

Terms of Reference

International Consultant for the Mid-Term Review of the UN Joint RMNCH Programme phase 2 (2017-2020)

1. Background

In Lao PDR, the Ministry of Health, the Government of Luxembourg and UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO are working together to advance RMNCH through a United Nations (UN) Joint Programme. This Programme contributes to the National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020), the national Health Sector Development Plan (2016-2020), the Health Sector Reform strategy (2013-2025) and the national strategies on RMNCH and Nutrition¹. The UN Joint Programme directly contributes to pillar 2 (Human Development) of the UN Partnership Framework (2017-2021).

The overall objective of the UNJP is to improve the health of women, newborns, children and adolescents in Lao PDR through supporting the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan for Integrated Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Services (2016-2025).

The current RMNCH Strategy focuses on 11 ‘Strategic Objectives’ (SOs): Reproductive Health (SO1), Safe Delivery (SO2), Emergency Obstetric Care (SO3), Newborn Care (SO4), Child Curative Care (SO5), Immunization (SO6), Nutrition (SO7), Human Resources (SO8), Health Financing (SO9), Health Information (SO10) and Medical Supplies, Commodities and Equipment (SO11). Compared to the previous Strategy (2009-2015), Reproductive Health was added as a new Strategic Objective and adolescents as a specific target group. Each Strategic Objective has a sub-committee that is responsible for implementing the relevant interventions as set out in the RMNCH Strategy and Action Plan. In phase 2 (2016-2020), the UNJP supports Strategic Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11 as well as the overall coordination of RMNCH Strategy implementation and cross-cutting components that relate to multiple SOs, such as planning & monitoring processes at national and sub-national level and community and district health system strengthening.

Phase 2 of the UNJP builds on the results and lessons learned from phase 1 (2011-2016) and takes into account the changing country context. As such, in phase 2, the UNJP focuses on ‘upstream support’ and health system strengthening. UNJP partners provide RMNCH policy advice and technical assistance at national level combined with sub-national support to generate evidence and lessons learned from implementation on the ground to further improve the quality and coverage of integrated RMNCH service delivery. “Modelling” is a key element of the programme implementation strategy. It refers to developing, testing and refining RMNCH service delivery packages and implementation approaches. Selected provinces/districts serve as learning sites that generate evidence to inform the scale up of RMNCH service coverage nationwide. With Bokeo, Bolikhamxay and Savannakhet serving as focus provinces where modelling takes place, the programme delivers results that have an impact beyond these three provinces.

Following two years of implementation (2017-2018), a Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the programme will be carried out to assess progress against outputs, management and coordination aspects, and recommend necessary adjustments for the 2nd half of programme implementation (2019-2020) as well as recommendations for strategically positioning the programme beyond 2020.

¹ Mid Term Reviews of these strategic frameworks have been undertaken / have started in 2018.

UNICEF, as the Convening and Administrative Agent of the UN Joint Programme, is seeking qualified consultants to undertake the MTR. The MTR is scheduled for March-April 2019.

2. Purpose of the assignment

The main objectives of the MTR are to:

1. assess programme design, objectives, implementation strategy, and governance and management arrangements in light of changes in context
2. take stock of progress, challenges and opportunities
3. verify the continued relevance of the programme and the sustainability of its results
4. make recommendations on how to improve programme performance, identify areas which require specific attention to achieve expected results and identify strategic elements of joint programme support beyond 2020

3. Work assignment

The MTR will cover the following areas:

1. analysis of the context and environment for programme implementation
2. programme design and results framework
3. programme governance, management and coordination
4. implementation of programme activities (quantity, quality and utility)
5. progress towards achievement of programme results (outputs, outcomes)

The MTR will be based on the following assessment criteria: Strategic Relevance & Added Value, Effectiveness, Organization & Efficiency, and Sustainability. Review questions, developed on the basis of these criteria, will guide the review process.

Programme context

The current RMNCH Strategy and Action Plan was developed in 2015 and launched in 2016. The Strategy covers 10 years (2016-2025) and includes a 5-year Action Plan (2016-2020). The Mid Term Review of the RMNCH Strategy and Action Plan will be carried out in 2019 and feeds into the development of the 9th Health Sector Development Plan.

