

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Bangkok, Thailand
Vacancy Announcement 2019/023

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Consultancy –Technical assistance on child overweight and nutrition for school age children and adolescents

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. To save their lives. To defend their rights. To help them fulfil their potential.

Across 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, every day, to build a better world for everyone.

And we never give up.

For every child, a better future

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office works to ensure the rights of all children in Thailand. This means the rights of every child living in this country, irrespective of their nationality, gender, religion or ethnicity, to:

- **survival** – to basic healthcare, peace and security;
- **development** – to a good education, a loving home and adequate nutrition;
- **protection** – from abuse, neglect, trafficking, child labour and other forms of exploitation; and
- **participation** – to express opinions, be listened to and take part in making any decisions that affect them

How can you make a difference?

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) is seeking an individual consultant to provide technical assistance to selected countries in the region to generate evidence and develop strategies and programmes to address child overweight and improve nutrition of primary school age children and adolescents, as well as contribute to regional knowledge products, resources and tools.

Background:

In its Strategic Plan 2018-2021, UNICEF has committed to address overweight among all children 0-18 and to support strategies to improve nutrition of primary school-age children and adolescents. These are relatively new areas for UNICEF and overarching guidance is currently under development by the Nutrition section in HQ, as well as some joint tools with WHO. In EAPRO, several countries have already begun to develop certain components,

and in the 2018 regional management team meeting of country representatives, commitment was made to advance the child overweight agenda in at least 5 countries in the region (China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines).

In the East Asia and Pacific Region (EAPR), it is estimated that close to 9 million children under 5 are overweight – almost quarter of the global total and the single largest regional burden. Almost 90% of overweight children in the region live in just three countries: China, Indonesia and the Philippines. Thailand, Malaysia, Mongolia and the Pacific island countries also have significant child overweight burdens and prevalence. Most of these countries also have persisting high burdens of undernutrition – stunting, wasting and micronutrient deficiencies.

In terms of children aged over 5 years, a major recent global analysis¹ showed that mean BMI in children aged 5-19 had increased significantly in South East Asia. The analysis found the highest rates of overweight and obesity in the Pacific Island countries. National data on adolescent nutritional status in the region is scarce, with most countries lacking national data for the whole reference population of adolescents aged 10-19, never mind the entire school-age population from 5-19. Modelled data exists from this global analysis for the 5-19 age group, which shows high prevalence – between 22-32% - in PNG, China, Malaysia and Thailand, and all countries in the region with modelled data above 10%. In total, over 80 million school age children are estimated to be overweight in the region, the vast majority in China.

On the other hand, several countries still have high rates of undernutrition among adolescents. The highest rate of underweight (low body mass index - BMI) for girls aged 15-19 is in Timor-Leste at (40 per cent), Cambodia (28 per cent), while an Indonesia sub-national study recorded a striking double burden of malnutrition, with 11% of adolescents aged 13-15 years having low BMI while the same proportion of adolescents were overweight or obese. Anaemia is common among adolescents with rates close to 50% among 15-19 year olds in some countries. Adolescent mothers are more likely to have babies with poor fetal growth, which is a significant contributor to poor child nutrition outcomes.

Some of these country offices in EAPRO with a large double burden have begun investigating this double burden through undertaking landscape analyses of the situation, policies and programmes, and a few have initiated selected interventions, mainly with primary school age children and adolescents. But many have not yet undertaken full landscape analyses, nor studies on the obesogenic environment, including marketing, retail and school studies, analyses of fiscal and regulatory frameworks and specific household studies on consumption of unhealthy foods and beverages; and no country has so far designed and planned the type of comprehensive approach to addressing child overweight which the global and regional strategies recommend.

All countries require technical assistance to advance their overweight programmes. At the regional level, resources and tools for studies, analyses, advocacy, strategic design and planning will be needed.

EAPRO has already developed a toolkit for improving nutrition of school age children and adolescents², which includes overweight prevention, and is in process of designing various components of an assessment of the commercial determinants of child diets in the region. In addition, EAPRO has successfully advocated with ASEAN to develop a series of ASEAN guidance and standards related to nutrition, which various member states have volunteered to develop and EAPRO has committed to support; this work has yet to commence.

