necessary information and country visits are well managed and coordinated;
 - Hardware is made available for the CAPI application (data collection and central office menu components), and software is properly installed and a working, data transfer system and data backup system is established;
 - Monitor data processing and secondary data editing.
3. *Data Analysis and Report Writing:*
- Sampling Weights are included in the datasets and reviewed by the sampling expert of the LSB with the guidance and review of the UNICEF Sampling expert consultant;
 - MICS tabulation plan and standard syntax are customised and used in generating SPSS dataset and tables.
 - Dataset/Tables including the wealth index are substantively reviewed by technical experts (e.g., sampling and household survey experts) and subject matter experts at the LSB, as well as by the UNICEF MICS Team before the report writing commences;
 - Facilitate communication on process of anonymisation of geocodes between the UNICEF MICS Team and the LSB as per Memorandum of Understanding.
 - Coordinate and contribute substantively to the elaboration of the Survey Findings Report and Statistical Snapshots, using the MICS template and according to MICS standards to ensure a timely release;
 - Ensure that the Survey Findings Reports and Statistical Snapshots undergoes the technical review process by the UNICEF MICS Team;
 - Coordinate the printing and distribution of the Survey Findings Report and Statistical Snapshots;
 - Organise and facilitate the presentation of the Survey Findings Report and Statistical Snapshots through a national seminar;
 - Provide technical expertise and advice for wide dissemination of the Survey Findings Report, Statistical Snapshots and main results;

- Ensure that the MICS survey archive with all final survey documents and materials (MoU, CSP, questionnaires, manuals, sample design, field reports, CAPI application, syntaxes, database, geocoding, tables, Survey Findings Report and Statistical Snapshots, dissemination materials, etc.) is being produced by the LSB.

4. Attend to all MICS Regional and/or National Workshops

4. Qualifications and Competencies

Education:

University degree in, Demography, Statistics, Social Sciences, Epidemiology or any other related technical field is required.

Skills and Experience:

- Proven minimum of 5 year experience in the coordination and/or management of quantitative household surveys (prior MICS or Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) requested; ;
- Strong computer skills and strong expertise in statistical analyses (familiarity with data processing and data analysis software, particularly SPSS);
- Experience with CAPI data collection;
- Training experience and ability to organise and facilitate training and presentations;
- Experience in data analysis and survey report writing.

Other competencies:

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Excellent oral and written communications in English required; Knowledge of Lao language is an advantage.
- Familiarity and previous experience of working in Lao PDR and/or in the region highly desirable.
- Demonstrated ability to work in a multicultural environment and to establish harmonious and effective relationships both within and outside the organisation, more specifically with National Statistical Offices;
- Demonstrated leadership, managerial and supervisory ability; Ability and willingness to travel extensively in-country and to attend regional workshops. (providing that COVID 19 situation allowed).

Languages

- Fluency in English

5. Location:

Home based (during survey planning stage) and required in-country station before the training and data collection stages start.

6. Duration:

The NMC should be recruited at the start of MICS planning and should remain on board until the Survey Findings Report, Statistical Snapshots and the survey archive are produced. Without significant and unforeseen delays, the MICS survey can be conducted in 18 months.

The duration of consultancy should cover a minimum of 11.5 months with possibility of extension to a maximum of 18 months starting from August 2021, depending on the time it will take to finalise the whole MICS process. Only candidates that can commit for this whole duration will be considered.

7. Deliverables and Payment

The consultant is to indicate their monthly fee for the services to be provided. The fees payable to a consultant shall follow the “best value for money” principle, i.e., achieving the desired outcome at the lowest possible fee. This contract does not allow payment of off-hours, medical insurances, taxes, sick leave.

Timeframe and suggested payments are as per current draft survey plan and will be adjusted based on actual deliverables submitted by the consultant. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/output is incomplete or not delivered or for failure to meet deadlines.

