

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS

<p>Title:</p> <p>International Consultancy Digital Education Action Plan</p>	<p>Funding Code: SC220871</p> <p>WBS: 2460/A0 /06/300/001/004</p>	<p>Duty Station:</p> <p>Vientiane, Lao PDR</p>
<p>Purpose of Activity/Assignment:</p> <p>Committed to improving its socio-economic status, Laos has embarked on a path of steady modernization, leveraging its natural resources and attracting foreign investment. In recent years, the government has made significant strides in strengthening the national education system and enhancing access to quality education, with a particular focus on digital transformation. These efforts aim to support the country's broader development goals and equip the population with essential 21st-century skills.</p> <p>The Lao National Statement of Commitment to Transforming Education, endorsed in 2022, underscores the country's dedication to leveraging technology and innovation in education. This national statement highlights the importance of integrating advanced digital tools and methodologies to enhance learning outcomes and educational equity.</p> <p>To advance these efforts, the Ministry of Education and Sports recently finalized its Digital Strategy for Education (2025-2035) in line with the broader National Digital Economy Development Vision (2021-2040) as well as the National Digital Economy Development Strategy (2021-2030). The Digital Strategy for Education identifies priority areas of focus in digital access, digital skills development, digital information and digital learning across the entire education sector.</p> <p>To implement this strategy, MoES is required to develop a five-year costed Digital Education Action Plan (2026-2030) to help guide its education sub-sectors. This action plan should be finalised by end 2025, so that its implementation coincides with that of the next Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2026-2030).</p> <p>An international consultant with the relevant expertise is sought to support MoES in the development of this five-year costed Education Digital Action Plan.</p>		
<p>Scope of Work:</p> <p>The consultant will provide direct support to the MoES ICT Centre and the MoES Department of Planning to establish a costed five-year action plan (2026-2030) to accompany the recently endorsed MoES 10-year Digital Strategy for Education (2025-2035). The Digital Education Action Plan should extend across the nine education sub-sectors identified in the Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2021-</p>		

2025).¹ This will require working within the ICT Centre of MoES for the duration of the assignment (i.e. primarily based in Laos) with the support of a national consultant and in coordination with the MoES Digital Transformation Committee.² Exact tasks include:

Stage 1: Kick-off Meetings and Inception Report

- The consultant will start with a kick-off meeting with the MoES ICT Centre, the Department of Planning, the MoES Digital Transformation Committee and UNICEF to set expectations and outline the approach. Insights from this meeting will be used to shape the inception report.
- To further develop the inception report, the consultant should examine key legislation, strategy and policy documents as well as the Digital Strategy for Education and its accompanying situation analysis.
- Preliminary meeting with the nine sub-sectors supported by the Digital Transformation Committee.
- The inception report will detail the consultant's strategy for creating a five-year Digital Education Action Plan for Laos. It will outline the methodology for each task, the data sources, a list of recommended stakeholders and documents to review, and a comprehensive work plan with a clear timeline. The report should not exceed 20 pages, excluding annexes. It will be distributed to the MoES Digital Transformation Committee and UNICEF for review.

Stage 2: Situational analysis on ICT in Education in Laos

- Based on the ICT in Education Strategy, the consultant will develop a tailored situation analysis which looks at the four priority areas identified within the strategy (on Digital Access, Digital Skills, Digital Information and Digital Learning) for each of the nine sub-sectors. This will involve interview with key stakeholders from the MoES, the Ministry of Technology and Communications, development partners, the private sector, particularly Internet Service Providers, and other relevant organizations as well as assessment of key reports and research to develop an updated, more tailored assessment of the current state of ICT in Education in Laos. In addition, the consultant will interview teachers, parents/caregivers, and students. Furthermore, the consultant will engage with teachers, parents, caregivers, and students. It is essential that the situation analysis captures the experiences of vulnerable populations, including children in rural areas, girls, and children with disabilities. This will involve travel to provinces outside of Vientiane capital and intentional outreach to these vulnerable groups to gather evidence and insights on the state of digital equity within the education sector.
- A situation analysis of the four priority areas should highlight opportunities, challenges, and recommendations for the five-year Digital Education Action Plan. This analysis should be presented to UNICEF, the MoES Digital Transformation Committee, and the MTC Digital Government Centre. It should include a basic infrastructure assessment to identify synergies

¹ This includes all sub-sectors except for subsector IX on sport and physical exercise. It is anticipated that each sub-sector will be represented as part of the MoES Digital Transformation Committee with the active involvement of development partners operating across each of the sub-sectors. MoES anticipates the Action Plan to follow a similar format to that of the ESSDP 2021-2025 sub-sector section in terms of identified priorities, targets, outcomes, strategies and activities.

