

TERMS OF REFERENCE

SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

HIV Elimination of Mother-To-Child Transmission (EMTCT) consultant-Fiji

BACKGROUND

UNICEF is at the forefront of global efforts to eliminate mother-to-child transmission (EMTCT) of HIV, a critical component of its mission to improve child health and survival. The EMTCT initiative is integral to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. The EMTCT program in Fiji is part of the broader Triple Elimination agenda, which aims to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis B. This integrated approach enhances the overall effectiveness of maternal and child health interventions.

Fiji is a low HIV prevalence country, but available data suggests that the HIV epidemic in Fiji has been growing in recent years. UNAIDS estimates show that between 2010 and 2022, new infections increased by 260%, which made Fiji the second fastest growing epidemic in the Asia Pacific region. While early analysis indicates that the driver of new HIV infections is among people injecting drug (IDU), but an increase in reported cases of mother-to-child transmission is also a significant concern. This is particularly so because there exists an effective intervention to reduce the transmission rate from 15-45% to below 5%.

Underlying this epidemic, there are multiple issues to be tackled: finding, testing and linking those who are living with HIV to treatment and supporting them in care; reducing HIV-related stigma; supporting adolescents and young people at risk and living with HIV. In this regard, the HIV EMTCT program in Fiji faces several challenges, including limited access to healthcare services in remote and rural areas, stigma and discrimination, and health systems gaps in terms of data surveillance, loss to follow up, defaulting on treatment, rapid diagnostic tests and point-of-care testing, and supply chain.

The consultant will play a pivotal role in addressing these challenges by providing technical assistance, capacity building, and strategic guidance to ministry of health counterparts, national and local partners. This consultancy aims to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of EMTCT interventions, ensuring they are effective, sustainable, and culturally sensitive. By leveraging global best practices and innovative solutions, the consultant will contribute to the ultimate goal of eliminating new HIV infections among children and improving the health outcomes of mothers living with HIV in Fiji.

OBJECTIVE / SCOPE OF WORK

The objective of the consultancy for the EMTCT (Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission) of HIV program for UNICEF in Fiji would be:

To provide comprehensive technical assistance and support to the EMTCT of HIV program in Fiji, ensuring effective implementation and monitoring of activities aimed at eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV. The consultant will work closely with national health authorities, local partners, and UNICEF team to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Enhance Policy Environment:
 - Provide expert guidance on EMTCT strategies and interventions, ensuring they are evidence-based and contextually appropriate for Fiji.
 - Support the revision / development of national PPTCT (Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission) Policy, EMTCT guidelines and plan.
2. Strengthen Service Delivery:

- Build the capacity of healthcare providers through training and mentorship, including on provider-initiated testing and counseling on ANC, HIV re-testing during pregnancy, early detection of HIV, timely start of ART, timely follow-up for HIV-exposed infants, etc.
 - Improve the integration of EMTCT services into existing maternal and child health programs.
 - Advocate for and provide technical support to the roll out of point-of-care diagnostics across health facilities to reduce testing turnaround times and improve EID capacity and coverage.
 - Establish One-Stop Clinics - a center of excellence where women can receive comprehensive services, including ANC, HIV testing, ART, and infant care, in a single visit.
3. Data Management and Analysis:
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive database for EMTCT program data, ensuring data quality and integrity.
 - Train local staff on data collection, entry, and management practices to ensure accurate and timely data reporting.
 - Analyze program data to identify trends, gaps, and areas for improvement.
 - Ensure use of data to inform decision-making, program adjustments, resource allocation, and policy recommendations in support of EMTCT.
4. Improve EMTCT programme performance monitoring:
- Develop a real-time data monitoring system that integrates PMTCT, EID, and pediatric HIV data into the broader national health system and develop a robust Monitoring and Evaluation system to track key indicators and address gaps in service delivery.
 - Conduct regular assessments and provide actionable feedback to enhance program effectiveness.
5. Foster Collaboration and Advocacy:
- Collaborate with government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders to promote and support EMTCT initiatives.
 - Advocate for policy changes, resource allocation, and the integration of EMTCT services into broader health systems.
6. Quality Improvement Initiatives:
- Implement continuous quality improvement processes to regularly assess and improve the quality of EMTCT services. This includes setting benchmarks, conducting regular audits, and implementing corrective actions

By achieving these objectives, the consultancy aims to significantly reduce the rate of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Fiji.

ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES, PLUS PAYMENT SCHEUDLE PER DELIVERABLE

ACTIVITY	DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE	PAYMENT (%)
HIV Elimination of Mother-To-Child Transmission (EMTCT)			
Inception Outline approaches to undertake the assignment with a work plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a desk review of existing documents to assess the current situation with focus on HIV EMTCT program and broader triple elimination agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception report with a work plan 		

<p>Enhance Policy Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide expert guidance on EMTCT strategies and interventions. • Support the revision of PPTCT (Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission) Policy and development of national EMTCT plans and guidelines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft revised PPTCT Policy and national EMTCT plans and guidelines 		
<p>Strengthen Service Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise/develop job aides, SOPs, and training materials for healthcare providers and information materials for clients. • Conduct training sessions for healthcare providers. • Implement point-of-care HIV testing in antenatal clinics. • Establish One-Stop Clinics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job aides, SOPs, training materials, information materials. • Training reports. • Implementation report on point-of-care HIV testing. • Plan and progress report for One-Stop Clinics 		
<p>Data Management and Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain a comprehensive database. • Train local staff on data practices. • Analyze program data and make programme/policy recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive database. • Training reports and materials. • Data analysis reports with recommendations. 		
<p>Improve Monitoring and Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement monitoring and evaluation frameworks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and evaluation frameworks. 		
<p>Quality Improvement Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement continuous quality improvement processes. • Conduct regular audits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality improvement plans. • Audit reports. • Final consultancy report summarizing the consultancy outcomes and recommended way forward 		
Total		9 months	TOTAL 100%

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES

Bachelors Masters PhD Other

Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:

The consultant tasked should have the following experiences and essential skills:

- Advanced degree in public health, medicine, epidemiology, or a related field.
- At least 5 years of experience in HIV/AIDS programs, with a specific focus on EMTCT.
- Strong knowledge of EMTCT strategies, global guidelines, and best practices.
- Proven experience in capacity building, training, and mentorship of healthcare providers.
- Excellent analytical, communication, and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to quickly grasp the local context and provide the contextualized technical support.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively within a multidisciplinary team.
- Proficiency in data analysis and the use of relevant software tools.

CONDITIONS OF WORK AND CLARIFICATION ON SUPERVISION

The consultant will be seconded to the Fiji MHMS and deployed to the government premises (TBC). S/he will work under supervision of UNICEF Health and Nutrition Specialist and MHMS focal person on EMTCT, in close coordination with all other relevant MHMS officials and the UNICEF Maternal and Child Health Specialist, on a day-to-day basis. The consultant will be based in Suva, Fiji with field missions within the country.

Payment will be made after completion of each of the deliverables and submission of invoices for the actual work completed, subject to satisfactory performance.

The duration of the consultancy is nine months.

Start date: 1 December 2024

End date: 31 August 2025

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- Individuals engaged under a consultancy 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. Consultants 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.
- No contract may commence unless the contract is signed by both UNICEF and the consultant.
- Consultant will be required to complete mandatory online courses (e.g. Ethics, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Security) upon receipt of offer and before the signature of contract.

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

- Please submit a **separate financial offer** along with your application. The financial proposal should be a **lump sum amount for all the deliverables** and should show a break down for the following:
- Monthly / Daily fees– based on the deliverables in the Terms of Reference above
- Travel (economy air ticket where applicable to take up assignment and in country field mission travel
- Living allowance for 9 moth duration in country including field missions
- miscellaneous- to cover visa, health insurance (including medical evacuation for international consultants), communications, and other costs.