¹ Source: NCD Risk Factor Collaboration (NCD-RisC), Worldwide trends in body-mass index, underweight, overweight, and obesity from 1975 to 2016: a pooled analysis of 2416 population-based measurement studies in 128.9 million children, adolescents, and adults, Lancet 2017,390:2627-2542 1: WHO, 2016. Modeled estimates.

² <https://unicefaproinasactoolkit.wordpress.com> and <http://tie.inspvirtual.mx/temporales/toolkit/vx/>

Work Assignment, Work Schedule and Deliverables:

Under the overall supervision and guidance of the UNICEF EAPRO Regional Nutrition Advisor, the consultant will perform the following tasks:

| Deliverables | Estimated Duration (days) | Timeline |
|---|---------------------------|----------|
| 1. Data, evidence and knowledge products, including regional tools: | | |
| a. Provide technical support to countries to identify gaps in current data and generate evidence on topics related to child overweight prevalence, its determinants, the landscape of existing policies and programmes. | 2 | Oct-19 |
| | 21 | Nov-19 |
| | 9 | Dec-19 |
| b. Assist countries to integrate survey questions on snack foods and sugar sweetened beverages into national surveys. | 5 | Dec-19 |
| c. Provide support to countries to advocate for and generate data on overall nutrition status of primary school age children and adolescents. | 5 | Dec-19 |
| d. Provide technical assistance to countries to design and implement formative research on nutrition of school age children and adolescents and child overweight. | 2 | Dec-19 |
| | 3 | Jan-20 |
| e. Contribute to the design and coordinate and support the implementation of the assessment of commercial determinants of child diets. Components include: (1) review of regulatory assessment reports from DLA Piper, (2) commercial landscape assessment for processed foods with regular feedback to consultants, (3) marketing scan report for how types of foods and beverages are marketed to young people and caregivers of young children, (4) retail assessment in all types of point of sale stores including exit interviews with caregiver/adolescent shoppers (5) opinion leader research (6) adolescent opinion and caregiver opinion research using crowdsourcing and social media (7) mapping of allies and opponents to policy change in targeted ASEAN countries. | 6 | Jul-19 |
| | 21 | Aug-19 |
| | 13 | Sep-19 |
| f. Contribute to the development of national and regional level reports on the findings from the commercial determinants of child diets assessment. | 8 | Sep-19 |
| | 7 | Oct-19 |
| g. Produce a summary of the literature on the effectiveness and impact of strategies and policies to prevent overweight during childhood (0-18). | 5 | Jun-19 |

| | | |
|---|----|--------|
| h. Produce quality knowledge products of various types – peer reviewed articles, UNICEF reports, policy briefs, case studies, advocacy pieces, multi-media materials, presentations and contribute to funding proposals. | 5 | Jun-19 |
| | 5 | Jul-19 |
| i. Produce summaries of documented experiences from various countries on introducing and implementing these legislative measures. | 10 | May-19 |
| 2. Advocacy and partnership: | | |
| a. Working together with WHO and others, support country advocacy efforts to address child overweight through creating improved regulatory and legislative environments, including on food and beverage marketing, front of pack warning system labels, fiscal measures and school food environment policies. | 15 | Jan-20 |
| b. Help organize a study tour of Chile for selected EAPR countries to learn about their comprehensive legislation and strategies; compile a brief on what Chile has done and the results. | 5 | May-19 |
| c. Begin the process of designing a regional symposium on child overweight in 2020 to be convened by UNICEF in one of the high-burden countries | 5 | Oct-19 |
| 3. Double duty actions in existing health, ECD, SBCC and school platforms: | | |
| a. Provide technical assistance to countries to integrate child overweight prevention into existing systems and platforms, including IYCF counseling in the health system and communities, social and behavior change communication (SBCC), parenting programmes and ECD centers, and pre-schools, including to model and document effective “double duty” actions. | 3 | Jan-20 |
| | 17 | Feb-20 |
| b. Contribute to updating the global IYCF counseling package with overweight prevention content. | 5 | May-19 |
| c. Contribute overweight prevention content for ECD and parenting materials and resources as required. | 4 | Oct-19 |
| d. Provide technical assistance to countries on design or improvement of school nutrition curricula, school nutrition education, weekly iron folate supplementation and deworming interventions, physical activity and healthy school canteens. | 4 | Feb-20 |
| | 1 | Mar-20 |
| e. Contribute to design and content of SBCC strategies on child overweight. | 5 | Mar-20 |
| 4. Regional resources and tools: | | |
| a. Produce a conceptual framework on child overweight strategies and policies. | 1 | May-19 |
| | 9 | Jun-19 |

