

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Vientiane, Lao PDR

Individual Consultancy: Individual contract for the revision of Breast Feeding Accreditation (BFA) course and rolling out of next cohorts of accreditation course

Terms of Reference

1. Background:

Despite Lao PDR has made significant progress in reduction of child and maternal mortality, persistent high prevalence of malnutrition is a significant concern. The Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS), conducted in 2011 and 2017, showed a significant reduction in the rate of chronic malnutrition (stunting) from 44% to 33%, however it is still classified in “ Very High” category as per the WHO cut off value of public health significance. This consequence of malnutrition results in enormous human and economic costs including impairment of normal brain development, reduced learning outcome and overall reduction of lifetime earnings and impacting in significant reduction of GDP. It was estimated that Lao PDR has lost approximately 481.66 million USD in Yr-2020 due to malnutrition¹.

In more recent years during the COVID-19 pandemic the dietary diversity amongst women and young children as well as the minimum meal frequency has significantly declined, with 79% of children 6-23month of age living in food poverty as of Q1 of 2022. Quality of services remains a significant issue with limited capacity of staff at all levels, and uptake further affected by physical access to facilities and language barriers. The current financial crisis is expected to further impact the quality of diets, services and care of young children and there is great concern that previous progress on stunting will be lost.

Although the Government of Lao PDR strongly recommends babies to be exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months and continued breastfeeding with other safe and nutritious food until child turns 2 years old, less than half of the children (45 per cent) are exclusively breastfed up to 6 months and continued breastfeeding till 2 years of age is only practiced for about 1 in 4 (27.2%) children.

One of the main reason of suboptimal IYCF feeding practices in Lao PDR is widespread consumption of breastmilk substitutes in early days of children;s lives especially, in urban settings where mothers are exposed to aggressive marketing of artificial formulas, around 35% children aged 0-23 months are bottle-fed, including, 22% of those younger than 5 months of age; thus, posing formidable challenges to the practice of exclusive breastfeeding.

Although Government of Lao (GoL) has taken significant efforts to address these issues especially in adoption of marketing of breastmilk substitutes decree to protect and promote breastfeeding in the country and strengthening enforcement of legislation through robust monitoring mechanism and regulatory measures. Additionally, government also took measures to strengthen capacity of hospital based staffs on breastfeeding counselling practices through inception of first ever Breast Feeding Accreditation (BFA) course, which was developed based on the national curriculum and technical support of Save the Children (SCI). The aim of this course was to establish a cadres of Breast Feeding Advisors/Counsellors to promote and support breastfeeding practices. Last year , 17 participants were trained to become champions of breastfeeding promotion and counselling experts.

Further as part of lesson learned of first cohort, a technical evaluation was conducted which revealed that few topics need to be amended in the curriculum based on the feedback of lead trainers and academic professors of University of Health Sciences (UHS). Secondly, it was also suggested that evaluation methodology of course needs to be modified especially MCQ and OSCE design, with were less focused toward towards improving counselling skills in the previous syllabus. The changes are intend to be incorporated in the next cohort of batches of year 2023.

Therefore UNICEF, with the financial support of the EU Delegation of Lao PDR, is seeking to recruit a Individual consultant to support the Ministry of Health, particularly Center for Nutrition under the Department of Health and Hygiene Promotion, for required changes in the BFA course syllabus and evaluation methodology.

2. Purpose:

The purpose of this assignment is to support the Ministry of Health in the revision of BFA course syllabus and modification in the evaluation methodology of course for upcoming batches of breastfeeding accreditation course.

3. Work Assignment:

The consultant shall work closely with the Ministry of Health, specifically Center of Nutrition, to coordinate and support in organizing meeting with University of Health Science and selected trainers to ensure that revisions in the curriculum is finalized and validated prior to the teaching schedule; revisions done in the design of evaluation methodology for Objective, Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) and MCQs for the BFA course. He/ She will also support in the preparation of second and third cohort of Breast Feeding Accreditation course through coordination and collaboration with Hospital staffs of selected hospital staffs for skill practices and finalization of the hospital practice plan. This will require coordination meetings with Centre of Nutrition, UNICEF, and SCI colleagues to discuss overall management, administration, logistic and selection of target trainees based on the criterion etc.

More specifically, in consultation with the UNICEF Nutrition Team, the consultant shall:

- Support in coordinating meeting with University of Health Science and selected trainers of BFA course for revisions in course syllabus based on the inputs in the technical review meeting.
- To support in organizing meeting to finalize the evaluation methodology of course syllabus and changes to be made in the design of OSCE and MCQs.
- To support in the preparation of second and third cohort of Breast-Feeding Accreditation (Breast Feeding Accreditation) course through coordination and collaboration with trainers and Hospital based staffs for skill practices and finalization of hospital practice plan.
- As needed, support CN and trainers by identifying technical references and learning resources such as training videos, references for best practice etc.
- Support in coordination and organizing entrance exam of trainees for selection of participants for next cohort.
- Work with the Nutrition Centre team to support and follow up on each lecture to ensure that it is delivered qualitatively on regular basis.
- Conduct the OSCE exam with support of CN and trainers at the end of each course part(section) and prepare report of learners' results.
- Work with the Nutrition Center team to monitor and facilitate hospital practice sessions.
- Convene meeting of course completion with CN, Hospital Staffs, UNICEF and SCI to review learner results.