² The national consultant will be recruited separately by MoES and UNICEF. The digital transformation committee combines key representatives of MoES from across all relevant sub-sectors and line departments.

between the MTC, private sector, and partners to address the four priority areas in regions lacking connectivity. It should not exceed 30 pages, excluding annexes.

Stage 3: Consultation Workshops

- The consultant will work closely with MoES and UNICEF to organize a series of 2-3 workshops³ with the MoES Digital Transformation Committee and other key actors from across sub-sectors and at the national and sub-national levels (e.g., teacher training institutes, related ministries, private sector representatives). Based on the situation analysis, the workshops will serve to gather inputs from across the education sub-sectors to the four priority areas which form the basis of the Digital Education Action Plan.
- Prior to the workshops, the consultant should prepare a set of slides covering the workshop agenda and a high-level outline for the five-year Action Plan. These slides will guide workshop discussion and should be shared with and reviewed by UNICEF and MoES in advance of the workshop. Incorporating interactive elements (e.g. discussion prompts, polls, or real time surveys) in the slides is strongly recommended.

Stage 4: Develop First Draft of the Digital Education Action Plan

- Building on the situational analysis and workshops, the consultant will create a draft five-year Digital Education Action Plan. This draft should focus on the four priority areas of the strategy (digital access, digital skills, digital information and digital learning) and should include (rough) cost estimates for implementation across the sub-sectors.
- The draft Action Plan should be submitted and presented to the MoES Digital Transformation Committee, UNICEF and the Education Sector Working Group and/or its relevant Focal Groups as well as private sector representatives and relevant line ministries for feedback. The Action Plan may also be circulated for comments.
- Feedback from this stage will be used to refine and enhance the draft in preparation for a second draft.

Stage 5: Presentation of a Second Draft of the Digital Education Action Plan

- Feedback collected during Stage 4 should be used to inform the development of a refined second draft of the ICT in Education Strategy Action Plan.
- The revised second draft should be resubmitted to MoES and UNICEF together with a set of slides summarizing the content of the five-year Digital Education Action Plan for presentation to MoES, relevant line ministries, development partners, the private sector and other relevant organizations as well as to a representation of sub-national authorities, principals, teachers and school communities.
- The presentation of the second draft of the Action Plan may be carried out across 2-3 separate meetings and/or require circulation to accommodate the engagement of different stakeholder groups.

Stage 6: Finalization of the Digital Education Action Plan

³ The exact approach can be determined together with MoES during the inception phase.

- Feedback from the second round of consultations should be used to develop a penultimate draft of the Digital Education Action Plan for submission to MoES and UNICEF.
- This penultimate draft should undergo an additional, final review process, involving circulation and engagement of key stakeholders across 2-3 meetings.
- This will involve the incorporation of final feedback received to produce the final costed Digital Education Action Plan which will be submitted for official endorsement by MoES.

This work will require at least at least 120 days in country working closely with the MoES ICT Centre in the development of the Action Plan. At least 20 days of field visits/travel outside of Vientiane but within Laos should also be anticipated.

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](#)

Budget year:	Requesting Office:	Section/Issuing	Reasons why consultancy cannot be done by staff:
2024	Lao PDR	Education	This position is to be couched within the Ministry of Education and Sports as a highly specialised IT in Education consultant dedicated to one singular and significant task for a specific period only. This is beyond the capacity and functional role of a UNICEF staff member.

Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan: Yes No, please justify:

Consultant sourcing: <input type="checkbox"/> National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> Both		
Competitive Selection: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advertisement <input type="checkbox"/> Roster <input type="checkbox"/> Informal competitive (Low Value Contract)		
Single Source Selection: <input type="checkbox"/> (Emergency - Director's approval)		
If Extension, Justification for extension:		
Supervisor: Rachel McCarthy	Start Date: 1/11/2024 End Date: 15/10/2025	Total duration: 11.5 month

