###### United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

###### Vientiane, Lao PDR

###### Individual Consultancy: Individual contractor to conduct an Analysis of the Situation of Children and Women in Lao PDR

###### Terms of Reference

1. **Background**

2019 is the third year of the country programme of cooperation 2017-2021 between the Government of Lao PDR and UNICEF. UNICEF’s country programme, 2017-2021, is aligned with seven of the eight outcomes of the United Nations Partnership Framework, 2017-2021, and contributes to the achievement of the national priorities of the Eighth National Socioeconomic Development Plan (NSEDP), 2016-2020. It is also directly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction, hunger, health, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, reduced inequalities, peace and justice, and partnerships.

The country programme’s overall goal is to ensure that children, especially the most disadvantaged, fully enjoy their rights to survival, development and protection. It will balance the support to upstream policy work with capacity strengthening to deliver services and to create demand for services in disadvantaged communities. UNICEF supports the Government to address the concluding observations of the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

To achieve results, the country programme employs six mutually reinforcing strategies that include: (a) evidence generation and advocacy for policy dialogue to inform and strengthen national policies, laws, budgets and standards; (b) institutional and human capacity strengthening for policy development and execution; (c) communications for development to promote healthy practices and social norms, and to facilitate community mobilization and ownership; (d) service delivery to ensure community demands are met through strengthened integrated outreach services and operational capacities, including essential commodities and supplies; (e) broad partnerships for children to ensure aid effectiveness in line with the Vientiane Declaration II on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, 2016-2025, South-South cooperation, and to leverage resources for children; and (f) innovation to support programme implementation, communications and monitoring of results, including through social media and mobile technology. While the programme operates at the national level in the areas of policy advocacy and

capacity strengthening, activities to improve service delivery and enhance local capacity and knowledge focuses on seven selected provinces and districts.

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Lao PDR’s 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) conducted in 2018 provides a good overview of the current socio-economic development context and situation of children in Lao PDR. Lao PDR has made rapid progress towards the criteria for graduation from the LDC category. The findings of the Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS-II) show that important progress has been made in several areas of the wellbeing of women and children in Lao PDR such as child mortality, stunting, skilled birth attendance, water and sanitation coverage, primary education attendance, and to some extent in reducing violence against children. However, many challenges remain and disparities persist between households from different geographical regions, rural and urban areas, households with different wealth and education level of mothers; and between ethnic groups.

The Multiple Overlapping Deprivation (MODA) report shows that despite considerable progress, the majority of children age 0-17 years in Lao PDR are multidimensionally deprived, and they experience a high deprivation intensity. Only 12 percent of children experience no deprivation at all, 70 percent suffer from at least two deprivations and 50 percent of children are suffering from three or more deprivations at the same time. Stunted children have a higher rate and intensity of deprivation in all dimensions.

The Government of Lao PDR is committed to further strengthening strategies and activities that align and support LDC graduation, the 2030 Agenda and accelerating the implementation the of the 8th NSEDP with focus on human capital development and social development results and preparing the 9th NSEDP in 2019.

Against this backdrop, the Midterm Review of Lao PDR’s UNICEF country programme 2017-2021 is relevant and timely to review whether the country programme effectively contribute to national development goals and to make recommendations for the future development priorities. In preparation for the development of the mid-term review of the current country programme, building on the CRC committee concluding observations, the findings from the MODA and to contribution to the 9th NSEDP preparations, UNICEF will undertake a situation analysis (SitAn) of children (girls and boys) and women. The findings of the MTR will provide an opportunity to adjust and align the country programme to feed into the national development plan and to address issues linked to the emerging children’s agenda at regional and global levels. The MTR will also provide an opportunity for visioning, strategizing and going forward towards the development of a new Country Programme. Timely and strategic investments in children and young people will maximize the cognitive and human capital of Lao PDR’s ‘generation 2030’, who will drive the development of a country that aims to graduate from the list of Least Developed Countries (LDC) and achieve the SDGs.

