United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Vientiane, Lao PDR

Individual National Consultancy: Support the Ministry of Education and Sports of Lao PDR in developing online Information Management Systems (MIS), digital learning platform, Khang Panya Lao, and the Fundamental Quality Standards (FQS)

Terms of Reference

1. Background:

The Lao Ministry of Education and Sports' (MoES) Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2021-2025) highlights the criticality of MoES improving its management and the functioning of information, monitoring, and evaluation systems in the education sector. Indeed, a robust information management and M&E system is expected to enable MoES and its partners to identify challenges and investment areas, strengthen its evidence base, and inform programmatic and efficient and effective resource allocation. Improved data management and utilization is key to improved student learning outcomes.

In recognition of this, MoES has committed to strengthening education data quality and the use of disaggregated data at all levels of the education system. In 2019, Lao Education and Sports Management Information System (LESMIS) Supervising Committee affirmed the need for a fully online integrated LESMIS that links disparate MoES databases (EMIS, FMIS, TEMIS, PMIS, TVET-MIS, LUMIS, PBMIS). Not only does LESMIS enable enhancement of data verification and utilization processes, but it also promises to alleviate the burden of reporting at the provincial, district and school levels by minimising overlapping information requests in different formats. In response to the ESSDP, LESMIS thereby allows for an improved, more efficient data management system for strengthened M&E.

For this to work well, however, support is needed not only in the development of the integrated LESMIS platform but also support to the upgrading of other key MoES management information systems, including the MoES accounting system and the MoES Personnel Management Information systems as well as capacity building support to operate these systems. These upgrades are crucial to ensuring these systems work well independently with their respective departments but also that key data required by MoES can be exchanged across different information systems within the ministry. Work on this is well underway but support is needed to help ensure the finalization of LESMIS and key information system upgrades and capacity building support is provided.

While UNICEF continues to support MoES in this area, the COVID pandemic has demonstrated that crucial digital upskilling is required not only within MoES but across the entire education system; when school closed rapidly due to lockdown, hundreds of thousands of children were left without access to learning. As one key solution, UNICEF supported MoES to establish its first ever national digital learning platform, Khang Panya Lao, which provides children and teachers with access to all official curriculum textbooks and as well as a vast suite of local and international learning resources so that they could continue learning from home. Much support is required, however, to not only ensure all children and teachers can access the platform from any location, but also that they have mastered basic digital literacy skills required for their ongoing learning, professional development and future employment. UNICEF is continuing to support MoES in developing the Khang Panya Lao platform, including incorporation of more interactive features, the additional of learning resources in Lao language and ongoing trainings for teachers and students in digital literacy and in how to use the platform both within classrooms and at home.

Simultaneously, UNICEF is supporting MoES in the implementation of Fundamental Quality Standards (FQS) for all schools at primary and pre-primary levels. These standards define what schools in Laos should aim to achieve to ensure improved student learning outcomes. FQS are used for school selfassessment and development planning so that schools can identify good practices and areas for improvement to be included in their school development plan. With the support of UNICEF, the FQS approach will be trialled in 2022, including the incorporation of a blended learning course on FQS-based School Development Planning for district education officials and schools. Technical support is needed in the finalization of this blended learning course and well as in the IT and technology provided to MoES and to schools to support its roll out.

2. Purpose:

Under the supervision of the UNICEF Education Manager in Lao PDR and in close coordination with key MoES departments including the Education and Sports Statistic Center (ESSC), the Department of Planning, the Department of Organization and Personnel, the Department of Finance, the ICT Centre and the Department of Legislation and Education Quality Assurance, an individual national consultant is required to help provide key IT and communications support in the ongoing work to strengthen LESMIS and other information systems (Accounting and PMIS) as well as support the ongoing roll out of Khang Panya Lao and FQS implementation.

