

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS

<b>Title:</b> Individual National Consultancy to support capacity building on delivering preventive nutrition interventions through health systems.	<b>Funding Code:</b> SC220431 <b>WBS:</b> 2460/A0/06/200/002/003	<b>Duty Station:</b> UNICEF Vientiane (Lao PDR)
<p><b>Purpose of Activity/Assignment:</b></p> <p>Lao PDR has made significant progress in reducing stunting rates, from 44% in 2011 (LSIS 1) to 33% in 2017 (LSIS 2). However, this progress has stagnated, with the rate only slightly decreasing to 32.8% in 2023 (LSIS 3). The stunting rates remains classified in the "Very High" category of public health significance according to WHO standards. Malnutrition results in severe human and economic costs, including impaired brain development, reduced learning outcomes, lower lifetime earnings, and a significant reduction in GDP.</p> <p>One key factor contributing to high stunting levels in Lao PDR is suboptimal Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices. Recent LSIS 3 data reveals that only 44.9% of infants are breastfed within the first hour of life, and only 50.6% are exclusively breastfed within the first six months. One of the main reasons for these suboptimal feeding practices is the widespread use of breastmilk substitutes, especially in urban areas where aggressive marketing of artificial formulas is prevalent. Approximately 40.1% of children aged 0-23 months are bottle-fed, posing significant challenges to exclusive breastfeeding.</p> <p>The Government of Lao PDR (GoL) with the technical and financial support of UNICEF, has made substantial progress in addressing key issues related to breastfeeding and nutrition. This includes the adoption of the Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes Decree, which aims to safeguard and promote breastfeeding practices by regulating the marketing of breastmilk substitutes. Comprehensive monitoring and regulatory measures have been put in place to ensure compliance. UNICEF supports the GoL for monitoring and reporting breastmilk substitute (BMS) violations at retail and sales points, as well as in hospitals, though more work is required for effective enforcement and regulatory measures to put in place. Additionally, UNICEF also plans to develop AI-based web tool and mobile application to track and report BMS violations in the digital social platforms such as company websites, Instagram, and Facebook pages.</p> <p>UNICEF is also supporting the Centre of Nutrition (CN) in strengthening the implementation of the micronutrient supplementation program, especially for Vitamin A. This includes technical and financial support in planning, forecasting, procurement, and distribution of Vitamin A supplies. However, to ensure effective program implementation, there is a need to develop operational guidelines, job aids, and Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials to support frontline workers and stakeholders. Additional technical support is needed for national and subnational governments officials to better understand Vitamin A coverage in DHIS-2 for improved coverage and follow-u. Additional support is also provided to Department of Hygiene and Health Promotion ( DHHP ) &amp; Food and Drug Department ( FDD) in strengthening coordination mechanism and monitoring system to improve quality assurance and quality control of salt iodization process using real time data collection tool through mobile based ONA application platform. However, this will require more handholding support to government counterparts in using these tools for reporting and ensure compliance of legislation.</p> <p>UNICEF also plans to support the government in adopting recently revised Global Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counseling package for community workers, tailored to the country context. This effort will involve close coordination and follow-up within various departments of Ministry of Health and development partners.</p> <p>To support these initiatives, UNICEF intends to hire the services of a consultant with strong liaison skills and expertise in working with key health departments, including DHHP, FDD, Mother and Child Health Center (MCHC), CN, Center of Communication for Education and Health (CCEH), and the Department of Health Care and Rehabilitation (DHR). The consultant will continue provide technical and operational support for BMS monitoring, strengthening the Universal Salt Iodization (USI) program, and improving the</p>		

micronutrient supplementation program to enhance improved coverage and outcomes. The consultant will also coordinate with government departments to build consensus on strengthening nutrition interventions through the health system.

**Scope of Work:**

The purpose of assignment is to support and build the capacity of Ministry of Health in planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of preventive interventions implemented through health system. The consultant will work closely with the Ministry of Health especially with relevant departments to improve the delivery of preventive nutrition intervention through the health system. This will include.

