

TERMS OF REFERENCE

SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

Consultant to undertake comprehensive dietary intake assessment in Cooks Island and Niue

BACKGROUND

The Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs) face a triple burden of malnutrition. Overweight and obesity rates are increasing across all population groups (children and adults), while undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies continue to persist.

Sub-optimal diets are conceptually the main key immediate driver for malnutrition in all its forms including overweight and obesity. In Cooks Island, obesity and associated non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are a significant public health concern. The 2011 Stepwise Approach to Surveillance of Risk Factors for NCDs (STEPS) survey found that 87.1 and 65.7 per cent of the female adult population aged 25-64 were overweight and obese respectively. Furthermore, more than half of the children between 5-19 years are obese.

Similarly, in Niue, obesity and associated non-communicable diseases are a significant public health concern for the adult population. The 2011 STEPS survey found that 86.6 per cent of females aged 15-64 were overweight, of which 62.7 per cent were obese. Data on obesity prevalence in children are limited; however, existing evidence suggests Niue has the second highest obesity prevalence rate among school children in the PICTs group (UNICEF, 2017).

Both Cooks Island and Niue are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change on food and nutrition security, directly through its effects on agriculture and fisheries, and indirectly by contributing to underlying risk factors such as water insecurity, dependency on imported foods, urbanization and migration, and service disruption. However, there is lack of reliable data to show the full picture of the dietary patterns in these countries, including the specific deficiencies or excesses in the diet.

Studies and evaluation of nutrition programs across the globe consistently show that tailored nutrition counselling addressing the gaps or excesses in the prevailing dietary intake patterns as well as addressing interpersonal or community socio-cultural barriers, is more effective in improving dietary quality and long-term health markers than generalized counselling or nutrition education. Additionally dietary patterns are influenced by broader food access issues shaped by socio-cultural norms, market prices, regulations and climate.

UNICEF emphasizes the need for national dietary guidance to be tailored to local food contexts. Furthermore nutrition-related social behaviour change communication should specifically address deficiencies in prevailing dietary patterns as well as socio-cultural barriers. Ensuring that food-related policies and regulatory acts are up to date to address barriers to accessing and utilizing locally available nutritious foods is crucial.

In this context, UNICEF is seeking an individual consultant to conduct a comprehensive dietary intake assessment, including developing context-specific food-based recommendations in Cooks Island and Niue.

OBJECTIVE / SCOPE OF WORK

The objective of this consultancy is to conduct a comprehensive dietary intake assessment, including developing context-specific food-based recommendations in Cooks Island and Niue. The findings of the assessment are expected to contribute to revising dietary guidelines with meal plans, context-relevant nutrition education counselling content, Social Behavior Change (SBC) interventions as well as inform necessary policy revisions in the long run.

The assignment includes:

1- Quantified dietary intake assessment

- Mapping of locally available food (Local food basket)
 - Undertake a thorough mapping of locally available food (local food basket) in the selected areas of the assignment considering cultural diversity/indigenous dietary patterns, variations in food availability, including foods acquired through purchase.
 - Document the types of food commonly consumed according to the variations across different seasons, locations, and common source (purchase or direct farm produce or household grown)
 - Document pricing/costing of the mapped foods
- Undertake data collection for quantified dietary intakes assessment
 - Undertake required preparations to enable data collection for quantified dietary intake assessment of maternal, and young children's diets.
 - Collect 24-hr recall data and manage all processes required for the data collection
 - Quality-assure collected data and enter it into a relevant data entry software
- Support the analysis of the quantified intakes and the development of recommended dietary modifications for optimal dietary intakes
 - Provide support towards the analysis of the collected data to determine adequacy of nutrient intakes for optimal intakes.
 - Provide support towards the modelling of food-based recommendations including facilitating any feedback sessions with stakeholders.

2- Local recipe modifications

- In liaison with relevant local stakeholders, collect data on common food preparations methods; compile a comprehensive list of local recipes including indigenous recipes.
- Collect data on common dietary practices/habits, food culture norms
- Review the nutritional value of the recipes and in consideration of the results which will come from the analysis of the dietary intakes data and modelling; recommend recipes for further modelling for optimal dietary intakes.
- Pre-test the draft modified recipes and meals plans, and provide feedback for any revisions
- Finalize the development of a week's set of potential full-day meal and snack plans incorporating the modified recipes; for different groups (young children, pregnant or lactating women, adolescents)

3- Review / Updating of existing social behavioral change communication (SBCC) materials and Nutrition-related Guidelines

- Take inventory of the existing SBCC materials and nutrition-related guidelines
- Provide technical support in the review of SBCC materials and nutrition-related guidelines based on the results which would have emerged from the dietary intakes assessment exercise and identify areas for revision.
- Undertake the content modifications (revisions) of the SBCC materials and nutrition-related guidelines.

ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES, PLUS BUDGET PER DELIVERABLE			
ACTIVITY	DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE (Cooks & Niue)	PAYMENT
<p>Inception Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a concise and brief inception report, summarizing the methodology tailored to the local context and work plan. Consult with Cooks and Niue Ministries of Health, UNICEF and other relevant stakeholders, and finalize methodology and work plans. • In addition, prepare a detailed research protocol explaining in detail the methodology for quantified dietary intakes through the 24-hr recalls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception report summarizing approved methodology and workplan for the assignment • Research protocol for data collection on quantified dietary intakes 		
<p>Quantified dietary intake assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a food basket mapping including collecting data on costs, as outlined in the “Objective/Scope of Work” section • Conduct data collection (followed by entry) of quantified dietary intakes as outlined in the “Objective/Scope of Work” section. • Provide ad-hoc support for analysis of quantified intakes and development of recommended dietary modifications for optimal intakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief report on the Food basket mapping report (draft) including Food Lists (for use in the preparations for the 24-hr recall data collection); • Cleaned data sets; • Additional inputs toward analysis and development of food-based recommendations, as required 		
<p>Local recipe modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile local recipes (and other related data) and review for modelling as outlined in the “Objective/Scope of Work” section. • Pre-test the draft modified recipes which incorporate the developed food-based recommendations • Finalize the development of a week’s set of potential full-day meal plans for different groups outlined in the “Objective/Scope of Work” section. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compilation of all local recipes • A brief report on dietary practices/food culture norms • Finalized set of full-day meal plans for different age groups 		

Review of SBCC materials and dietary guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing nutrition SBCC materials and nutrition-related guidelines and make recommended revision and/or propose sketch of new materials in line with the newly developed food-based recommendations as above. 	Brief on existing material review with suggested amendments and sketch of new materials		
Consolidate all the reports emanating from this assignment into the overall Final Dietary Intake Assessment Report	Final merged report, Power point slide deck, final cleaned data files <i>NB Data use from the exercise for publication will be guided by UNICEF</i>		
<i>NB: Above deliverables will be delivered for each country; Time covers both Cooks& Niue</i>			
Total			

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE, AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES

Bachelors Masters PhD Other

Education:

An advanced University degree in Nutrition, Food Science, Dietetics, Public Health, or other relevant disciplines, a PhD will be an added advantage

Experience:

- A minimum of 5 years of professional experience in nutrition related work
- Experience in conceptualizing, designing and implementing dietary intake assessments and linear programming-based analyses for developing food-based recommendations.
- Work experience serving in a developing country is required. Work experience in the Pacific Islands region is an asset.
- Experience working in UNICEF or a UN system agency is an asset.

Skills:

- Able to work effectively with people internal and external parties
- Communicates clearly and concisely
- Excellent analytical and conceptual skills
- Demonstrated ability to produce high-quality analytical reports
- Proficiency in various analytical applications for Nutrition, OptiFood, or any Linear Programming software.
- Proven ability to work independently under difficult conditions

Language:

- Fluency in English is required, and knowledge of a local language would be an asset.

CONDITIONS OF WORK AND CLARIFICATION ON SUPERVISION

Management, Organization, and Timeframe:

The consultant is expected to work remotely with 2 in-country field missions to Cook Islands and Niue (8 weeks each), making the total of 4-month work on the ground out of 6-month contract period. All costs related to the work will be included in the financial proposal and subsequent contract. Overall monitoring and supervision will be provided by Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF Pacific Multi-Country Office.

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 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 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, program 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 afterward 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 the offer and before the signature of the contract.
- Deliverables that require payment within less than 30 days should be lumped together for ease of transaction.

The below is to be included in the advert.

NOTE FOR CONSULTANTS:

Please submit a **separate financial offer** along with your application and **technical proposal**. The financial proposal should be a **lump sum amount for all the deliverables** but should show a break down for the following:

- Daily fees– based on the deliverables in the Terms of Reference
- Travel (economy air ticket where applicable to take up assignment if in country support is required, as well as any in country travel)
- Living allowance for international consultant that will need to relocate to the countries (Cooks, Niue) , for the duration of in-country assignment
- Costs and purchases to be incurred to execute the assessment/data collection in the countries in question
- Miscellaneous- to cover visa, health insurance (including medical evacuation for international consultants), communications, and other costs.