

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**

**Vientiane, Lao PDR**

**Individual Consultancy: National consultant to support Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes for Grade 5 in Lao PDR**

**Terms of Reference**

**1. Background:**

A comprehensive analysis on the primary student assessment system undertaken by the Research Institute for Educational Science (RIES) of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) with UNICEF's support in 2017 reveals that there are currently no national standardized assessments and no systematic provisions for comparative analysis of results and dissemination of results at all levels, resulting in limited utilization of the assessment results to inform both system-level strengthening and the classroom teaching-learning improvement. The analysis suggested that development and implementation of a standardized, sustainable large-scale national assessment on the key milestones of basic education is a key to address the challenge.

In late 2018, as part of the EU-MoES-UNICEF Partnership to Strengthen the Education System in Lao PDR (PSES) programme, an assessment of student learning outcomes (ASLO) for Grades 9 and 5 were planned for 2019 and 2020, respectively. The Grade 9 ASLO was completed in 2019 by RIES with UNICEF support. However, while preparations for the Grade 5 ASLO planned for 2020 were underway with key activities implemented, the actual assessment has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The assessment is now planned for the end of school year 2021-2022 from April to May 2022 with preparatory activities starting in March.

The Ministry of Education and Sports and UNICEF Lao PDR Rolling Workplan (RWP) 2022-2023 under the Government of Lao PDR-UNICEF Country Programme 2022-2026 includes undertaking of the Grade 5 ASLO as one of the key activities for 2022. The MoES-UNICEF RWP also includes preparations for Lao PDR's participation to the second cycle of the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM), which includes an assessment for Grade 5 students expected to be undertaken in 2023. The SEA-PLM first cycle assessment for Grade 5 students was undertaken in 2019.

**2. Purpose:**

The key purpose of this assignment is to provide additional short-term support to the MoES-UNICEF Education Programme, in the implementation of the following activities: 1) Assessment of Student Learning Outcome (ASLO) for Grade 5

- 2) Finalization of the Grade 9 ASLO National Report Lao version
- 3) South East Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) activities
- 4) Strengthening MoES capacity on formative assessment

Undertaking of the above interventions involve a series of sub-activities which require data literacy and analytical skills, complemented by local knowledge and language skills. Good coordination and communication skills are also required to facilitate the work with the government counterparts and other stakeholders.

**3. Work Assignments:**

The national consultant will support the UNICEF Lao PDR Education Team and MoES will provide technical support in the following areas:

- 1) Support the planning, coordination and preparation for Grade 5 ASLO implementation, including development of test schedules, cost calculation and review and translation of government and other reference materials. This would require coordination with MoES.
- 2) Support field monitoring of the implementation of the Grade 5 ASLO;
- 3) Support the finalization of the Grade 9 ASLO National Report Lao version
- 4) Support the finalization of the SEA-PLM National Report Lao version
- 5) Support the international consultant and education officer who will provide key technical assistance for Grade 5 ASLO, SEA-PLM and the related tasks;
- 6) Coordination with MoES and other key stakeholders at different levels, including support to preparations of direct cash transfer (DCT) requests; and
- 7) Provide technical translation and interpretation during meetings for English and Lao language and vice versa, as needed.

About 80% of the activities under this consultancy is primarily linked to Grade 5 ASLO support. The consultant will work closely with UNICEF education officer, MoES (in particular RIES) and other implementing partners and key stakeholders.

**4. Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required:**

The consultant is expected to hold a degree in education/international development or any related field. S/he must have at least five years of experience working in the education sector, including in supporting learning assessments. S/he must be familiar with the education development context in Lao PDR, including MoES structure and functions, and education development partners. S/he must be fluent in both English and Lao language with excellent verbal and writing skills in both languages. S/he must have an excellent knowledge of Lao culture and is fluent in Lao language. S/he should be adaptable and flexible in their working approach.

**5. Location:**

The consultant will report to the Education Officer in the UNICEF Lao PDR Country office under the broader guidance of the Education Manager and the Chief of Education. Agreement to work remotely/at home for certain days has to be agreed upon with office. Regular participation to the meetings at MoES is also required.