**(a) Strengthening Breast Milk Substitute (BMS) Monitoring and Legislation Enforcement**

The Consultant will provide technical support to UNICEF by coordinating with national and subnational government stakeholders, including the Department of Hygiene and Health Promotion, the Centre of Nutrition, and the Food and Drug Department, to expand BMS monitoring activities in the remaining provinces. They will assist in organizing Task Force Meetings to evaluate progress, address challenges, and find solutions related to breaches of the breast milk substitute decree. Additional support will involve coordinating between government stakeholders and technical agencies to develop an AI tool for detecting BMS violations on social platforms, ensuring timely completion of the task. The Consultant will provide support in organizing training for trainers (ToT) and implementing training on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) in targeted provinces with high wasting rates and those with existing IMAM programs.

**(b) Strengthening Micronutrient Supplementation Program**

The Consultant will offer technical and operational support in assessing the implementation status of the Vitamin A program nationwide. This will involve reviewing existing operational guidance, supply chain systems, and monitoring and reporting mechanisms to identify challenges and propose solutions. The information gathered will be used to develop operational guidance, job aids, and IEC materials to enhance service uptake, coverage, quality, and reporting of the Vitamin A program in DHIS-2. The Consultant will also support salt producers and food inspectors in using a developed monitoring tool for ensuring quality assurance and control of national salt iodization legislation. Furthermore, they will coordinate and organize Task Force Meetings for the Universal Salt Iodization Program to discuss progress, challenges, and solutions related to salt iodization, including the effective functioning of the Potassium Iodate Revolving Fund (PIRF) committee.

**(c) Coordination support for development of Community Infant and Young Child Feeding (CIYCF) Counselling Package**

The Consultant will provide technical support to the government in coordinating and adapting the recently revised global Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counseling package for community workers to fit the country context. This will require close coordination and follow-up with various Ministry of Health departments.

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

- Support in organizing refresher training of Central Level Trainers and cascade trainings of provincial and district level stakeholders on BMS monitoring.
- Technical support in preparation and coordination of Technical and Task Force Meeting of BMS committee under National Committee on Food and Drug Control.
- Technical support in facilitating coordination meetings to develop new AI based monitoring tools to report violations of unethical promotion and marketing of BMS products in social media and platforms.
- Joint monitoring & supervision visits of salt factories to strengthen quality assurance and quality control process of salt iodization.

- Technical support in the preparation and coordination of Task Force Meeting of USI committee to review progress, challenges and way forward of salt iodization program
- Provide technical support in developing guidance on growth monitoring and for reviewing the DHIS-2 data (quarterly) for interpreting, deliberation and provide strategic recommendations to improve IYCF counselling services in target districts of 10 priority provinces.
- Enhance the capacity of LSPG and PIRF committee members in procurement and supply chain management of KIO3 to strengthen QA and QC in the salt iodization process.
- Coordinate and plan learning visit of government stakeholders to learn and adopt some good practices on efficient PIRF management system, govt tax exemption and allocation of funding for USI program etc.
- To provide technical support in organizing Training of Trainers (ToT) on IYCF and support cascading IYCF trainings for frontline workers and Village Health Volunteers in targeted districts.
- Support for coordination meetings with staffs of Center of Nutrition and Center for Health Statistic Institution (CHSI) to review and discuss the development of C- IYCF counselling package
- Coordinate and provide support for field testing of tools and the IYCF counseling package to integrate stakeholder feedback and operational assistance in organizing central-level Training of Trainers (ToT).

**Child Safeguarding**

Is this project/assignment considered as “[Elevated Risk Role](#)” from a child safeguarding perspective?

