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TERMS OF REFERENCE

National Consultant – Project monitoring and PHEOC Support, ALERT-LAO (Human Health Component)

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR – Office based with possibility of travel
DURATION OF CONTRACT	12 Months

Purpose of Assignment

Background

Advancing Lao PDR's Pandemic Response and Transformation" (ALERT-LAO) is a government-led, multisectoral One Health project co-led by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE). On 12 February 2026 the Pandemic Fund Governing Board allocated US$17,585,716.07 to ALERT-LAO as a catalytic investment which, with national co-investment and partner co-financing, mobilizes over US$124 million for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPR) in Lao PDR. UNICEF and FAO are the Implementing Entities (IEs): UNICEF supports the human health component and FAO the animal health component.

The Department of Disease Control (DDC) of the MOH is the lead coordinating agency and hosts the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), responsible for day-to-day coordination, planning, monitoring and consolidated reporting against the Project-Specific Results Framework (PSRF). For the human health component, funds are channelled from UNICEF through the MOH Department of Planning and Finance (DoPF) to implementing departments under DDC and the MOH, in line with HACT. Implementation follows a quarterly cycle of activity planning, fund requests (FACE), implementation, activity reporting and liquidation, within a project fiscal year running from 1 July to 30 June.

Purpose

Working day-to-day within the ALERT-LAO PCU at DDC, the Consultant provides dedicated and tailored programme coordination, monitoring and reporting support to DDC for the human health component. The Consultant acts as the operational interface between DDC, its implementing units, UNICEF as Implementing Entity, as well as with DoPF to ensure that activity plans, fund requests, activity reports and annual work plans are prepared on time, to the required quality, standard and in accordance with agreed templates and procedures, and that UNICEF is regularly informed of progress, challenges and risks.

In addition, the Consultant supports DDC in operationalizing and strengthening the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) as an ALERT-LAO human health output, working under the guidance of the IHR National Focal Point. This support covers readiness documentation, coordination tools and the information-management routines needed for timely, coordinated response.

The assignment is temporary and time-bound to the ALERT-LAO project period and is paid against the monthly deliverables set out below.

Scope of Work

1. Programme coordination, annual work planning and implementation support

- Support the PCU to organize the annual work planning process for the human health component, including the planning calendar, templates and consultations with DDC technical divisions and centres (including NCLE) and other MOH implementing departments.
- Compile inputs into the draft annual work plan and budget; check consistency with the project document, PSRF targets and approved budget lines; flag activities whose eligibility or costing is unclear; use the previous year's implementation record to propose realistic timing.
- Break the approved annual work plan into a quarterly activity schedule, prepare documentation for DoPF, PSC and UNICEF review, and maintain version control of the work plan and revisions.
- Follow up with implementing units on delivery of approved activities and help resolve practical bottlenecks.
- Maintain a single consolidated activity tracker (planning, fund request, implementation, reporting, liquidation), updated at least weekly, flagging delays and issuing reminders on deadlines.
- Support implementing units to prepare quarterly activity plans and FACE fund requests using approved templates, checking completeness, consistency and supporting documents before submission.
- Organize PCU coordination and technical working group meetings and assist with PSC meetings: agendas, background documents, minutes and action tracking.
- Maintain an organized electronic and hard-copy project filing system ready for programmatic visits, spot checks and audits.

2. PHEOC support

- Support DDC to review and update PHEOC operational documents (SOPs, the Incident Management System structure, contact lists, activation and deactivation criteria) in line with WHO PHEOC framework guidance.
- Support the planning, documentation and follow-up of PHEOC simulation exercises, drills and after-action reviews financed under ALERT-LAO, and track implementation of the recommendations.
- Link PHEOC activities to the ALERT-LAO work plan, PSRF indicators and quarterly reporting.

3. Interface between DDC, UNICEF (Implementing Entity) and DoPF

- Serve as the day-to-day operational focal point between DDC, UNICEF and DoPF, facilitating a smooth flow of documents, information and feedback.
- Maintain a log of fund requests, reports and disbursements as they move between implementing units, DDC, DoPF and UNICEF; identify and follow up on bottlenecks.
- Relay UNICEF comments on activity plans, FACE forms and reports to departments and follow up until revised documents are resubmitted.
- Cross-check programmatic information across DDC, DoPF and UNICEF records to support timely liquidation and prevent cash advances outstanding for more than six months.
- Support preparation for, and follow-up to, HACT assurance activities (programmatic visits, spot checks, audits).
- Facilitate communication in Lao and English, including translating or summarizing key documents, correspondence and meeting outcomes.

