

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Vientiane, Lao PDR

Individual Consultancy: Individual contract for desk review and secondary analysis on nutrition and WASH linkages with malnutrition in Lao PDR

Terms of Reference

1. Background:

Despite progress in recent years including a reduction in prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age from 44% in 2011 to 33% in 2017, malnutrition remains a major challenge in Lao PDR. 9% of children under 5 years are wasted whilst 44% are anaemic. This poses enormous human and economic costs to the country. Malnutrition affects brain development; increases the risk of disease and death; impacts on learning outcomes and causes a reduction in lifetime earnings. At the national level, it contributes to significant reductions in GDP of countries.

According to the Lao Social Indicator Survey (2017), about 86.3% of households drinking water is contaminated with E. coli. On hygiene, only 54.1% of households had handwashing facilities where water and soap/detergent are present. Also, about 24% of households had no toilet facilities or use the field or bush.

The determinants of malnutrition are multi-faceted and cut across different sectors beyond health. Globally, there is significant evidence linking poor nutrition outcomes to drinking contaminated water, poor access to hygiene and sanitation especially in low income settings. Drinking water contaminated with E. coli, poor faecal disposal and/or management as well as limited handwashing with soap at critical times has been associated with increased incidence of diarrhoeal diseases and intestinal inflammations among children -- environmental enteropathy. Frequent infections among children predisposes them to wasting, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies.

The European Union and UNICEF are supporting the Government of Lao PDR in addressing the high burden of malnutrition in the country in the context of their Partnership for Improved Nutrition (PIN) in Lao PDR. They support the implementation of nutrition specific and sensitive actions as part of the National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action (2016-2025). Multi-sectoral interventions ranging from health, nutrition, education, and WASH actions are implemented across provinces and communities as part of an integrated package of services under the National Plan of Action on Nutrition (NPAN). A new NPAN (2021-2025) is at the final stage of development and it is expected to guide implementation of the National Nutrition Strategy (2016-2025).

The UNICEF Lao Country Office has prepared a new Country Programme Document (2022-2026). The Nutrition Programme Component seeks to improve nutrition using the systems approach-- food, health, **water and sanitation**, education, and social protection by ensuring coherence in actions and integrated programming for optimal results.

As part of evidence generation to inform programming and policy choices, there is the need for indepth analysis on nutrition and WASH linkages in Lao PDR. This will enhance efficiency and effectiveness in programming as well as contextualization of actions that will address the nutrition-WASH nexus in fighting malnutrition in the country.

2. Purpose:

The purpose of this assignment is to recruit an International Consultant to undertake an indepth secondary analysis of the Lao Social Indicator Survey (2017) data. It shall involve desk review and synthesis of research works and systematic reviews on nutrition-WASH linkages with appropriate recommendations for policy makers and programming.

3. Work Assignments:

The consultant shall:

- Undertake desk review and synthesis of evidence on nutrition-WASH linkages and develop a study plan detailing the key assessment questions and methodology
- Conduct indepth causal and inferential analysis of data on nutrition and WASH linkages in Lao PDR that is disaggregated by age, gender, location, wealth and others. This should include linkages across more than one potential pathway such as diarrhea and factors contributing to (repeated) bouts of diarrhea; intestinal worm infection and/or factors contributing to this; and environmental enteropathy, as appropriate/possible.
- Prepare a report with context appropriate recommendations to inform policy, advocacy and programming choices

4. Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required:

- Post- graduate degree in Public health, international development, nutrition, agriculture or other clearly related disciplines
- At least 10 years professional work experience in related areas
- Excellent skills on systematic review of literature to guide nutrition policy and strategies
- Good knowledge and experience in supporting countries with evidence-based research to guide decision making and selection of priority nutrition interventions
- Good analytical and report writing skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Fluency in English is required- both in oral and written communication.

5. Location:

Part time consultant will be home based and work remotely.

6. Duration:

3 months (September – November 2021).

7. Reporting Requirements:

The consultant will be under contract to UNICEF Lao PDR and report to the Chief of WASH and Nutrition Manager.

8. Payment Schedule linked to deliverables:

- Payment is against deliverables upon satisfactory completion of the activity and certified by the UNICEF Chief of WASH and Nutrition Manager
- A direct payment will be made to the service provider upon submission of invoices and related reports
- Payment will be made in USD within 30 days of submission of invoice as per UNICEF guideline.

<i>Deliverables (exact deadlines of the deliverables will be agreed at the start of the assignment)</i>	<i>Payment (including business travel fee) be directly linked with satisfactory deliverables</i>	<i>Reporting Requirements for each deliverable</i>
Submission of inception report showing plan of assignment and scope of analysis approved by UNICEF including initial literature review	30%	Report and accompanying presentations

Conduct indepth analysis of data on nutrition-WASH linkages	40%	Tables of preliminary analysis
Final analysis and report writing	30%	Final report and summary brief

9. Administrative Issues

- If the consultant is expected to undertake some domestic travels within the country, UNICEF Lao PDR shall provide transport for such missions.
- The consultant is responsible for his/her own medical insurance and related expenses incurred during the assignment.
- 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 the Chief of WASH and Nutrition Manager of UNICEF. The Programme Specialist (NIPN) shall provide technical insights on the data set and related issues.

The consultant is 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 **15/09/2021**

13. Assessment Criteria:

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

- Technical Qualification (max. 100 points) weight 70 %
Degree Education in (20 points)*

- Post-graduate degree in Public health, international development, nutrition, agriculture or other clearly related disciplines

Knowledge of (20 points)

- Good knowledge and experience in supporting countries with evidence-based research to guide decision making and selection of priority nutrition interventions
- Good analytical and report writing skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Fluency in English is required- both in oral and written communication.

Experience in..... (40 points)

- Experience in and excellent skills on systematic review of literature to guide nutrition policy and strategies
- At least 10 years professional work experience in related areas

Quality of past work (e.g. understanding, methodology) (20 points)

- Assessment of previous work
- Reference check from 2-3 former employers

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.]