No	Expected Deliverables	Timeframe	Payments
1	Survey design drafted and finalized	Aug to Oct 2021	Aug 2021
2	Personnel for listing operation, pre-test of questionnaires and test of CAPI application, main fieldwork and data processing selected	Sept to Oct 2021	Sept 2021
3	Inventory/procurement of equipment	Aug 2021 to June 2022	Oct 2021
4	Question/manual preparation-translation	Nov 2021 to Feb 2022	Nov 2021
5	Sample design prepared included localization of Indicators and its finalization Indicators finalized	Dec 2021 to March 2022	Dec 2021, Jan 2022
6	Household listing and Mapping conducted	Jan to March 2022	Feb 2022 and June 2022
7	Training and pre-testing of questionnaires conducted	Dec 2021 to April 2022	March 2022
7	Questionnaires manual finalized	April and May 2022	April and May 2022
8	Review and re-customize CAPI application and data processing workshop conducted	Feb to June 2022	June 2022
9	Sample selection conducted and finalized	July and Aug 2022	July 2022
10	Training of data collection: Presentations and training materials used in trainings, workshops, and other meetings.	July to Aug 2022	Aug 2022
11	Data collection initiated and continued guidance and support provided	Sept 2022 to Jan 2023	Sept, Oct and Nov 2022
12	Data processing and cleaning and final data set available		Dec 2022 and Jan 2023
13	Preliminary analysis and draft report available and contribution of technical inputs to LSIS III brochure	Feb to April 2023	Feb, March and April 2023
14	Monthly Progress Report of activities, describing activities undertaken during the month and highlighting problems met and solutions put in place to mitigate them;	End of each month during the duration of the contract	Paid together with other deliverables of the month
14	Trip reports	After the completion of each trip	
15	Archiving of relevant documents i.e. presentations and training materials used in trainings, workshops, and other meetings.	Monthly basis	

8.Reporting Line and Requirements:

This work will be carried out under the supervision of the UNICEF Chief of Social Policy and PME, and Deputy Director General of Social Statistics, Department, Lao Statistics Bureau (where the consultant will be based). S/he will be working in close collaboration with the M&E Specialists and will include a number of concrete time-bound deliverables and expectations. The consultant will also work closely with the Deputy Representative and UNICEF internal working group (chaired by Deputy Representative), the Global and Regional MICS Team, the UN Agencies staff, members of Steering Committee (STC) and

Technical Taskforce (TTF) and Director, Deputy Director and key relevant staff from the Department of Social Statistics from LSB to support to UNICEF country office and LSB for the preparation, implementation, and completion of the LSIS III.

Given COVID 19 situation, advisory support will also be required remotely via skype/teleconference and emails during the initial stage of the contract. However, this consultancy is required to be presented in the Lao PDR.

The consultant will also work closely with key line ministries, STC, and TWG, especially from Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Ministry of Health (MoH), , and their provincial and district offices as needed.

The consultant is always expected to observe the highest standards of professional ethics and integrity, promote a results-oriented approach in his/her responsibility and accountability and report irregularities to his/her supervisor.

9. Confidentiality of Data and LSIS Documents

The consultant should respect the confidentiality of the LSIS III data as well as any country specific documents that will be produced throughout the LSIS III process or any previous data and documents related to LSIS II&I, MICS and LRHS. The survey consultant can use the documents and the datasets only for the tasks related to these terms of reference.

10. Payment Schedule linked to deliverables:

- Payment is against deliverable and duly signed reports for each line item of invoice satisfactory completion of the activities and certified by Deputy Representative
- A direct payment will be made to the service provider upon satisfactory completion of all the deliverables indicated above

** The fees shall be calculated based on the days estimated to complete the assignment in the Terms of Reference and shall be considered the maximum compensation as part of a lump sum contract and agreed on a work plan for submission of deliverables. No additional fees shall be paid to complete the assignment. Payment will be made upon delivery of all final products and full and satisfactory completion of the assignment.*

11. Administrative Issues, Office Arrangements and Travel Requirements

The assignment is both home-based (during the initial stage of the assignment) and required for in country travel and based before the training and data collection stage start. The NMC must have a proof of 2 COVID 19 vaccines certification for supporting issuance of contract and travel arrangements. During the contract period, the NMC is expected to travel within the country and to MICS Regional Workshops in other countries and UNICEF Regional Office (providing that COVID 19 situation allowed). The travel costs will be covered by the UNICEF Country Office. The NMC will be based at the LSB to ensure day-to-day knowledge transfer (LSB will provide her/him space, adequate working conditions). UNICEF will facilitate for other logistic arrangements as required. The consultant is expected to use his/her own computer/laptop for the duration of this assignment.

During the contract period, the Consultant is expected to travel within the country and, if necessary, to technical workshops in other countries. The travel costs and DSA will be covered as per UN regulations. Translation service of key documents, meetings and workshops will be support as necessary. Health insurance is required by the consultant. The copy rights of all the deliverables to be produced through this assignment will remain with UNICEF.