- Prepare biweekly progress report of BFA course's, highlighting good practices, challenges and proposed solutions.
- Prepare final report of Breast Feeding Accreditation (BFA) courses undertaken in Year 2023.

The work would be undertaken in close consultation with the UNICEF Lao PDR Nutrition team and the Health and Nutrition team of Save the Children International Lao PDR office as well as the Centre for Nutrition.

4. Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required:

- Medical doctor or similar qualification
- At least 10 years clinical experience supporting lactation
- Proven experience with clinical lactation support in the wider Lao health system
- Minimum 5 years proven experience as a medical trainer including experience with key relevant adult education and assessment techniques
- Familiar with global best practice in lactation and clinical care
- Excellent understanding of key OBGY/Pediatric/BF/EENC services and practices in Lao PDR
- In-depth understanding and knowledge of the government internal process and administrative procedures related to the launching the course training
- Strong interpersonal communication, persuasion, and training skills;
- Good organization skills including advocacy and dialoging skills with the government officials at decision making levels.
- Strong Lao language skills
- Excellent written and spoken English, an advantage

5. Location:

Consultant shall be based in Vientiane (Centre of Nutrition or other location).

6. Duration:

The assignment is expected to be full time for **10 months** from approximately **24th April- 23rd Feb 2024**

7. Reporting Requirements:

The consultant will be under contract of UNICEF Lao PDR and report to the Nutrition Specialist with support of Chief of Nutrition as well as the wider nutrition team for administrative arrangements.

8. Payment Schedule linked to deliverables:

Payment is against deliverables upon satisfactory completion of the activity and certified by the Nutrition Specialist - UNICEF

A direct payment will be made to the service provider upon submission of invoices and related reports

Payment will be made in KIP within 30 days of submission of invoice as per UNICEF guideline.

<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>Payment (including business travel fee) be directly linked with satisfactory deliverables</i>	<i>Reporting Requirements for each deliverable</i>

1. Deliverable 1:- Finalize and revise BFA course syllabus based on UHS curriculum and recommendations from technical team members.	10%	Final revised course syllabus approved by MOH;
2. Deliverable 2:- Revisions in MCQs and OSCE design based on the recommendation of technical team members to finalize evaluation methodology	10%	Final Evaluation Methodology approved by MOH which includes of amended MCQs and OSCE design
3. Deliverable 3:- Support to organize entrance exam and interviews for selecting candidates of BFA course. <i>(Travelling to Savannakhet (to & fro \$100 + 1 day taxi @ \$100 + 2 days DSA @ \$64) = \$ 128 + \$100+ \$ 100 = \$ 328</i>	10%	Entrance exam organised to finalize the list of selected participants of BFA Course
4. Deliverable 4:- Support and organize first cohort of BFA course with submission of course completion report	25%	Report of First batch of training
5. Deliverable 5:- Convene meeting to discuss and lesson learned for improvement in the next batch.	10%	Meeting Minutes of discussion taken and action points.
6. Deliverable 6:- Support and organize second cohort of BFA course with submission of course completion report	25%	Report of second batch of training
7. Deliverable 7:- Convene meeting to discuss and lesson learned for improvement in the next batch.	10%	Meeting Minutes of discussion and action points.

9. Administrative Issues:

- The consultant will complete all her/his tasks as mentioned above on deliverables.
- The applicants should provide medical insurance covering medical evacuation for the whole duration of the assignment -as part of the financial proposal submission.
- The consultant is expected to use his/her own computer/laptop for the duration of the assignment.
- The copy rights of all the deliverables to be produced through this assignment will remain with UNICEF.

10. Contract supervisor:

The Consultant shall work under the general supervision of Nutrition Specialist of UNICEF. The consultant is always expected to observe the highest standard of professional ethics and integrity, promote a results-oriented approach in the area of his/her responsibility and accountability and report irregularities to his/her supervisor.

11. 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.

12. 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 **15th Apr 2023**

13. Assessment Criteria:

For evaluation and selection method, the Cumulative Analysis Method (weight combined score method) shall be used for this recruitment:

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

- Degree/ Education in (20 points)
 - Medical doctor or similar qualification
 - Strong interpersonal communication, persuasion, and training skills
- Knowledge of (20 points)
 - Familiar with global best practice in lactation and clinical care
 - Excellent understanding of key OBGY/Pediatric/BF/EENC services and practices in Lao PDR
 - In-depth understanding and knowledge of the government internal process and administrative procedures related to the launching the course training
 - Strong Lao language skills
 - Excellent written and spoken English, an advantage
- Experience in..... (40 points)
 - at least 10 years clinical experience supporting lactation
 - Proven experience of Course Coordinator or with clinical lactation support in the wider Lao health system
 - Minimum 5 years proven experience as a medical trainer including experience with key relevant adult education and assessment techniques.
- Quality of past work (e.g. understanding, methodology) (20 points)
 - Assessment of previous work including good organization skills including advocacy and dialoging skills with the government officials at decision making levels
 - Reference checks

b) 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.

14. Programme Area, Outputs and Specific Key Results Areas in the Rolling Work Plan:

Section Request: Nutrition

Programme Area:

Output 2: Government authorities and their partners have strengthened capacity to deliver convergent quality high-impact nutrition interventions and services

KI : 2.2 Promote and support breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices for optimal nutrition, growth and development of children

Included in approved AWP: Yes No