The MTR of the UNJP will be carried out in alignment with the MTR of the national RMNCH Strategy and Action Plan. The UNJP MTR shall elicit the risks and opportunities for successful implementation of the UNJP as it supports the implementation of this national strategic framework. The UNJP MTR will consider the findings of the recent MTR of the 4th Indicative Cooperation Programme between Lao PDR and Luxembourg (2016-2020). Also, the UNJP MTR will examine linkages with the UNPF and Delivering as One strategy in Lao PDR and opportunities for improved synergies with joint UN planning and reporting processes taking place within the context of UNPF structures.

Programme design

The MTR will assess the logic of the various components of the UNJP results framework; the coherence and cohesion of the various activities under the respective outputs; the statement/language of outputs, outcomes and the related indicators and targets; the validity of the assumptions/risks and premises that formed the basis for the design and implementation of the programme to determine their appropriateness and continued relevance.

Programme governance, management and coordination

The MTR will assess the governance and management arrangements of the UNJP, its functions and performance in order to determine its adequacy and effectiveness. The MTR will look at the

leadership for strategic direction, the extent to which activities and resources are effectively coordinated, the extent to which timely and appropriate decisions are being made to support effective implementation, monitoring and reporting mechanisms to determine their relevance and compatibility with provisions, objectives and activities as designed. Specifically, the MTR will assess the readiness of national RMNCH coordination structures to absorb UNJP governance arrangements with the aim of further reducing the administrative burden on national counterparts. The UNJP MTR will also review the coordination with other Luxembourg-funded projects/programmes and identify further entry points for synergies.

Programme implementation

The implementation of programme activities will be reviewed to take stock of the quantity and quality of progress made towards achievement of results, compare them with planned activities and ascertain the likelihood of the programme achieving its objectives/results. The MTR will examine the UNJP's instruments for activity planning and monitoring. These will include but will not be limited to annual work plans and budgets, annual progress and financial reports, and will also assess information management and reporting and the extent to which key stakeholders are adequately informed of programme activities. The MTR will examine the adequacy of inputs for the delivery of programme outputs and the timelines of the delivery of such inputs. The inputs will include financial support, technical assistance, and other material inputs for capacity development. With regard to financing, the MTR will compare the budget with actual disbursements, timeliness of disbursement of funds, and implementing partners' capacity to ensure timely delivery of results.

Programme results: outputs, outcomes and sustainability

The MTR will assess the programme's overall outputs and will assess quantity and quality of the outputs produced with what was planned. The review will also assess progress made towards achievement of outputs in comparison to the milestones as defined in the programme results framework. Based on these assessments, specific constraints and opportunities will be identified and specific recommendations will be made on how to improve programme performance and sustainability.

4. Roles, responsibilities and tasks

The MTR of the UNJP will consist of a document review, key informant interviews at central and sub-national level, field visits, discussions with direct and indirect beneficiaries of the programme and a participatory review with UNJP staff of the programme results framework.

UNICEF

UNICEF, as Convening and Administrative Agent of the UNJP, will be responsible for the effective coordination of the MTR, incl. the recruitment and supervision of consultants, the provision of documents to be reviewed as well as a mapping of partners and stakeholders to inform the review process.

UNJP Technical Team

The UNJP Technical Team, which consists of the UNJP Technical Focal Points from the 3 participating UN organizations and the UNJP Coordinator, will be responsible for providing guidance and feedback on the implementation and deliverables of the MTR. Throughout the MTR, the UNJP TT will meet regularly with the consultants. UNJP TT members will be expected to:

- contribute to the formulation of review questions
- facilitate access to information
- review and provide comments on the main deliverables of the MTR

- facilitate the incorporation of MTR findings, conclusions and recommendations into programme plans and implementation

Reference Group

A Reference Group will provide overall oversight and guidance to the MTR. The Reference Group will consist of the Heads of Agencies of the participating UN organizations, Ministry of Health members of the existing Joint MoH/UN UNJP Management Team and a representative of the Embassy of Luxembourg. The Reference Group will approve the Terms of References for the MTR and the consultants' selection process and review/provide feedback on the draft and final reports.

