

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTORS/ CONSULTANTS

PART I		
Title of Assignment	<i>National Consultancy: Cold Chain & Immunization Supply Chain Management support to Ministry of Health (MOH) to strengthen immunization supply chain systems in Malawi</i>	
Section	Health & HIV	
Location	Lilongwe	
Duration	191 days during a 9-month period	
Start and End Date	From: 1 February 2021	To: 31 October 2021

BACKGROUND

The Government of Malawi has been receiving support in the management of vaccines significantly from GAVI and other Donors over an extended period. Notwithstanding this fact, 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. The Ministry of Health (MOH) conducted a nationwide Measles Rubella Campaign in early 2017 which required the initiation of the plan for introduction of new vaccines e.g TCV, COVID-19, IPV etc at least nine months ahead of the campaign.

Malawi conducted an Effective Vaccine Management (EVM) assessment in 2016. While the results of the assessment showed good performance across all Immunization Supply Chain (ISC) levels, gaps were evident at the service delivery level in maintenance and stock management. The report and several other assessments done between 2014 and 2016 made recommendations on a number of programme components that need strengthening at national, district level and service delivery levels. A comprehensive EVM improvement plan was developed in 2016 to respond to the identified gaps. The Improvement Plan focused on five areas:

- (1) Temperature monitoring;
- (2) Cold chain equipment and cold chain equipment management;
- (3) Distribution;
- (4) Human resource development and
- (5) Data management.

With the significant support the vaccine cold chain system is benefitting from, there is however a likelihood of significant wastage which are not recorded and appropriately addressed. Ordering systems between the health centres and the district hospitals are porous and likely to provide ways of wastage of the vaccines within the system, defeating value for money. Introduction of the Solar Direct Driven fridges from 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 may have on more effective cold chain management.

Maintenance of refrigerators installed in several health facilities has been seen as a challenge. Cold chain technicians do not have easy access to transportation to conduct preventive or curative maintenance. This disrupts the vaccination plans, affects performance indicators and ultimately may result in destroying the potency of vaccines rendering them unusable. Introduction of remote monitoring technologies is key in ensuring that performance of refrigerators is continuously being monitored.

In order to sustain quality vaccine management for effective immunization coverage in Malawi, provision of continued technical assistance to MOH is crucial. UNICEF Malawi Country Office therefore requires the services from a national consultant to support the EPI team to monitor, assist and improve the bottlenecks in the system. The national consultant will hence assist the 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

Transformative changes in supply chains are required for high performing ISCs in order to achieve better immunization access and coverage. Malawi's EPI programme has implemented incremental, and often necessary, supply chain improvements, such as investing in additional storage capacity. However, coping mechanisms such as these do not solve underlying structural problems. New approaches must reconsider the complete supply chain system, from distribution and inventory policies to the changing role of information systems and supply chain managers.

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.

Currently, neither MoH nor UNICEF Malawi has the in-house capacity to perform the above-mentioned planning and preparatory activities for successful introduction of NEWER VACCINES (TCV, IPV, COVID-19 vaccine etc.) in Malawi, hence the requirement to engage a short-term technical consultant to deliver on the activities.

PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The consultant will be responsible for providing technical support to EPI unit for vaccine cold chain system and services, and monitoring of upstream and downstream supply activities, and immunization programme implementation.

Under the direct supervision of UNICEF's Health Specialist (Community Health), the consultant will assist the EPI unit in strengthening the immunization supply chain system, focusing on some gaps identified in the assessments done in the country thus far. The consultant will support the MoH (EPI) in development of the Cold Chain Maintenance Plan, Operational Deployment Plan 4 (ODP4) and Operational Deployment Plan 5 (ODP 5), introduce the remote temperature monitoring system and facilitate the roadmap in the integration of ISC into the general Health Supply Chain. In addition, the consultant will champion and ensure coherent and continues management of the immunization supply chain/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 MoH's EPI unit to strengthen planning and implementation of supply chain of EPI programme at zonal, district and health facility levels, including:

- Organize monthly coordination meetings and capacity building with central, regional and zonal officials and discuss on bottlenecks for geographic coverage, vaccines and cold chain status, micro-planning etc.