12. Contract supervisor:

The consultant shall carryout the assignment under the supervision of the UNICEF Chief of Social Policy and PME, and in close collaboration with the M&E Specialists and will include a number of concrete time-bound deliverables and expectations.

13. Nature of 'Penalty Clause' to be Stipulated in Contract:

Unsatisfactory performance: In case of unsatisfactory performance the contract will be terminated by notification letter sent five (5) business days prior to the termination date in the case of contracts for a total period of less than two (2) months, and ten (10) business days prior to the termination date in the case of contracts for a longer period

Performance indicators: Consultants' performance will be evaluated against the following criteria: timeliness, quality, and relevance/feasibility of recommendations for UNICEF Lao PDR.

14.Submission of applications:

Interested candidates are kindly requested to apply and upload the following documents to:

<http://www.unicef.org/about/employ/>

- Letter of Interest (cover letter)
- CV or Resume
- Performance evaluation reports or references of similar consultancy assignments (if available)
- Financial proposal: All-inclusive lump-sum cost including travel and accommodation cost for this assignment as per work assignment.

The deadline for applications is 28 July 2021

15.Assessment Criteria:

A two stage procedure shall be utilized in evaluating proposals, with evaluation of the technical proposal being completed prior to any price proposal being compared.

Applications shall therefore contain the following required documentation:

1. Technical Proposal, including a cover letter, updated CV, and copies of 2 relevant evaluations performed earlier by the consultant.
2. Financial Proposal: Lump-sum offer with the cost breakdown: Consultancy fee, travel costs (economy class), per-diem to cover lodging, meals, and any other cost related to the consultant's stay in Vientiane, including transportation inside the city and other costs. The travel (if involved) shall be based on the most direct and economy fare.

No financial information should be contained in the technical proposal.

Assessment Criteria for International Consultant

I) Technical Qualification (max. 100 points) weight 70 %

- **Education Degree will have a maximum of (10 points)**
 - Advanced university degree in social sciences, demography, statistics, epidemiology or any other related technical field is required.
 - Qualification in research methods, qualification specifically in monitoring and evaluation an advantage.
- **Knowledge of the below will have a maximum of (30 points)**
 - **Strong analytical and writing skills and the ability to present the results in a simple language, making use of interesting visual aids (maps, graphs and other visual tools)**
 - Strong computer skills and strong expertise in statistical analysis (familiarity with data processing and data analysis software, particularly, CS Pro and SPSS);
 - Track record of successful delivery of high-level expert advice to governments and international organizations; previous work with the UN is an asset
 - Familiarity with and experience in analysis complex data
 - Excellent analytical skills
 - Good English language skills
- **Experience in the below will have a maximum of (30 points)**
 - At least five years of experience in the coordination and/or management of quantitative national household surveys (prior MICS or/and DHS coordination experience highly desirable);
 - Training experience and ability to organize and facilitate training and presentations, including on-the-job training;
 - Experience in survey report writing;
 - Experience with CAPI data collection is an advantage;
 - Excellent oral and written communications in English.
 - Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
 - Ability and willingness to travel extensively in-country and, if necessary, internationally.
- **Quality of past work (e.g. understanding, methodology) in the below will have a maximum of (30 points)**
 - Track record of successful delivery of high-level expert advice to governments and international organizations; previous work with the UN an asset;

- Substantial experience working cross-culturally, with familiarity and previous experience of working in Lao PDR highly desirable
- National level experience in working across complex data and national information systems, knowledge products and reports across social and economic sectors
- Familiarity with and experience in the socio-economic and political environment of the Southeast Asian Region and Lao PDR is an asset;
- Experience of providing technical assistance to government for sector development and capacity building;
- Experience in similar assignment and in Lao PDR is preferable.

II) Financial Proposal (max. 100 points) weight 30 %

The maximum number of points shall be allotted to the lowest Financial Proposal that is opened / evaluated and compared among those technical qualified candidates who have attained a minimum 70 points score in the technical evaluation. Other Financial Proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price.

The Contract shall be awarded to candidate obtaining the highest combined technical and financial scores, subject to the satisfactory result of the verification interview.

The applicants should provide **medical insurance covering medical evacuation** for the whole duration of the assignment -as part of the financial proposal submission.