3. Work Assignments:

The consultant is expected to provide the following services as part of their work assignment:

1. Provide technical support in development of the Ministry of Education's LESMIS platform as well as ongoing capacity building support to Ministry colleagues in operating and maintaining the platform.
2. Provide technical support in the development of the online Personnel Management Information System (PMIS) PMIS including capacity building support to MoES counterparts in operating and maintaining the platform.
3. Provide technical support in the development of the Ministry's Accounting System including capacity building support to MoES counterparts in operating and maintaining the platform.
4. Support MoES and UNICEF in the deployment of the Khang Panya Lao platform, including technical and IT support to the platform and key platform users, the curation of content and communications support to help promote the platform. The consultant will be required to help develop promotional and instructional materials including videos to promote the platform and participate in and actively support Khang Panya Lao and digital learning trainings and orientations.
5. Provide technical support to MoES, UNICEF and partners in the implementation of FQS-based school development planning. This includes IT and communications support in the development of an FQS blended learning course including development and finalization of videos, posters and other key digital content included in this course. The consultant will also be required to support the testing and implementation of FQS including support to the provision of technology and IT devices to districts and schools.
6. Provide communications support to the education team, including in graphic design and video and media production. This includes producing instructional guides, posters videos and other visual materials linked to LESMIS, PMIS and the MoES accounting system, Khang Panya Lao and FQS.
7. Provide ongoing IT support to MoES and UNICEF in the trialling and roll out of technology at provincial, district and school levels, particularly the use of tablets, TVs, projectors and technology to support remote access to digital learning, including device hubs and solar-powered backpacks. This IT support is linked to the management information systems, Khang Panya Lao

and FQS and includes coordination of an internal database on the distribution of devices across the country as well as maintaining, installation and upgrading of hardware.

8. Identify and support building of new partnerships including with the private sector in the expansion of digital learning in Lao PDR.
9. Provide technical inputs to MoES and UNICEF in the development of a national ICT in Education Strategy.
10. Provide inputs and support to UNICEF in the development of donor reports, annual results reporting and other needed updates.

4. Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required:

- Advanced degree in education, information technology, statistics, communication, engineering, or other relevant field. In lieu of a specific academic degree, relevant experience may be considered to meet this requirement.
- At least 5 years of professional work experience in Technology for Development (T4D) and/or information system development, including mobile and web-based applications, with manifested capacity to manage programmes involving many stakeholders. Specific experience on ICT for learning or digital learning is an advantage.
- Experience managing user-driven design processes.
- Experience in digital learning design.
- Technical communication skills in media production and graphic design.
- Proven training and capacity building skills for a range of stakeholders.
- Good technical understanding and familiarity with information management systems.
- Knowledge of at least Teams, SharePoint, GitHub, Trello, Jira other software development and project management tooling a plus.
- 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 and Lao language is a requirement.

5. Location:

The consultant will be stationed at the UNICEF Lao PDR office in Vientiane Capital. However, pending any further COVID-related restrictions, the consultant may also be required to work from home in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

6. Duration:
The duration of this assignment is for 11.5 months.

7. Deliverables:

Deliverables	Timeline

Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to the following areas: 1. Technical inputs provided in development of the MoES **LESMIS, PMIS and the Accounting System** including quality assurance for system testing and deployment . 2. IT and technical support provided to the deployment of the MoES **Khang Panya Lao,** including the curation of content, communications/visibility products and implementation of trainings/orientations. 3. Implementation of **FQS-based school development planning** supported including blended learning course development and other key digital content required. Support provided to the testing and implementation of FQS. 4. **Communications support** provided to the education team, including in graphic design and video and media production. 5. **IT support** to MoES and UNICEF provided including in the roll out and maintenance of technology at provincial, district and school levels, particularly the use of tablets, TVs, projectors and technology to support remote access to digital learning. 6. Key **additional support** linked to above initiatives provided including in development of donor reports, annual results reporting and other needed updates.	By 30 September, 2022
Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to the following areas: 1. Technical inputs provided in developed of **LESMIS, PMIS and the Accounting System** including capacity building/trainings support to MoES for system deployment/dissemination training 2. IT and technical support provided to the deployment of **Khang Panya Lao,** including the curation of content, communications/visibility products and implementation of trainings/orientations. 3. Implementation of **FQS-based school development planning** supported including blended learning course development and other key digital content required. Support provided to the testing and implementation of FQS. 4. **Communications support** provided to the education team, including in graphic design and video and media production. 5. **IT support** to MoES and UNICEF provided including in the roll out and maintenance of technology at provincial, district and school levels, particularly the use of tablets, TVs, projectors and technology to support remote access to digital learning. 6. Key **additional support** linked to above initiatives provided including in development of donor reports, annual results reporting and other needed updates.	By 31 October, 2022

Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to the following areas: 1. Technical inputs provided in developed of **LESMIS, PMIS and the Accounting System** including capacity building/trainings support to MoES for system deployment/dissemination training. 2. IT and technical support provided to the deployment of **Khang Panya Lao,** including the curation of content, communications/visibility products and implementation of trainings/orientations. 3. Implementation of **FQS-based school development planning** supported including blended learning course development and other key digital content required. Support provided to the testing and implementation of FQS. 4. **Communications support** provided to the education team, including in graphic design and video and media production. 5. **IT support** to MoES and UNICEF provided including in the roll out and maintenance of technology at provincial, district and school levels, particularly the use of tablets, TVs, projectors and technology to support remote access to digital learning. 6. Key **additional support** linked to above initiatives provided including in development of donor reports, annual results reporting and other needed updates.	By 30th November 2022
Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to the following areas: 1. Technical inputs provided in developed of **LESMIS, PMIS and the Accounting System** including capacity building/trainings for system deployment/dissemination training 2. IT and technical support provided to the deployment of **Khang Panya Lao,** including the curation of content, communications/visibility products and implementation of trainings/orientations. 3. Implementation of **FQS-based school development planning** supported including blended learning course development and other key digital content required. Support provided to the testing and implementation of FQS. 4. **Communications support** provided to the education team, including in graphic design and video and media production. 5. **IT support** to MoES and UNICEF provided including in the roll out and maintenance of technology at provincial, district and school levels, particularly the use of tablets, TVs, projectors and technology to support remote access to digital learning. 6. Key **additional support** linked to above initiatives provided including in development of donor reports, annual results reporting and other needed updates.	By 31st December 2022

Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to the following areas: 1. Technical inputs provided in developed of **LESMIS, PMIS and the Accounting System** including capacity building/trainings support to MoES in mmaintaining and operating the platform. 2. IT and technical support provided to the deployment of **Khang Panya Lao,** including the curation of content, communications/visibility products and implementation of trainings/orientations. 3. Implementation of **FQS-based school development planning** supported including blended learning course development and other key digital content required. Support provided to the testing and implementation of FQS. 4. **Communications support** provided to the education team, including in graphic design and video and media production. 5. **IT support** to MoES and UNICEF provided including in the roll out and maintenance of technology at provincial, district and school levels,	By 31st January 2023

particularly the use of tablets, TVs, projectors and technology to support remote access to digital learning. 6. Key **additional** linked to above initiatives provided including in development of donor reports, annual results reporting and other needed updates.	
Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to the following areas: 1. Technical inputs provided in developed of **LESMIS, PMIS and the Accounting System** including contribution to capacity building/trainings and support to MoES in maintaining and operating the platform. 2. IT and technical support provided to the deployment of **Khang Panya Lao,** including the curation of content, communications/visibility products and implementation of trainings/orientations. 3. Implementation of **FQS-based school development planning** supported including blended learning course development and other key digital content required. Support provided to the testing and implementation of FQS. 4. **Communications support** provided to the education team, including in graphic design and video and media production. 5. **IT support** to MoES and UNICEF provided including in the roll out and maintenance of technology at provincial, district and school levels, particularly the use of tablets, TVs, projectors and technology to support remote access to digital learning. 6. Key **additional IT/communications support** linked to above initiatives provided including in development of donor reports, annual results reporting and other needed updates.	By 28th February 2023

Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to the following areas: 1. Technical inputs provided in development of **LESMIS, PMIS and the Accounting System** including contributing to capacity building/trainings for MoES MIS Core Team in maintaining and operating the platform. 2. IT and technical support provided to the deployment of **Khang Panya Lao,** including the curation of content, communications/visibility products and implementation of trainings/orientations. 3. Implementation of **FQS-based school development planning** supported including blended learning course development and other key digital content required. Support provided to the testing and implementation of FQS. 4. **Communications support** provided to the education team, including in graphic design and video and media production. 5. **IT support** to MoES and UNICEF provided including in the roll out and maintenance of technology at provincial, district and school levels, particularly the use of tablets, TVs, projectors and technology to support remote access to digital learning. 6. Key **additional IT/communications support** linked to above initiatives provided including in development of donor reports, annual results reporting and other needed updates.	By 31st March 2023

Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to the following areas: 1. Technical inputs provided in developed of **LESMIS, PMIS and the Accounting System** including contributing to capacity building/trainings for MoES MIS Core Team in maintaining and operating the platform. 2. IT and technical support provided to the deployment of **Khang Panya Lao,** including the curation of content, communications/visibility products and implementation of trainings/orientations. 3. Implementation of **FQS-based school development planning** supported including blended learning course development and other key digital content required. Support provided to the testing and implementation of FQS. 4. **Communications support** provided to the education team, including in graphic design and video and media production. 5. **IT support** to MoES and UNICEF provided including in the roll out and maintenance of technology at provincial, district and school levels, particularly the use of tablets, TVs, projectors and technology to support remote access to digital learning. 6. Key **additional IT/communications support** linked to above initiatives provided including in development of donor reports, annual results reporting and other needed updates.	By 30th April 2023

Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to the following areas: 1. Technical support of **LESMIS, PMIS and the Accounting System** to MoES is provided to ensure MoES is maintaining and operating the platform. 2. IT and technical support provided to the deployment of **Khang Panya Lao,** including the curation of content, communications/visibility products and implementation of trainings/orientations. 3. Implementation of **FQS-based school development planning** supported including blended learning course development and other key digital content required. Support provided to the testing and implementation of FQS. 4. **Communications support** provided to the education team, including in graphic design and video and media production. 5. **IT support** to MoES and UNICEF provided including in the roll out and maintenance of technology at provincial, district and school levels, particularly the use of tablets, TVs, projectors and technology to support remote access to digital learning. 6. Key **additional IT/communications support** linked to above initiatives provided including in development of donor reports, annual results reporting and other needed updates.	By 31st May 2023
Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to the following areas: 1. Technical support of **LESMIS, PMIS and the Accounting System** provided to MoES in maintaining and operating the platform. 2. IT and technical support provided to the deployment of **Khang Panya Lao,** including the curation of content, communications/visibility products and implementation of trainings/orientations. 3. Implementation of **FQS-based school development planning** supported including blended learning course development and other key digital content required. Support provided to the testing and implementation of FQS. 4. **Communications support** provided to the education team, including in graphic design and video and media production. 5. **IT support** to MoES and UNICEF provided including in the roll out and maintenance of technology at provincial, district and school levels, particularly the use of tablets, TVs, projectors and technology to support remote access to digital learning.	By June 30, 2023
6. Key **additional IT/communications support** linked to above initiatives provided including in development of donor reports, annual results reporting and other needed updates.	

Monthly report indicating specific key results and deliverables linked to the following areas: 1. Technical support for **LESMIS, PMIS and the Accounting System** provided to MoES in maintaining and operating the platform. 2. IT and technical support provided to the deployment of **Khang Panya Lao,** including the curation of content, communications/visibility products and implementation of trainings/orientations. 3. Implementation of **FQS-based school development planning** supported including blended learning course development and other key digital content required. Support provided to the testing and implementation of FQS. 4. **Communications support** provided to the education team, including in graphic design and video and media production. 5. **IT support** to MoES and UNICEF provided including in the roll out and maintenance of technology at provincial, district and school levels, particularly the use of tablets, TVs, projectors and technology to support remote access to digital learning. 6. Key **additional IT/communications support** linked to above initiatives provided including in development of donor reports, annual results reporting and other needed updates.	By 31 July 2023

PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

Payment will be made in accordance with UNICEF financial rules and regulations and based on the deliverables below. The contract will be issued in USD and payment will be made in KIP as per UN exchange rate at the time of payment.