4. Programme monitoring, evaluation and reporting

- Support implementing units to complete activity reports within the timeframe and template set in the project management manual, reviewing drafts for completeness and quality.
- Maintain an indicator tracker for the human health component of the PSRF, with sources of verification and sex-disaggregated output data.
- Maintain a complete record of means of verification for each activity (attendance lists, agendas, training records, photographs, reports).
- Consolidate activity reports and tracker data into draft quarterly, semi-annual and annual progress reports for review by DDC and UNICEF and as input to Pandemic Fund reporting.
- Participate in joint monitoring and field visits with DDC and UNICEF as requested; prepare trip reports and track follow-up.
- Support quarterly review meetings, after-action reviews and the mid-term and final evaluations by compiling data, documents and stakeholder inputs.

5. Communication with PCU and UNICEF on progress, challenges and risks

- Provide PCU and UNICEF with regular (at least monthly) updates on implementation status, upcoming activities, pending documents and issues, and share schedules, invitations and agendas in advance.
- Prepare a monthly implementation status summary from the activity tracker (activities planned vs completed, fund requests submitted and disbursed, reports outstanding, liquidation status).
- Identify and report challenges, delays and risks early, propose mitigation measures and support the PCU in keeping the project risk register up to date.
- Promptly escalate to the project Lead and UNICEF project focal point any concern relating to potential misuse of funds, fraud, safeguarding or PSEA, in line with UNICEF policies.
- Collect results, good practices, photographs and human-interest stories to support Pandemic Fund and UNICEF visibility.

Scope boundaries

- PHEOC readiness and capacity-strengthening support is within the scope. Direct surge support to PHEOC operations during an activated response is outside scope unless agreed in advance, in writing and time bound.
- The assignment is fully dedicated to ALERT-LAO; the Consultant is not assigned routine departmental administrative, clerical, logistical or secretarial duties unrelated to the project.
- Work priorities are set in an annual work plan jointly agreed by the Head of the DDC PCU and UNICEF, which is also the basis for performance evaluation.
- Any support outside the project scope (including during a declared public health emergency) must be agreed in advance, in writing, between the Head of the DDC PCU and the UNICEF project focal point and be time bound.
- The Consultant does not handle cash, approve expenditure, or sign or certify fund requests and financial reports on behalf of the Government or UNICEF.

Key performance indicators

- Quarterly activity plans and fund requests submitted by agreed deadlines and complete at first submission in the large majority of cases.
- PHEOC operational documents updated and endorsed by DDC; PHEOC event log and sitrep templates in routine use; and recommendations from at least one simulation exercise or after-action review tracked to completion, including PHEOC infomration management.
- Liquidation carried out within the set timeline; no cash advances outstanding beyond six months due to missing or incomplete documentation.
- Activity reports submitted on time using the prescribed template; activity, indicator and document trackers accurate and up to date.
- Quarterly and annual progress reports and the annual work plan consolidated on schedule.
- UNICEF receives regular updates and implementation risks are flagged early with proposed mitigation.

Work Assignments Overview	**Deliverables/Outputs**	**Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable**
An annual consultation and coordination plan	**Deliverable 1** – An annual consultation and coordination plan agreed with the Head of the DDC PCU and UNICEF; consolidated activity tracker, fund-request/disbursement log, PSRF indicator tracker (human health) and project filing system established; first monthly implementation status summary. PHEOC support plan agreed with the IHR National Focal Point.	29 January 2027
Coordination and liquidation follow-up	**Deliverable 2** – PCU coordination meeting minutes with action tracker; liquidation status log for outstanding advances; monthly implementation status summary; updated trackers; including any project-related small group meetings.	26 February 2027

Quarterly activity planning and fund forecasts	**Deliverable 3** – Support planning of Q4 (Apr–Jun 2027) quarterly activity plans with all implementing department and complete FACE request form, checked for completeness and submitted; outputs, indicators and targets against the project timeframe.	31 March 2027
Monitoring and quarterly reporting	**Deliverable 4** – Q3 (Jan–Mar 2027) activity reports reviewed and consolidated; PSRF indicator tracker updated with means of verification; complete quarterly progress online report (human health component); monthly status summary; gap review of PHEOC SOPs and tools against WHO PHEOC framework guidance.	30 April 2027
Annual work planning (Year 2)	**Deliverable 5** – Planning calendar, templates/format and consultation schedule for the Year 2 (FY Jul 2027–Jun 2028) annual work plan; organize a PCU meeting and compiled inputs from implementing units; monthly status summary; updated risk register.	31 May 2027
Annual work plan consolidation and Q1 fund requests	**Deliverable 6** – Consolidated draft Year 2 annual work plan and budget submitted for DoPF, PSC and UNICEF review; Q1 (Jul–Sep 2027) activity plans and FACE fund requests submitted; monthly status summary.	30 June 2027
Year 1 annual reporting	**Deliverable 7** – Draft, compile and summarize Year 1 annual progress report for all departments based on the	30 July 2027

