

United Nations Children's Fund

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS

Title:	Funding Code:	Type of engagement:	Duty Station:
Individual international Consultancy for Cost of child Marriage study	SC240342	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International Consultant (individual) <input type="checkbox"/> National Consultant (individual) <input type="checkbox"/> Low-Value Contract (individual consultant)	Vientiane Laos

Purpose of Activity/Assignment:

Laos has one of the highest child marriage rates in the region. According to the recent Lao social indicator survey report 2023, despite a two-percentile decline from 2017, it remains high at 30.5%, with some provinces (Phongsaly, Borikhamxay and Sekong are among the provinces with the highest child marriage rates above the National average. According to a regional study, the main drivers of child marriage in Laos are school dropout, poverty, social and cultural norms, lack of adequate infrastructure to support girls, and... thus impacting Human capital development.

Addressing child marriage remains a critical challenge in global policy, as it represents a significant human rights violation. This study, therefore, aims to research the economic burden of child marriage in Lao PDR, looking at Spotlight provinces of Phongsaly, Borikhamxay and Sekong. This study is expected to provide data to understand the consequences of child marriage on the girl child, her family, and society, including, for example, the loss of current and future productivity, long-term cost of rehabilitation, and impact on educational and health and nutrition outcomes, Labour force participation, fertility, population growth, child survival and mortality, women's agency, and gender-based violence. The study's findings and recommendations will help position child marriage as a public policy issue, looking at its social and economic implications, especially in Human capital development, economic growth and post-LDC graduation.

In addition, the study will examine the comprehensive cost to the economy and social development using a robust, globally recommended microsimulation modelling methodology and child marriage framework.

Scope of Work:

The study will focus on the following four key areas:

1. Review available Policies, laws, strategies and plans, reports of existing studies, official projects of stakeholders, organisations and government agencies, line ministries papers and Lao Social Indicator Surveys (LSIS) for child marriage to understand the landscape of the subject matter.
2. Design an economic model to understand the financial and economic cost of child marriage, considering the added impact of the pandemic—macroeconomic shocks and school closures.
3. Building evidence on the economic impact of child marriage at the national, household and girls' levels at health, nutrition, education, gender-based violence and other CP-related issues.
4. Cost of Inaction—This economic analysis will assess the financial and economic cost of not addressing child marriage. It will highlight the economic benefits of ending child marriage and explore alternative practices that could enhance livelihoods and stimulate economic growth. In addition, propose actionable recommendations to reduce child marriage incidence.

In conducting this assignment, the consultant will engage with all relevant government ministries and departments responsible for implementing programmes that address the practice of child marriage through the technical working group coordinated by the Lao Academy for Social and Economic Science (LASES) both at the National and at the selected provinces of Phongsaly, Borikhamxay and Sekong. The stakeholders will include education ministers, health, finance, social welfare, culture and justice, the Lao Women's Union (LWU), the National Commission on the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children (NCAWMC), the Lao Front for National Development (LFND), Provincial and National Assembly. And will conduct a systematic review of relevant documents and past surveys, including the 2019 Violence Against Children (VAC) survey and the recent Lao Social Indicator Survey round three (LSIS III) data, drivers of child marriage study in Laos and regional study on understanding the pathways to adolescent pregnancy in Southeast Asia and existing child marriage related policies, plans, and budgets. The study will also involve a desk review of pertinent literature on the issue, including previous evaluations, Standard Operating Procedures, legal framework relating to legal

aid and access to justice costs, policy documents relating to child protection system, including the social service workforce, etc.

The consultancy will work under the technical guidance of the Social Policy Specialist and Child protection specialist, with the overall supervision of the Chief Social Policy.