1. **Purpose**

Conduct risk-informed, human rights-based, equity-focused and gender-sensitive Situation Analysis (SitAn) of Children and Women in Lao PDR

1. **Work Assignments**

The purpose of the SitAn is to understand the causes of, and linkages between, problems affecting children and how a country’s human, social, economic and organizational resources and structures (including its policies and institutions) can contribute to solving these challenges.

The SitAn process is expected to promote ownership by national partners and build consensus on the analytical results. The process will involve relevant partners – key government partners, civil society, other national stakeholders.

The SitAn will be risk-informed, rights-based, equity-focused and gender-sensitive, and will be developed through a process that includes the following steps:

* Use available data and other information to accurately identify trends, patterns, incidence and causes of key deprivations and patterns of vulnerability, disaggregated by relevant segments of the population, e.g., using LSIS II data.
* Identify and analyse the barriers and bottlenecks that prevent disadvantaged girls, boys and families from benefiting from required interventions and services. This will draw on the bottleneck analyses that is being undertaken by the sectors in Health and Nutrition, WASH, Education and Child Protection in 2 provinces, (Atappeu and Savannakhet).
* Analyse the extent to which gender inequalities and the fulfilment/non-fulfilment of the rights of women affect overall inequalities and deprivations, including those affecting children, building on the LSIS II Gender disaggregated analyses and Gender Review.
* Assess the current or potential presence of risks, including conflict, natural hazards, existing and future hazards from climate change and other potential shocks; the likelihood of their occurrence, the underlying vulnerabilities, the nature of the hazard and the particularly vulnerable groups that will be affected. The capacities and coping mechanisms of women and men, families, communities, local and national institutions to mitigate these risks and deal with shocks should also be assessed, using available DRR plans[[1]](#footnote-1).
* Based on sector specific reviews and analyses, map the gaps in national policies, legislative frameworks and sector plans, and identify the steps to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This would include an analysis of the extent to which there is an enabling environment for the realization of the rights of all children including the promotion of positive social norms and behaviours, transformation of gender norms, organization of services, institutional capacities at national, sub-national and community levels, in fulfilment of human rights conventions, in particular the convention on the rights of the child (CRC).
* Based on information available, synthesize findings on public finance and fiscal space in the country including external sources of financing such as overseas development assistance (ODA) to provide insight on how public resources are distributed, including across regions, and their contribution to (or lack thereof) achieving children’s rights. To the extent possible and based on availability, draw on Laos Expenditure and Consumption Survey findings on household spending and poverty.

## Methodology

The SitAn will make use of multiple methods and techniques. Mostly the analysis will rely on secondary data, including both quantitative data as well as qualitative information to establish trends and relationships. Some critical aspects of the methodology will include:

***Application of the Human-Rights Based Approach:*** The provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) will stand at the centre of the SitAn. The concluding observations of the CRC committee will form the foundation of these analyses.

***Referencing SDGs:*** While the analysis of status and trends in 2016 will be informed by the reporting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SitAn will need to reflect the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The more inclusive, holistic and vulnerability focused approach of the 2030 Agenda is highly relevant in the EAP context where issues, including but not limited to climate change, have a real significance for the equitable realisation of rights and opportunities of children. The localization of the SDGs is essential to the framing of the SitAn

***Use of update to date, disaggregated data and information:*** In order to further the equity approach, it is essential that the SitAn include the most up-to-date data from both survey and administrative sources, disaggregated in such a way as to highlight existing deprivations and inequities (along determinants such as wealth quintile, location, gender, age, ethnicity, etc.). The SitAn should support the identification of the most vulnerable and support more indepth planning and targeting. The latest LSIS II data will be used.

***Equity focused***: Equity-focused SitAn supported by UNICEF should seek to respond to the following questions, either through direct consideration, or through reference to other documents in which these are adequately addressed: How do child and maternal outcomes and trends differ across population groups and regions; Which are the most deprived groups of children and women? Where are they located; What forms of deprivation and exclusion do these groups face? What are the determining factors that give rise to and perpetuate their exclusion; What are the underlying causes of gender and other inequalities across population groups and regions?

