

TERMS OF REFERENCE

SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

Nutrition governance (institutional framework) consultant for Republic of Marshall Islands and Tonga

BACKGROUND

Surveys conducted in the Pacific Island Countries, including Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) and Kingdom of Tonga, over the past five years consistently show alarming rates of various forms of malnutrition among both children and adults. In RMI, one in every three children under five years of age are stunted. Nearly 5% of children in the same age group are overweight and another 4% are wasted. Over a third of women of reproductive age, and close to a similar proportion of children are anaemic. In Tonga, nearly six in every ten children and adolescents (5-19 years) are overweight and obese. Additionally, over a third of the children have been reported to be anaemic.

Sub-optimal diets are considered as the main key immediate driver for malnutrition in all its forms. Poor nutrition is a crucial risk factor for non-communicable diseases (NCDs). In both RMI and Tonga, NCDs are the leading cause of mortality and take up a significant proportion of the health expenditure. Overall, purchases from imported items are the main source of food access followed by small-scale agricultural production. Households in the lowest socio-economic quartile have the lowest food expenditure which is mostly on unhealthy foods as these are less expensive.

In order to address the multi-faceted burden of malnutrition in RMI, the government has undertaken several steps. In 2021, the government launched the Early Childhood Development policy. In 2022 a multisectoral framework of High Impact Nutrition Interventions (m-HINI) for RMI was launched with a proposed governance structure with the Ministry of health (MoH) as chair of the national nutrition multisectoral technical working group which hosts the m-HINI framework. In addition to this role, the MoH has the mandate to offer preventive and curative nutrition specific services, thus its capacity to carry out this role determines in long run the quality and scale of public nutrition services both in health and other sectors. Currently the institutional framework for delivery of nutrition services is yet to be defined in RMI.

In Tonga as the first Pacific country to release a national NCD strategy in 2004, the public health efforts have progressed well, notably with the promotion of physical activities and tobacco cessation/control. However, nutrition services at primary health care level, other sectors and in the communities are not well supported partly due to the constraints related to institutional set up. In Tonga, the MoH is the ministry expected to offer technical support in the delivery of nutrition services within health and other social services sectors such as agriculture, trade as well as social assistance.

In this context, UNICEF seeks a consultant to provide technical assistance for MoHs in RMI and Tonga to review the existing institutional framework and capacity to deliver, coordinate or steer nutrition services across different sectors and in communities; and recommend an organisational / human resource structure for optimal delivery of nutrition services.

OBJECTIVE / SCOPE OF WORK

The objective of this consultancy is to recommend: i) an evidence-based, context-specific, and fit-for-purpose institutional set-up / structure within MoHs in RMI and Tonga, which will allow optimal delivery of nutrition services through health systems and effective coordination of nutrition interventions across sectors; and ii) nutrition human resource capacity needed in other Ministries to deliver in full, required multisectoral interventions for nutrition.

Specifically, the assignment includes:

- 1- Undertake a desk review of organizational structures of public institutions (MoH, other line ministries and government institutions) for delivery of nutrition services in different countries, including the Oceania / Asian region, and identify good practices relevant to RMI and Tonga context.
- 2- Review the current organizational structures and institutional capacity in MoH, other line ministries and government institutions in RMI and Tonga against the country's public nutrition needs, challenges as well as expected roles of each agency in delivery and coordination of nutrition services, as well as civil service regulations.
- 3- Recommend a fit-for-purpose, context-specific organizational set-up with human resource prototype for a unit/department/division (including graded positions) under the MoH to deliver the required nutrition-specific services and coordinate multi-sectoral nutrition-sensitive interventions for each country. In consultation with MoH, recommend the same for nutrition positions in other relevant line ministries and government institutions (e.g., Agriculture, Education, Commerce/trade, and social protection & any other relevant government institution depending on the context) to ensure delivery of nutrition sensitive interventions in respective sectors.
- 4- Estimate the annual cost of the implementation of above recommendations
- 5- Develop a roadmap for gradually operationalizing the recommended institutional set-up in phases, taking into account the priority nutrition interventions and the existing in-country human resource capacity and the need for short-term measures (engagement of consultants / expatriates, task shifting, etc.) and long-term measures (workforce production through pre-service and in-service education and overseas partnership arrangement, etc.).

ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES, PLUS BUDGET PER DELIVERABLE			
ACTIVITY	DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE	PAYMENT
<p>Conduct a desk review of organizational structures of public institutions (MoH, other relevant line ministries and government institutions) for delivery of nutrition services elsewhere (including Oceania/Asia) and identify best practices relevant to RMI and Tonga context.</p> <p>Propose the approach for conducting the institutional capacity assessment and developing the fit-for-purpose organizational structure in RMI and Tonga, with a work plan.</p> <p>Summarize the desk review findings and proposed approach to this assignment with workplan in the inception report.</p>	Inception report outlining the desk review findings, and approach for the assignment	6 days	15%
<p>Review the current organizational structures and institutional capacity in MoH, other relevant line ministries and government institutions in RMI and Tonga, as well as the respective country's civil service regulations / structures in light of relevant specific & sensitive nutrition services.</p> <p>Map out the capacity required for MoH and other agencies against the expected roles of respective agency in delivery and coordination of the required nutrition services.</p>	Report outlining the institutional gap analysis findings in RMI and Tonga, respectively	18 days	25%

This will involve document review and analysis and stakeholder consultation.			
<p>Following extensive consultation with MoH and other stakeholders, make recommendation for a fit-for-purpose, context-specific organizational set-up with human resource prototype for a unit/department/division (including graded positions) under the MoH to delivery nutrition-specific services and coordinate multi-sectoral nutrition-sensitive interventions for each country.</p> <p>Recommend the same for nutrition positions in other relevant line ministries and government institutions (e.g., Agriculture, Education, Commerce/trade, and social protection) to ensure delivery of needed nutrition sensitive interventions in respective sectors.</p>	A brief report summarizing the recommendations for RMI and Tonga, respectively		
<p>Develop a road map for gradually operationalizing the recommended institutional set-up in phases, taking into account the nutrition programme priorities and the existing in-country human resource capacity.</p> <p>This should outline how the institutional set-up should transition over time, short-term and longer-term measures to allow a smooth transition.</p>	Realistic roadmaps for phased operationalization of recommended institutional set-up for RMI and Tonga, respectively.		
Estimate the annual cost of the implementation of above recommendations	Final reports summarizing all the above along with costing information for RMI and Tonga, respectively.		
Total			

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE, AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES

Bachelors Masters PhD Other

Education:

An advanced University degree in Nutrition, Dietetics, or Public Health, Organisational Development, Public policy, Governance, or other related disciplines is required. A PhD would be an added advantage.

Experience:

- A minimum of 10 years of professional experience in nutrition programming, including at policy level is required.
- Experience with nutrition governance review, organizational review, public sector reform, and institutional strengthening work is required.
- Experience in working with government institutions is required.
- Work experience in the Oceania / Asian region, particularly in the Pacific is an asset.

Skills:

- Ability to work effectively with people
- Clear and concise communication
- Excellent analytical and conceptual skills
- Proven ability to work independently under difficult conditions

Knowledge:

- Government systems, Nutrition service delivery

Language:

- Fluency in English is required.

CONDITIONS OF WORK AND CLARIFICATION ON SUPERVISION**Management, Organization, and Timeframe:**

The consultant needs to travel to RMI and Tonga (one visit each) to perform most of the assignment which involves extensive stakeholder consultation, while s/he can work remotely at the beginning and end of the assignment. The expected duration of the contract is 4 months. The exercise should be completed in RMI first, and then Tonga. The consultant is expected to spend approximately 50 working days for in-country assignment in 2 countries, while the remaining 14 days worth of work may be completed remotely. All costs related to the work will be included in the financial proposal and subsequent contract. Monitoring and overall supervision will be provided by the Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF Pacific Multi-Country Office, in close collaboration with the Chief of Health and Nutrition. While in RMI, the consultant will report to the UNICEF Maternal Child Health Specialist based in Majuro on a day-to-day basis.

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.

NOTE FOR APPLICANTS:

Please submit a **separate financial offer** along with your application and technical proposal on how the assignment will be conducted. 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 PICTs, for the duration of in-country assignment
- Miscellaneous- to cover visa, health insurance (including medical evacuation for international consultants), communications, and other costs