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline
Deliverable 1: Kick-Off Meetings and Inception Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one 'kick-off' meeting with the relevant representatives held to facilitate development of the inception report. Submission of an Inception Report examining all relevant literature and outlining the methodology for each task, the data sources, a list of recommended stakeholders and documents to review and a comprehensive work plan with a clear timeline. The report should not exceed 15 pages, excluding annexes. Linked to this, a progress report summarizing all activities, meetings etc attended during Stage 1. 	31-Jan-25
Deliverable 2: Situation analysis on ICT in Education in Laos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview of all stakeholders required to develop the situation analysis including teachers, parents/caregivers, students and sub-national and central level authorities within MoES, relevant ministries, development partners and the private sector. This requires at least five days of travel in Laos outside Vientiane capital. 	31-Mar-25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission and presentation of a situation analysis⁴ which looks at the four priority areas (on Digital Access, Digital Skills, Digital Information and Digital Learning) for each of the nine sub- sectors. This should include opportunities, challenges, and recommendations for the costed five-year Digital Education Action Plan. • Linked to this, a progress report summarizing all activities, meetings etc attended during Stage 2. 	
Deliverable 3: Consultation Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation of 2-3 workshops⁵ with the MoES Digital Transformation Committee and other key actors from across sub-sectors and at the national and sub-national levels (e.g., teacher training institutes, related ministries, private sector representatives) to gather inputs from across the education sub-sectors to the four priority areas which form the basis of the Digital Education Action Plan. This includes submission of slides covering the workshop agenda and high-level outline for the five-year Action Plan. • Linked to this, a progress report summarizing all activities, meetings etc attended during Stage 3. 	31-May-25
Deliverable 4: First Draft of the Digital Education Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of first draft five-year Digital Education Action Plan, focused on the four priority areas of the strategy (digital access, digital skills, digital information and digital learning) and including (rough) cost estimates for implementation across the sub-sectors. • Linked to this, a progress report summarizing all activities, meetings etc attended during Stage 4. 	31-Jul-25
Deliverable 5: Presentation of a Second Draft of the Digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on feedback received, submission of a revised second draft of the Digital Education Action Plan together with a set of slides summarizing the content of the five-year 	30-Sep-25

⁴ A broad situation analysis was developed as part of the 10 Year ICT in Education Strategy which provides the starting point for this more in-depth analysis of the four Action Plan priority areas. Not all four priorities need to be examined in each section necessarily. The scope and approach can be determined during the inception phase.

⁵ The exact approach can be determined together with MoES during the inception phase.

Education Action Plan	<p>Digital Education Action Plan for presentation to MoES, relevant line ministries, development partners, the private sector and other relevant organizations as well as to a representation of sub-national authorities, principals, teachers and school communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation of 2-3 separate meetings to present the second draft for further review. • Linked to this, a progress report summarizing all activities, meetings etc attended during Stage 5. 	
Deliverable 6: Finalization of the Digital Education Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of a penultimate draft of the Digital Education Action Plan including costing per sub-sector. • Facilitation of 2-3 meetings for final review and the incorporation of final feedback into the penultimate draft. • Submission of this draft to MoES for official endorsement. • Linked to this, a progress report summarizing all activities, meetings etc attended during Stage 5. 	<p>30-Nov-25</p>

Estimated Consultancy fee (USD)		
Travel International (if applicable)		
Travel Local (please include travel plan)		
DSA (if applicable)		
Health insurance		
Total estimated consultancy costsⁱ		

<p>Minimum Qualifications required*:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bachelors <input type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced degree in education, public policy, information technology, statistics, or other relevant field. In lieu of a specific academic degree, relevant experience may be considered to meet this requirement. • At least 10 years of professional work experience in ICT in Education, including digital infrastructure development, digital learning and digital learning platforms, ICT in teacher education, learning and 	<p>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced degree in education, public policy, information technology, statistics, or other relevant field. In lieu of a specific academic degree, relevant experience may be considered to meet this requirement. • At least 10 years of professional work experience in ICT in Education such as ICT in education policy development, digital infrastructure development, digital learning and digital learning platforms, ICT in teacher education, learning and information management systems, preferably in Southeast Asia.
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<p>information management systems, preferably in South-East Asia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency in English is a requirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent communication abilities, in both written and oral forms. Consultant should be at ease in presentations and meetings with D-level (UN) or C-level (private sector) executives. • Demonstrated ability and experience in coordination, and able to work under pressure is required. • Fluency in English is a requirement.
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Submission of applications:

- 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, accommodation cost and insurance with medevac for this assignment as per work assignment.

Evaluation Criteria (This will be used for the [Selection Report](#) (for clarification see [Guidance](#)))

a) Technical Qualification (70 points)

- Advanced degree in education, public policy, information technology, statistics, or other relevant field. In lieu of a specific academic degree, relevant experience may be considered to meet this requirement (20 points)
- At least 10 years of professional work experience in ICT in Education such as ICT in Education policy development, digital learning infrastructure, digital learning and digital learning platforms, ICT in teacher education, learning and information management systems, preferably in Southeast Asia (30 points)
- Excellent communication abilities, in both written and oral forms. Consultant should be at ease in presentations and meetings with D-level (UN) or C-level (private sector) executives
- Demonstrated ability and experience in coordination, and able to work under pressure is required (10 points)
- Fluency in English is a requirement (10 points)

b) Financial Proposal (30 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 50 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.

Administrative details:

<p>Administrative details:</p>	
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<p> Visa assistance required: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Home Based <input type="checkbox"/> Office Based: </p> <p> <i>*The consultant is expected to work primarily at the MoES ICT Centre for the duration of the assignment.*</i> </p>	<p> If office based, seating arrangement identified: <input type="checkbox"/> </p> <p> IT and Communication equipment required: <input type="checkbox"/> </p> <p> Internet access required: <input type="checkbox"/> </p>
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¹ 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.