| | | |
|---|-----|--------|
| b. Contribute to the finalization of a policy report being developed arising from the 2019 PMAC child overweight side session. | 2 | Jun-19 |
| c. Produce technical briefs on these legal instruments to contribute to increasing UNICEF knowledge and confidence. | 10 | Jul-19 |
| d. Support the identified ASEAN member states to develop guidance on i) marketing of foods and beverages to children; ii) nutrition of school age children; iii) prevention and management of overweight children in health facilities. | 15 | Mar-20 |
| | 10 | Apr-20 |
| e. Contribute to dissemination of guidance and tools to UNICEF staff through webinars, network meeting, presentations, and other means. | 3 | Oct-19 |
| TOTAL: | 241 | |

Final outputs, deliverables as well as the timelines are indicated in the table of Work Schedule. Payment will be made on the basis of reports on deliverables completed/progress on tasks and an invoice.

Estimated Duration of Contract: 11.5 months, starting 1 May 2019.

Official Travel: The consultant is expected to work at the UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand. The consultant may also be required to travel in the region to perform the assigned tasks upon discussion and agreement with supervisor.

Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required:

- Postgraduate Degree (at least Master's Degree) in public health or nutrition.
- At least eight (8) years' experience with proven record of accomplishment and exposure dealing with nutrition programmes, especially on overweight and nutrition of school-age children and adolescents at the policy, evidence, advocacy, and programme levels.
- Experience of knowledge of legislative measures on overweight and NCDs like fiscal measures, marketing restrictions and labelling.
- Experience of nutrition or health related research and analysis, including formative research.
- Demonstrated competency in technical (including peer-reviewed articles) and advocacy writing, reviewing, editing, and production/publication.
- Experience of nutrition counseling and communication and training.
- Sound interpersonal skills, including experience in cross-cultural environment and international settings. Demonstrated ability to motivate people, influence stakeholders and work effectively with people at all levels of the organisation and across multiple organisations and commitment to collaborative work practices.
- Demonstrated sound and wide-ranging oral communication and writing skills in English.
- Relevant experience in the Southeast Asia region is an asset.
- Competency in computer skills with sound knowledge of Microsoft Office, ideally data software (STATA or SPSS).
- Proven ability for accuracy under pressure and adherence to deadlines.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently, take initiative and innovate.

Interested candidates are requested to submit CV or P-11, full contact information of minimum 2 references, availability, and proposed monthly professional fee and all-inclusive travel cost and other incidentals to/from Bangkok in USD by **1 April 2019**. Please note the air tickets under UNICEF contract shall be re-routable, refundable type (economy class and most direct route). The consultant will be responsible for own travel insurance, visa fee and terminal expenses.

For every Child, you demonstrate...

UNICEF's core values of Commitment, Diversity and Integrity and core competencies in Communication, Working with People and Drive for Results.

View our competency framework at

http://www.unicef.org/about/employ/files/UNICEF_Competencies.pdf

Mobility is a condition of international professional employment with UNICEF and an underlying premise of the international civil service.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted and advance to the next stage of the selection process.

UNICEF is committed to diversity and inclusion within its workforce, and encourages all candidates, irrespective of gender, nationality, religious and ethnic backgrounds, including persons living with disabilities, to apply to become a part of the organization.

UNICEF has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UNICEF, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination. UNICEF also adheres to strict child safeguarding principles. All selected candidates will, therefore, undergo rigorous reference and background checks, and will be expected to adhere to these standards and principles.