- Provide joint monitoring visits with EPI officials and provide feedback necessary for strengthening the system.
- Participate in Country Programme planning to advice on cold chain supply requirements to provide technical advice on specifications/Terms of Reference, facilitating efficient procurement.
- In liaison with the Health Speciality (Community Health), work with the supply section and maintain links with Supply Division on transnational shipments, deliveries, claims and appropriateness of supplies.

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 supply chain system, with reference to the overall and specific tasks.

1. Coordination

- Participates in the partnership between the MoH governance and key stakeholders to address key gaps identified in immunization supply chain management.
- Through leadership of the EPI Sub Technical Working Group and the Drugs and Medical Supplies Technical Working Group, strengthen mechanisms for supply of adequate bundled vaccines of good quality and for monitoring, analyzing & reporting of key vaccine management parameters.
- Organizes and leads joint field visits for ISC at sites with MOH teams.
- Team with the Health Section and the Operations Section to facilitate procurement as well as efficient customs clearance, storage and distribution of the vaccines and related injection materials.
- Develop and maintain partnership and collaborative relations with UNICEF, Government, UN, and bilateral counterparts in supply and logistics activities including distribution, monitoring vaccine inputs, and inventory.
- Inform Programmes of slow moving inventory, upcoming field distributions or deliveries, incoming materials and quality issues to ensure maximum use of available transportation, warehousing space, manpower and other resources.

2. Provide technical support for the extension of cold chain through Cold Chain Equipment Optimization Platform (CCEOP) and other initiatives.

- Support to MoH (EPI) in development of the Operational Deployment Plan for the forth and fifth quarter.
- Support EPI in post-installation assessment of ODP 2.
- Support EPI in establishing as system to monitor already existing CCE indicators to ensure that the cold chain system is efficiently functioning.

3. Provide support for the development and implementation of corrective and preventative maintenance plans for Cold Chain Equipment at National, Regional and County level.

- Support MoH in the development of a cold chain maintenance plan to ensure that resources are tapped from the government's and partners budgets, and that the cold chain equipment attains its maximum lifespan.

- Advocate for a dedicated budget line in the maintenance of cold chain within the government annual plan.
- Review the current management of spareparts and recommend an efficient approach to ensure prompt repair of broke fridges.

4. Support introductions of innovations in Cold Chain, Vaccine and Logistic Management.

- Introduce the Remote Temperature Monitoring System in all the facilities to improve monitoring of the Cold Chain System.
- Work with the regional office and SD to introduce bar-coding on the Stock Management Tool in Malawi to reduce human error and improve data visibility.
- Develop a system to improve visibility in immunization supply chain data.

5. Support the preliminary works in determining areas of integration for the immunization supply chain into the main supply chain system.

- Facilitate review of the components for immunization supply chain system and the main health commodities supply chain system to determine areas of possible integration.
- Propose the integration process of the identified areas to avoid interrupting vaccine availability.
- Develop a report on roadmap for the integration of the ISC into the main health commodities supply chain system.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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

The consultant will report to the Health Specialist-Community Health and work closely with the Programme Manager, EPI, MoH and Immunization Specialist of UNICEF Health & HIV Section. Chief of Health & HIV Section, UNICEF Malawi will support with providing guidance for this assignment.

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 face-to-face, virtually, the consultant is expected to stay in touch via telephone, e-mails and other means such as Zoom or Skype. The consultant will be based at Lilongwe with regular field visit.