***Consideration of the Life Cycle Approach***: A life-cycle approach will be used to undertake the analysis of the key issues affecting children aged 0 to 17 years, with a focus on the 1st and 2nd decades, as 2 windows of opportunity towards building Lao Generation 2030. A causal and trends analysis using appropriate age intervals (e.g., 0-59 months) will be helpful in determining the developmental needs, gendered barriers, and the ensuing programmatic interventions that need to be undertaken. Data should also be disaggregated by sex, ability[[2]](#footnote-2), socio-economic groups and national and sub-national geographic locations (including urban, rural and remote locations).

***Inclusion of Disaster and Climate Risk Analysis:*** Following the same three steps as the Human Rights Based approach, the analysis will be informed by an analysis of hazards (and their potential areas of exposure) as well as existing vulnerabilities and capacities to reduce, mitigate or manage the impact of shocks and stresses, particularly environmental hazards including those exacerbated by climate change. This analysis will build on the availability of DRR plans.

***Inclusivity for Analysis and Validation***: The Analysis phase of the SitAn is likely to require in-depth dialogue with and between key stakeholders. A consultation with key government partners and development partners will be conducted with the purpose of enriching the analysis and increasing the validity and influence.

***Research Modalities[[3]](#footnote-3):***

* ***Desk review and conceptual and analytical secondary research*** on selected topics published in existing studies, research, evaluations and survey reports.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* ***Analysis based on reviews*** of available legislation, social policy, budget allocation and expenditure documents in conformity with provisions of the CRC and CEDAW.
* ***Mapping*** of deprivations(considering hazards, exposure, vulnerability and capacity) and/or interpretation and analysis of relevant, existing vulnerability mapping.
* ***Key informant consultations*** with those who shape and implement public policies. Reports from the youth consultations as part of the CRC@30, sub-national planning, and private sector and civil society consultations will be used to inform the consultations.
* ***Socio-demographic trend analysis*** to understand the changes in child and young people populations, at disaggregated level on the basis of available data sets over the past decade and also future forecasting.
* ***Gender analysis*** based on the Gender Review and LSIS II analyses will be used identify key issues contributing to gender inequalities including recommendations for areas of further analysis during the new programming cycle where gender inequality or the disempowerment of girls or boys is especially evident, with a focus on child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

**Ethics**: The SitAn must be competed in-line with the UNICEF *Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis*. SitAn proposals should have an ethics section and explicitly outline: 1) the team member’s training in and familiarity with research ethics; 2) funding, sponsors and institutional affiliations; and 3) any actual or potential conflicts of interest.

1. **Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required**

To achieve this assignment ‘s objective, UNICEF is looking for an individual international consultant that can carry out the above takes with the following experience and qualifications.

Qualifications and Experience

* A higher-level university degree in Social Sciences, or similar background
* At least 10 years of working experience in analysis of social issues, preferably on children and in an international environment (previous experience with similar child rights studies an advantage)
* National level experiences in working across complex data and national information systems, knowledge products, and reports across social and economic sectors.

Knowledge and Skills

* 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)
* Track record of successful delivery of high level expert advice to governments and international organizations; previous work with the UN an asset
* Familiarity with and experience in analysing complex data
* Excellent analytical skills
* Good English Language skills