Methodology

- **Inception Report and Workplan**
 - a. Develop and submit an inception report outlining the study's objectives, scope, and methodology.
 - b. Create a detailed work plan specifying the costing study's timelines, milestones, and key deliverables.
- **Literature Review**
 - c. Conduct a comprehensive desk review of existing literature and documents related to child marriage.
 - d. Review relevant materials, including end-child marriage plans, legal frameworks, strategy documents, National Plans of Action, and sectoral development plans, to identify critical issues and data gaps.
- **Burden Assessment**
 - e. Utilize regression analysis and Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALY) to assess the health outcomes and overall burden of child marriage on girls and their children.
 - f. Quantify the direct and indirect health impacts of child marriage using these analytical tools.
 - g. Conduct focused group discussions and gather information from selected districts in the two provinces of Phongsaly, Borikhamxay and Sekong .
- **Cost Analysis**
 - h. Analyze the costs associated with child marriage across various sectors, including:
 - i. **Education:** Impact on educational attainment, skills, and related expenses (loss of human capital).
 - ii. **Health:** Increased costs of health care outcomes and services for individual child mothers and households caring for them.
 - iii. **Child protection and Welfare:** Financial implications for child protection and welfare services.
 - iv. **Labour Participation:** Effects on employment and productivity and earnings.
 - v. **Gender-Based Violence:** Costs related to violence and support services.
 - vi. **Criminal Justice:** Expenses related to legal and judicial processes.
- Review and evaluate these costs at the levels of girls, families, communities, selected provinces, and the national level.
 - Analyse the benefits of ending child marriages.
- Propose actionable recommendations in the report and policy briefs to reduce child marriage incidence and thus reduce the financial and economic costs on girls, themselves, society, and the economy.

Child Safeguarding

Is this project/assignment considered an “[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 immediate 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: 2024	Requesting Section/Issuing Office: <i>Social Policy/ Vientiane Laos</i>	Reasons why consultancy cannot be done by staff: <i>Specialized Public Finance skills</i>
Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 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 Single Source Selection <input type="checkbox"/> (Emergency - Director's approval)		Request for: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New SSA – Individual Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Extension/ Amendment
If Extension, Justification for extension:		
Supervisor: Chief of Social Policy	Start Date: October 15 2024	End Date: April 2025 Total duration: Three months spread across six months.

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline
Develop and submit an inception report outlining the study's objectives, scope, and methodology and specify timelines and deliverables	Inception Report and Workplan delivered	Two weeks after signing the contract, the first week in October 2024
Draft report on the cost of child marriage, including literature review shared with UNICEF and Technical working group for comments	Draft a report on the cost of child marriage available for contributions by stakeholders.	Second week in December 2024
Final report on the cost of child marriage and the designed economic model for understanding the impact of child marriage, and policy briefs for political and legislative advocacy.	A final report on the cost of child marriage, including six issues and policy briefs, is available for dissemination.	Third week in February 2025

Estimated Consultancy fee		
Professional fee		
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 type="checkbox"/> Bachelors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter Disciplines: Advanced degree in finance, economics, business administration and related fields. • Strong Microsimulation modelling techniques. • Proven track record in delivering high-level expert advice, technical support, and capacity development to governments on Public Financial Management and broader sustainable development financing issues; specific experience in child-related social sectors will be an asset. • Skills in developing policy briefs • Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English. • Ability to work in a team and a diverse work environment. • Familiarity with child marriage challenges. 	<p>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least ten years of experience and long-standing expertise in similar services • Enter Disciplines: Advanced degree in finance, economics, business administration and related fields. • Strong Microsimulation modelling techniques. • Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English. • Ability to work in a team and diverse work. • Proven track record in delivering high-level expert advice, technical support, and capacity development to governments on Public Financial Management and broader sustainable development financing issues; specific experience in child-related social sectors will be an asset. • Experience in cost-effectiveness analysis of social sector interventions. • Familiarity with child marriage challenges. • Proven experience in policy processes and undertaking research. • Skills in developing policy briefs 	
<p>Submission of applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. 		
<p>Evaluation Criteria (This will be used for the Selection Report (for clarification, see Guidance))</p> <p>A) Technical Evaluation (minimum 50 points and maximum 80 Points) 80points</p>		

- Track record of conducting microsimulation modelling techniques (30 points)
- Proven track record in delivering high-level expert advice, technical support, and capacity development to governments on Public Financial Management and broader sustainable development financing issues; specific experience in child-related social sectors will be an asset. (30 points)
- Skills in developing policy briefs (20 points)

B) Financial Proposal (minimum 20 points and maximum 50 Points) 20 points

The maximum number of points shall be allotted to the lowest Financial Proposal that is opened /evaluated and compared among those technically qualified candidates who have attained a minimum (60 points) 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.

Administrative details:

Visa assistance required:

Home Based Office Based:

If office-based seating arrangement is identified:

IT and Communication equipment required:

Internet access required:

¹ The costs indicated are estimated. The 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.

Professional fees will be paid based on the submission of agreed-upon deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment if the deliverables submitted are not up to the required standard or if the consultant delays submitting them.

Text to be added to all TORs:

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 consultant is solely responsible for ensuring 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 consultants 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. The vaccine mandate, 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.