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	Deliverable/Outcome (e.g. Inception, progress, final reports, training material, workshop, etc.)	Estimated # of days/weeks	Planned Completion date	% of total fee payable
Prepare and submit an inception report and work plan of consultancy assignment after consultations with MOH and key stakeholders and desk review of key documents	Inception report with detailed cold chain / supply chain deployment plan with roles and responsibilities, timeline and associated budget	10 days	11th February 2021	10%
Work with MoH EPI and Physical Assets Management (PAM) to develop the maintenance plan for cold chain.	CCE Maintenance Plan developed	38 days	7th April 2021	15%
Work with MoH EPI to review the previous ODPs and determine the gaps. Support the identification of new areas and develop the ODPs in liaison with EPI.	Development of Operational Deployment Plan 4 (ODP4) and Operational Deployment Plan 5 (ODP 5)	40 days	3rd June 2021	15%
In liaison with UNICEF Regional Office and MoH, agree on the tool to use for the exercise; work with the international consultant in organizing teams to visit 25% of the facilities with CCEOP Round 2 installations to assess the installation quality; Participate in field visit.	Report on Cold Chain Equipment Post Installation Assessment	34 Days	22nd July 2021	20%
Facilitate a workshop to review the current immunization supply chain system and brainstorm areas requiring integration; Work with a small team to develop a roadmap on integration; present the proposal to both the EPI TWG	Report on integration of ISC into the general Health Supply Chain	25 Days	27th August 2021	15%

and the DMS TWG for feedback; revise the proposal according to the feedback and submit the result to UNICEF for wider sharing.				
Effective remote temperature monitoring system implemented: liaison with supply division and MoH in choice of the innovation; support procurement of the innovation; work with the service provider to ensure installation of the system in not less than 10 facilities	Report on introduction of the Remote Temperature Monitoring system across the country (in all 850 health facilities, 29 districts). Final Report on the accomplishment of consultancy with observations and recommendations.	44days	28th October 2021	25%
	TOTAL	191 Days		

However, as the actual starting date may impact the dates estimated in the TOR, the exact timeframes and actual delivery dates will be jointly agreed upon between the 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.

Travel and living expenses costs while on official fiels trips will be reimbursed on actual expenditures and upon presentation of original supporting documents.

DESIRED COMPETENCIES, TECHNICAL BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

Academic qualification:

Advanced university degree from a recognized academic institution in one or more of the following areas is preferred: Supply Chain Management, Engineering, Project Management, Data Management and Analysis or related to supply and logistics operations in UNICEF programme areas.

First university degree combined with relevant professional work experience and understanding of relevant functions may be considered in lieu of advanced university degree.

Work experience:

Minimum eight years progressively responsible professional work experience at national levels in supply management, vaccines programming including cold chain and vaccine management.

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 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. As per the latest policy guideline the contract commencement, the consultant/individual contractor is requested to complete all 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 the UNICEF Malawi Country Office premises, pending the return to office strategy for consultants and as per the approved footprint plan for the section and office, keeping COVID-19 safety and preventative measures in mind. If the footprint plan does not allow working from UNICEF premises, the consultant will work from home.

The consultant will use a personal computer 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.
- No contract may commence unless the contract is signed by both UNICEF and the consultant.
- The consultant will be based in Lilongwe and working from UNICEF Malawi Office premises or from home as per office footprint until such a time when COVID travel restrictions are relaxed to allow in-country travel.
- The consultant will be paid an all-inclusive fee (stationary, communication and other miscellaneous expenses) as per the stipulated deliverable and payment schedule.
- Under the consultancy agreements, a month is defined as 21.75 working days, and fees are prorated accordingly for actual days worked.
- The consultant is not entitled to payment for overtime, weekends or public holidays, medical insurance, taxes, and any form of leave.
- 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.
- Transport will be provided to the consultant during in-country field travel, if planned and approved.

- 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 of the contract will provide the consultant 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.
- Consultants will not have supervisory responsibilities or authority on UNICEF budget.
- The assignment is an on-site/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