Consultant

For the purpose of the MTR, a team of two short-term consultants will be recruited: one international consultant and one national consultant. The responsibilities and tasks of the international consultant are outlined below. The responsibilities and tasks of the national consultant are outlined in separate Terms of Reference:

1. Prepare an inception report that should include but not be limited to: interpretation of the Terms of Reference, a list of review questions in line with the key assessment criteria outlined in section 3, a detailed work plan incl. the proposed data collection methodology and tools. Present the inception report to the UNJP Technical Team and incorporate feedback received.
2. Conduct a document review, incl. relevant policies, strategies, action plans, work plans, reports, studies and other relevant documents to inform the review.
3. Based on agreed review questions, conduct a participatory review process incl.:
 - meetings with representatives of participating UN organizations, the Ministry of Health, Provincial and District Health Offices in UNJP focus provinces and key development partners in line with the stakeholder mapping provided
 - field visits to 3 UNJP focus provinces
 - a participatory review with UNJP staff of the UNJP results framework
 - the collection of lessons learned to date through UN Joint Programme implementation
4. Prepare an updated UNJP results framework and a specific document describing lessons learned so far from modelling. Present these draft deliverables to the UNJP Technical Team and incorporate feedback received.
5. Prepare a draft report with preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations and validate with the UNJP Technical Team and Reference Group. Feedback received is expected to feed into the development of the final report.
6. Prepare a final report according to the following proposed format:
 - Executive summary
 - Introduction and background, including the objectives of the MTR and the methodology and process followed
 - Major findings (results achieved, constraints, lessons learned)

- Lessons from implementation, context and theories for achieving related results that can inform future strategy and programming
- Conclusions
- Recommendations for the programme in 2019-2020 and beyond
- Annexes, incl. terms of reference, assessment questions and data collection tools, documents reviewed, list of stakeholders/partners consulted

5. Expected deliverables

The international consultant is expected to submit the following deliverables (in English):

1. Inception report with detailed work-plan
2. Updated results framework for the UNJP phase 2
3. Document presenting key lessons learned to date from modelling
4. Draft report and PowerPoint presentation with preliminary findings and recommendations
5. Final report according to the suggested format

6. Timeline for submission of deliverables

The international consultant will be engaged for a total of 30 working days in the period March – April 2019. The proposed schedule for submission of deliverables is as follows:

No.	Deliverable	Timeline ²	Payment (USD) ³
1	Inception report with detailed work-plan	Draft: after 5 working days Final: 3 working days after UNJP TT feedback	10%
2	Updated results framework for UNJP phase 2	Draft: after 15 working days Final: 3 working days after UNJP TT feedback	15%
3	Document with lessons learned to date from modelling	Draft: after 15 working days Final: 3 working days after UNJP TT feedback	15%
4	Draft report and PowerPoint presentation with preliminary findings and recommendations	After completion of 18 working days	20%
5	Final report	Draft: after 25 working days Final: 3 working days after feedback from Reference Group	40%
			100%

7. Qualifications of successful candidate

Education

Advanced university degree in Public Health, Social Sciences, or other related area.

² These are tentative dates, to be confirmed with selected consultant.

³ Consulting fee to be agreed at contracting stage.

Professional experience

- At least 10 years of relevant work experience in the design, management and evaluation of reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health programmes in developing country contexts
- At least 7 years of experience with conducting research using different methodologies and tools, especially participatory processes

Other qualifications

- Familiarity with the UN system, including the participating UN organizations
- Familiarity with UN Joint Programming
- Knowledge of the Lao PDR political and social context, policy and legal frameworks and health sector
- Excellent analytical and communication skills
- Fluency and excellent command of written and spoken English

8. Contract supervision

The consultant will be supervised by the UN Joint Programme Coordinator, Health and Nutrition Section, UNICEF Lao PDR.