	given template; Q4 activity reports consolidated; monthly status summary; updated PHEOC SOPs/IMS documents submitted to DDC for endorsement.	
Work plan operationalization and field Follow-up	**Deliverable 8** – Schedule joint field visit to monitor the project progress; trip report from joint monitoring visit with follow-up tracker; monthly status summary.	31 August 2027
Quarterly fund requests and HACT assurance support	**Deliverable 9** – Q2 (Oct–Dec 2027) activity plans and FACE fund requests submitted; documentation compiled for HACT assurance activities (programmatic visits/spot checks) with recommendation tracker; monthly status summary.	30 September 2027
Monitoring and quarterly reporting	**Deliverable 10** – Q1 (Jul–Sep 2027) activity reports consolidated; PSRF indicator tracker updated; draft quarterly progress report; monthly status summary.	29 October 2027
Review, risk management and visibility	**Deliverable 11** – Quarterly internal review meeting documentation; updated project risk register with mitigation measures; collection of results, good practices, photographs and human-interest stories; monthly status summary; documentation and recommendation tracker from a PHEOC simulation exercise or after-action review.	30 November 2027
Close-out and handover	**Deliverable 12** – Q3 (Jan–Mar 2028) activity plans and FACE fund requests	24 December 2027

	submitted; final consultancy report with lessons learned and recommendations; complete handover of trackers, logs, PHEOC tools and project files to the DDC PCU and UNICEF.	

This assignment may include up to 3 trips to 1-2 provinces or districts outside of Vientiane, totaling nine travel days to support project monitoring, field follow-up, and related coordination activities. The specific destinations, duration of each trip, and travel schedule will be determined in consultation with the consultant, based on operational needs.

Payment Schedule:

Payment will be made on submission and acceptance of deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment in case the deliverables submitted are not up to the required standard or in case of delays in submitting the deliverables on the part of the consultant.

Important Notes

- Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract 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 and Individual Contractors. Consultants and individual contractors 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 health insurance (and visa if applicable) 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, 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.

QUALIFICATIONS / SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCE/ COMPETENCIES (CORE/TECHNICAL/FUNCTIONAL) / LANGUAGE SKILLS REQUIRED FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

- **Education:** Bachelor's degree in public health, health sciences, public or business administration, development studies, statistics or another relevant field.
- **Work Experience:**
  - Minimum three years of progressively responsible professional experience in project coordination or management, programme assistance and/or monitoring and evaluation, preferably in the health sector.
  - Demonstrated M&E experience, including tracking activities and indicators, collecting and consolidating data, and drafting activity and progress reports using standard templates.
  - Experience working with the Ministry of Health or other government institutions in Lao PDR, and/or with UN agencies, international development partners or donor-funded projects.
  - Experience supporting work planning, budgeting, fund requests and financial reporting or liquidation for donor-funded projects.
- **Knowledge/Expertise/Skills:**
  - Strong organizational, follow-up and documentation skills; able to manage multiple deadlines and stakeholders.
  - Good report-writing skills and working knowledge of results-based management.
  - Advanced proficiency in MS Excel (trackers, pivot tables, basic data analysis), Word, PowerPoint and Outlook/Teams.
  - Understanding of MOH structures and government planning, financial and administrative procedures in Lao PDR.
  - Proactive, service-oriented and diplomatic; able to build trust with senior government officials; culturally sensitive, respects confidentiality and demonstrates the highest standards of integrity.
- **Language Requirements:**
  - Fluency in Lao and English (spoken and written) is required, including the ability to draft reports and correspondence in English and to translate accurately between Lao and English.
- **Desirables:**
  - Master's degree in public health, monitoring and evaluation, project management or a related field.
  - Certified training in project management or M&E with a health portfolio grant.
  - Familiarity with IHR (2005), PHEOC/Incident Management System functions, or outbreak response coordination
  - Familiarity with UNICEF HACT and FACE procedures (strong asset).
  - Exposure to public health programmes such as disease surveillance, laboratory systems, outbreak response or One Health.
  - Familiarity with DHIS2, KoBoToolbox or similar data platforms.