Languages

###### Fluency in English

1. **Location**

###### Offsite with a few days of travel to Vientiane, Lao PDR

1. **Duration**

June – September 2019

1. **Deliverables**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ref | Key Tasks | Deliverables | Dura-tion (days) | Dates |
|  | **REPORT OUTLINE** | | | |
| 1 | Following the Office having shared all available publications on children (relevant to the scope & breadth of the SitAn ToR) published after 2017, the Consultant to review and identify key gaps in the information base | Bibliography of resource documents | 1 |  |
| 1 | Prepare a SitAn outline which incorporates the following:   1. Conceptual framework (drawing on the CRC and SDGs) 2. methodology; 3. plan for presentation of findings (charts and illustrations) 4. current information gaps; 5. schedule of activities and timeline |  | 2 |  |
|  | Submit report outline | SitAn Report Outline |  |  |
|  | **PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF THE REPORT** | | | |
| 2 | Create preliminary draft of the report as a discussion document with Steering committee (July) |  | 10 |  |
|  | **Feedback by office 2 weeks** | | | |
| 3 | **1ST FULL DRAFT OF SITAN REPORT** | | | |
|  | Produce complete first draft of the SitAn Report. This should include well-presented graphs and tables to illustrate key trends and comparisons. (August) |  | 10 |  |
| 3 | Review of 1st draft of SitAn Report by Steering Committee |  | 5 |  |
|  | Validate the situation analysis findings with UNICEF and government partners and development partners through consultations (sept) |  | 5 |  |
| 4 | **2ND DRAFT OF SITAN** | | | |
|  | Produce second draft of the SitAn report integrating inputs from the validation workshop and comments on the first draft |  | 7 |  |
|  | Review of 2nd draft by Steering committee |  |  |  |
|  | **SITAN FINALIZED** | | | |
| 5 | Final draft text of SitAn prepared |  | 3 |  |
|  | Final text is formatted, published and distributed |  |  |  |
|  | Prepare materials for dissemination workshop of SitAn results and facilitate workshop (tentative) |  | 2 |  |
|  | TOTAL DAYS |  | 45 |  |

1. **Reporting Requirements**

To conduct this exercise UNICEF will contract an individual with outstanding expertise and experience in this field of work, preferably with experience in Lao PDR. The key tasks and deliverables will be under the responsibility of the individual contractor who will manage the entire SitAn process and discussions with UNICEF, including the development of the conceptual and analytical framework and writing of the final Situation Analysis report. If feasible, consultant maybe requested to support the MTR process by documenting the MTR workshops, generating recommendations and drafting the MTR report.

1. **Payment Schedule linked to deliverables**

* Payment is against deliverable and duly signed reports, for each line item of invoice satisfactory completion of the activity 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.*

1. **Administrative Issues**

###### UNICEF office will provide space in UNICEF Lao PDR country office as needed during working days. UNICEF will facilitate for other logistic arrangement as required. The consultant is expected to use his/her own computer/laptop for the duration of this assignment. Translation service of key documents as well as for workshops and meetings will be provided by UNICEF as necessary. Health insurance is required by consultant. The copy rights of all the deliverables to be produced through this assignment with remain with UNICEF.

1. **Contract supervisor**

The UNICEF SitAn process will be undertaken under the direct supervision of the Deputy Representative, who will be responsible for managing the project’s planning, deliverables, peer review, dissemination, monitoring of research uptake, and any other tasks required for successful completion.

The Deputy Representative will Chair the Steering Committee, which will comprise the Chief of Programme Planning Monitoring and Evaluation, and other relevant staff members to oversee the SitAn. While no formal technical committee will be formed, it is expected that the Steering Committee will assist in facilitating access to reference documents, meetings and feedback from technical experts within UNICEF and key stakeholders. The updates from the SitAn will be presented at all CMT meetings.

The Steering Committee will be accountable for:

* Approval and overall monitoring of the work plan for the development of the SitAn;
* Early identification and filling of critical capacity needs;
* Full participation in all key milestone events in the work plan.

1. **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.

1. The completion of this assessment is dependent on the availability of plans and data. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As defined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ‘Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” and in-line with social models of disability which identify systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion by society (purposely or inadvertently) that mean society is the main contributory factor in disabling people. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The primary modality is secondary analyses based on existing reviews. The research is also dependent upon the availability of documents and reports at the time of the review. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Steering Committee for this SitAn will provide an initial bibliography upon commencement of the contract. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)