Payment	Conditions
1st payment (end of September 2022)	Monthly work report with the identified key identified results submitted.
2nd payment (end of October 2022)	Monthly work report with the identified key identified results submitted.
3rd payment (end of November 2022)	Monthly work report with the identified key identified results submitted.
4th payment (end of December 2023)	Monthly work report with the identified key identified results submitted.
5th payment (end of January 2023)	Monthly work report with the identified key identified results submitted.
6th payment (end of February 2023)	Monthly work report with the identified key identified results submitted.
7th payment (end of March 2023)	Monthly work report with the identified key identified results submitted.
8th payment (end of April 2023)	Monthly work report with the identified key identified results submitted.
9th payment (end of May 2023)	Monthly work report with the identified key identified results submitted.
10th payment (end of June 2023)	Monthly work report with the identified key identified results submitted.

11th payment (end of July 2023)	Monthly work report with the identified key identified results submitted.

8. Reporting Requirements:

The consultant is expected to submit a monthly report of the specified deliverables with acceptable quality in a timely manner and mention key priorities for the next month.

9. Administrative Issues:

The assignment will be based in the UNICEF Lao PDR office, or at home, based on COVID-related measures enforced by the Lao Government and in line with the UN Business Continuity Plan, with significant amount of time also spent in the Ministry of Education and Sports, when feasible. The consultant will be provided with workspace in the UNICEF Lao PDR office. The consultant is expected to provide his/her own computer for the duration of the assignment.

Frequent field visits may be required and transport will be provided by UNICEF. The DSA for the field trips will be paid according to UNICEF guidelines. The cost will be calculated based on UN rate at the time of travel.

The consultant is required to obtain his/her own health insurance including medical evacuation for the whole duration of the assignment

Copyright of all the deliverables to be produced through this assignment will rest with the MoES and UNICEF.

10. Contract supervisor:

The service provider will be supervised by the UNICEF Education Manager (P4), under the broader supervision of the UNICEF Chief of Education. The consultant will ensure close coordination with MoES.

11. Nature of 'Penalty Clause' to be Stipulated in Contract:

Unsatisfactory performance: In case of unsatisfactory performance the contract will be terminated by notification letter sent five (5) business days prior to the termination date in the case of contracts for a total period of less than two (2) months, and ten (10) business days prior to the termination date in the case of contracts for a longer period

Performance indicators: Consultants' performance will be evaluated against the following criteria: timeliness, quality, and relevance/feasibility of recommendations for UNICEF Lao PDR.

12. Submission of applications:

Interested candidates are kindly requested to submit applications electronically and include the following documents:
- Letter of Interest (cover letter)
- CV or Resume
- Performance evaluation reports or references of similar consultancy assignments (if available)
- Financial proposal: Total proposed consultancy fee (excluding travel) as per the work assignment.

13. Assessment Criteria:

As part of the evaluation and selection, a Cumulative Analysis Method (weight combined score method) shall be used for this recruitment. This involves assessment of:

a) Technical Qualification (max. 100 points) weight 70 %
- Relevant education/degree (30 points)
- Experience working in the education sector in Lao PDR (40 points)
- Fluency in both English and Lao languages (30 points)

b) Financial Proposal (max. 100 points) weight 30 %

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 70 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.

14. Programme Area, Outputs and Specific Key Results Areas in the Rolling Work Plan:

Section Request: Education Programme Areas:

Output 1, Activity 6: Expansion of the Lao Education and Sports Management Information System (LESMIS) and strengthen capacity on data collection, verification and use of data down to the school level and support effective monitoring of the ESSDP

Output 1, Activity 7: Support development of an online Personnel Management Information System (PMIS) that links to LESMIS and relevant government information systems

Output 1, Activity 8: Support the development of an online Accounting System that links to PBMIS and relevant government financial management systems

Output 2, Activity 5: Strengthening capacity of PESS, DESBs, school leaders and schools in school development, planning and quality assurance in basic education (primary and lower secondary) using FQS (Linked to Output 1 activity 2: pre-primary FQS)

Output 2, Activity 7: Strengthening the capacity of MoES, TTCs, PESS, DESBs and teachers to deliver remote and digital learning, content development and delivery of blended learning for students and teachers including the use of the MoES Khang Panya Lao for teaching-learning

Output 3, Activity 4: Digital learning support: Expansion of contents and reach of MoES Teaching & Learning Platform Khang Panya Lao, including development of more inclusive contents focusing on 21st century skills and STEM, including for girls

Included in approved AWP: ☒ Yes   ☐ No