**6. Duration:**

15 March to 14 June 2022

**7. Deliverables:**

Deliverables	Timeline
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<p>1. Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to support related to the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inputs and support provided to Grade 5 ASLO for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) coordination with MoES and other key stakeholders, including preparation of DCT request</li> <li>2) finalization of test items and questionnaires</li> <li>3) test administration logistics plan including cost calculation</li> <li>4) Preparation for test administrator’s training</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Inputs and support provided to SEA-PLM for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) coordination with MoES and other stakeholders</li> <li>2) finalization of SEA-PLM national report Lao version</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Inputs and support for the finalization of the Grade 9 ASLO National Report Lao version <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) review of the report</li> <li>2) coordination with MoES and other stakeholders</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>14 April 2022</p>
<p>4. Support meetings related to strengthening of MoES formative assessment capacity, as needed</p>	
<p>2. Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to support related to the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inputs and support provided to Grade 5 ASLO for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) coordination with MoES and other key stakeholders</li> <li>2) test administrator training</li> <li>3) preparing logistics for the main survey</li> <li>4) monitoring of the main survey</li> <li>5) preparations for report writing workshop for ASLO Grade 5</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Inputs and support provided to SEA-PLM for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) coordination with MoES and other stakeholders</li> <li>2) preparation of presentation materials for regional meetings</li> <li>3) development of dissemination plan</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Inputs and support for the finalization of the Grade 9 ASLO National Report Lao version: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) coordination with MoES and other stakeholders</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Support meetings related to strengthening of MoES formative assessment capacity, as needed</li> </ol>	<p>14 May 2022</p>

<p>3. Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to support related to the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inputs and support provided to Grade 5 ASLO: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) coordination with MoES and other key stakeholders</li> <li>2) cleaning, coding and entry of Grade 5 data</li> <li>3) Support report writing workshop</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Inputs and support provided to SEA-PLM for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) coordination with MoES and other stakeholders</li> <li>2) preparation of presentation materials for regional meetings</li> <li>3) preparations for SEA-PLM cycle 2</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Inputs and support for the finalization of the Grade 9 ASLO National Report Lao version <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) coordination with MoES and other stakeholders</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Support meetings related to strengthening of MoES formative assessment capacity, as needed</li> </ol>	<p>14 June 2022</p>
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### 8. Reporting Requirements:

The consultant is expected to prepare a brief monthly report identifying key tasks and deliverables completed. This report will be submitted to UNICEF along with the deliverables for the specific reporting period.

### 9. Payment Schedule linked to deliverables:

*\* 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. Payment will be made upon delivery of all final products and full and satisfactory completion of the assignment.*

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Payment (directly linked with satisfactory deliverables)</b>	<b>Reporting Requirements for each deliverable</b>
Monthly report and deliverables linked to Deliverables 1 above	Payment 1	Agreed Monthly Activity Plan Monthly status report
Monthly report and deliverables linked to Deliverable 2 above	Payment 2	Agreed Monthly Activity Plan Monthly status report
Monthly report and deliverables linked to Deliverables 3 above	Payment 3	Agreed Monthly Activity Plan Monthly status report

### 10. Administrative Issues:

The consultant is expected to use their own office equipment (laptop computers, printers etc.) and consult with UNICEF staff via email/online conferencing during the period of COVID lockdown.

In-country travel may be required as part of this consultancy. If the consultant needs to travel, a daily subsistence allowance will be provided based on approved UN rates at the time of travel. UNICEF will also support travel arrangements.

The consultant is required to obtain his/her own health insurance including medical evacuation for the whole duration of the assignment.

#### **11. Contract supervisor:**

The consultant will be supervised by and work closely with an Education Officer within the UNICEF Lao PDR office, under the guidance of Education Manager and the Chief of Education.

#### **12. 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.

#### **13. Submission of applications:**

Interested candidates are kindly requested to apply and upload the following documents to:

- 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 *1 March 2022*

#### **14. Assessment Criteria:**

As part of the evaluation and selection, a Cumulative Analysis Method (weight combined score method) shall be used for this recruitment. This involves assessment of:

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

- *Relevant education/degree (30 points)*
- *Experience working in the education sector in Lao PDR (40 points)*
- *Fluency in both English and Lao languages (30 points)*

*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 the candidate obtaining the highest combined technical and financial scores, subject to the satisfactory result of the verification interview, if required.*

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

Section Request: Education

Programme Area: Output 1

IR: Activity 11 and Activity 12

Milestone: Support to learning assessments

Included in approved AWP:  Yes  No