YES  NO If YES, check all that apply:

**Direct contact role**  YES  NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:

**Child data role**  YES  NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information of children (name, national ID, location data, photos):

More information is available in the [Child Safeguarding SharePoint](#) and [Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates](#)

<p><b>Budget year:</b> 2024/2025</p>	<p><b>Requesting Section/Issuing Office:</b> Nutrition Section, Lao PDR</p>	<p><b>Reasons why consultancy cannot be done by staff:</b> The Section currently lacks the capacity to undertake the identified streams of work in a coherent and timely manner. Some of the activities are tied to donor funds which are time bound.</p>
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**Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan:**  Yes  No, please justify:  
All the activities are contained in the 2024 rolling workplan of the section.

**Consultant sourcing:**  National  International  Both

<b>Competitive Selection:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advertisement <input type="checkbox"/> Roster <input type="checkbox"/> Informal competitive (Low Value Contract)		
<b>Single Source Selection:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> (Emergency - Director's approval)		
<b>If Extension, Justification for extension: -</b> Not Applicable		
<b>Supervisor:</b> Hari Vinathan	<b>Start Date:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct 2024 <b>End Date:</b> 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2025	<b>Total duration:</b> 9.5 months

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline	Estimated Budget (Percentage of payment)-USD
<b>Deliverable: - 1</b> Technical support in facilitating coordination meetings to develop new AI based monitoring tools to report violations of unethical promotion and marketing of BMS products in social media and platforms.	Supported in facilitating minimum of three technical meetings with stakeholders from various departments, with meeting minutes prepared and submitted.	Nov 2024	3.9 %
<b>Deliverable: - 2</b> Strengthen the capacity of LSPG and PIRF committee members in procurement and supply chain management of KIO3 to enhance QA and QC in the salt iodization process.	Supported in facilitating minimum of three technical meetings involving LSPG or PIRF committee members to support supply chain management of potassium iodate (KIO3) with meeting minutes prepared and submitted	Dec 2024	5.8 %
<b>Deliverable: - 3</b> Support for undertaking learning visit of government stakeholders to country from where they can learn and adopt some good practices on efficient PIRF management system, govt tax exemption process and regulations and allocation of funding for USI program etc.	Submission of learning visit report that details the lessons learned and highlights best practices to be adapted for the Lao context.	Jan 2025	9.7 %
<b>Deliverable: - 4</b> Technical support for coordination meetings at national and sub-national	At least 3 subnational meetings facilitated on salt iodization program	Feb 2025	9.7 %

level including monitoring and supportive supervision visits for salt iodization program.	with meeting minutes prepared and submitted.		
<b>Deliverable: - 5</b> Support for coordination meetings with staffs of Center of Nutrition and Center for Health Statistic Institution (CHSI) to review and discuss the development of C- IYCF counselling package	At least 3 coordination meeting organized and facilitated among government departments and development partners to discuss on the revisions of C- IYCF counselling package.	Feb 2025	7.7 %
<b>Deliverable: - 6</b> - Technical support for coordination of BMS technical meetings including monitoring and supportive supervision visits to report violations across retail sales points and health facilities for informed decision making and take corrective actions.	(a) Preparation and support for facilitating at least 2 technical meeting with submission of meeting minutes and action points.  Submission of reports of at least 10 provinces for BMS monitoring across retail or sales point and hospitals.	Feb 2025	14.5 %
<b>Deliverable: - 7</b> – Strengthen the capacity of salt producers and food inspectors in the QAC process through refresher training and on job support in using digital based reporting tools.	Facilitate at least two trainings for salt producers and food inspectors on how to use QA and QC tools for reporting on salt iodization process. Monitoring visits of at least two provinces	Mar 2025	11.6 %
<b>Deliverable: - 8</b> - Support for developing short guidance/ SOPs/ Job Aids on operational aspects of Vitamin A, Iodine & IFA/ MNT tablets.	Finalization of Short guidance/ Job Aids/SOP on the operational aspects of micronutrient supplementation programmes .	Mar 2025	7.7 %
<b>Deliverable: - 9</b> - Support in coordination and organizing national & sub- national review meetings and trainings for strengthening micronutrient supplementation programmes especially planning, implementation, monitoring reporting and supply chain management.	Facilitate 3 Zonal meetings of micronutrient supplementation programme to review coverage and understand challenge of supply chain management and reporting issues.	Mar 2025	5.8 %
<b>Deliverable: - 10</b>	Undertake field testing of revised tool of IYCF	Mar 2025	9.7 %



<p>understanding of nutrition specific interventions in the Lao context .</p>	<p>Child Feeding ,micronutrient supplementation and Universal Salt Iodization (USI) programme of Lao PDR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-depth understanding and knowledge of the government internal process and administrative procedures related to the nutrition programme</li> <li>▪ Strong Lao language skills</li> <li>▪ Excellent written and spoken English, an advantage</li> </ul>
<p><b>Submission of applications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Letter of Interest (cover letter)</li> <li>▪ CV or Resume</li> <li>▪ Performance evaluation reports or references of similar consultancy assignments (if available)</li> <li>▪ Financial proposal: All-inclusive lump-sum cost including travel, accommodation cost and insurance with medevac for this assignment as per work assignment.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Evaluation Criteria (This will be used for the <a href="#">Selection Report</a> (for clarification see <a href="#">Guidance</a>))</b></p> <p><b>A) Technical Evaluation (minimum 50 and maximum 80 Points) 75 points</b>  The passing mark of the technical evaluation 60 points</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Degree/ Education in ..... (15 points)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Medical doctor with preferably Public Health background or similar qualification</li> <li>○ Strong interpersonal communication, persuasion, and training skills</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Knowledge of ..... (20 points)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Familiar with global guidance of international code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitute act.</li> <li>○ Good understanding of nutrition specific programmes like Infant &amp; Young Child Feeding ,micronutrient supplementation and Universal Salt Iodization (USI) programme of Lao PDR</li> <li>○ In-depth understanding and knowledge of the government internal process and administrative procedures related to the nutrition programme</li> <li>○ Strong Lao language skills</li> <li>○ Excellent written and spoken English, an advantage</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Experience in..... (20 points)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ At least 10 years of proven experience of working with government health system and good understanding of nutrition specific interventions in the Lao context .</li> <li>○ Past experience of implementation of Breast Milk Substitute (BMS) monitoring and USI monitoring would be added advantage.</li> <li>○ Familiar with innovative and technology-based applications to monitor nutrition programmes</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>4. Quality of past work (e.g. understanding, methodology) (20 points)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assessment of previous work including good organization skills including advocacy and dialoging skills with the government officials at decision making levels</li> <li>○ Reference checks</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	

**B) Financial Proposal (maximum 50 and minimum 20 Points) 25 points**

- 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 60 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 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 (\_60\_) 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.]*

**Administrative details:**

Visa assistance required:

Home Based  Office Based:

**If office based, seating arrangement identified:**

IT and Communication equipment required:

Internet access required:

Costs indicated are estimated. Final rate shall follow the “best value for money” principle, i.e., achieving the desired outcome at the lowest possible fee. Consultants will be asked to stipulate all-inclusive fees, including lump sum travel and subsistence costs, as applicable.

Payment of professional fees will be based on submission of agreed deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment in case the deliverables submitted are not up to the required standard or in case of delays in submitting the deliverables on the part of the consultant

**Text to be added to all TORs:**

Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract will not be considered “staff members” under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF’s policies and procedures and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants and Individual Contractors. Consultants and individual contractors are responsible for determining their tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.

The selected candidate is solely responsible to ensure that the visa (applicable) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected candidates are subject to confirmation of fully-vaccinated status against SARS-



CoV-2 (Covid-19) with a World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed vaccine, which must be met prior to taking up the assignment. It does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, programme delivery locations or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts.

UNICEF offers [reasonable accommodation](#) for consultants with disabilities. This may include, for example, accessible software, travel assistance for missions or personal attendants. We encourage you to disclose your disability during your application in case you need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and afterwards in your assignment.

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