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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy on Reviewing Harmful Social and Gender Norms in Lesotho's Health and Community Policies

(National candidates only)

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	Maseru, Lesotho & Remote
DURATION OF CONTRACT	2.8 months

Purpose of Assignment

The Ministry of Health, with support from UNICEF, seeks to engage an individual consultant to review selected national health and community policies, strategies, and frameworks to determine how harmful social and gender norms are addressed, identify implementation and accountability gaps, and propose practical recommendations to strengthen policy alignment, service delivery, and institutional accountability. The review will be guided by the findings and analytical dimensions of the existing 2gether4SRHR Regional Policy Brief on Harmful Social and Gender Norms to ensure alignment with regional evidence and recommendations.

Scope of Work

Background and rationale: Harmful social and gender norms influence health-seeking behaviour, access to services, participation in decision-making, and the effectiveness of health and community systems. Reviewing national policies through this lens will help the Ministry of Health and partners identify where existing policy commitments can be strengthened, better implemented, and more clearly monitored to advance equitable health outcomes for adolescents, women, children, and vulnerable populations in Lesotho.

The consultant will conduct a structured desk review and stakeholder consultations to assess how selected national health and community policies address harmful social and gender norms, including gender norms, adultism, stigma and discrimination, social inclusion, access to services, participation and decision-making, and accountability and monitoring systems.

Policies and documents to be reviewed

The review should include, but not be limited to:

1. SRMNCAH+N Policy/Strategy
2. Adolescent and Young Adult Health (AAHA) Policy
3. Community Health Policy
4. National HIV Policy
5. EMTCT Policy
6. National Health Policy
7. Community Health Strategy
8. National Immunization Policy

9. National Immunization Strategy

Additional relevant frameworks, implementation plans, guidelines, monitoring frameworks and operational documents may be reviewed during the inception phase.

Detailed Activities

1. Inception Phase
    - Hold inception meetings with UNICEF and Ministry of Health stakeholders.
    - Finalize methodology and workplan.
    - Confirm policy documents and stakeholders for consultation.
2. Desk Review
    - Conduct a systematic review of the identified policies and strategies.
    - Use the existing 2gether4SRHR Regional Policy Brief on Harmful Social and Gender Norms as the primary analytical framework for the review. The policy brief and its assessment dimensions will guide the examination of national policies, strategies and implementation frameworks.
    - Develop and apply an analytical framework derived from the 2gether4SRHR Regional Policy Brief, assessing the extent to which policies address the following dimensions: Gender norms, Adultism, Stigma and discrimination, Social inclusion, Access to services, Participation and decision-making, and Accountability and monitoring systems.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Conduct interviews with: Ministry of Health programmes, Gender Ministry, Youth representatives, Development partners, Civil society Organisations, Faith-based Organisations, Professional associations, Local government and community leaders

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Conduct FGDs with: Adolescents and young people, Women and girls, Men and boys, Community health workers, Vulnerable and marginalized populations

Analysis and Reporti

- Analyze findings from document review and consultations.
- Identify policy strengths, gaps, implementation barriers and opportunities.
- Develop recommendations for policy strengthening and institutional reforms.

Validation

- Facilitate a national stakeholder validation workshop.
- Integrate stakeholder comments and recommendations.

Final Policy Brief

- Develop a concise policy brief summarizing findings.
- Develop a roadmap outlining priority actions, responsible actors and recommended next steps.

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable
Develop an Inception Report including methodology, policy review framework, stakeholder mapping and workplan	Deliverable #1 Inception Report	21 December 2026
Conduct Desk Review Report assessing key policies and identifying social and gender norms gaps	Deliverable #2 Report	4 January 2027
Conduct KII and FGD Interviews with relevant stakeholders, Draft Policy Gap Analysis recommendations, Convening a validation Workshop, Final Policy Gap Analysis report	Deliverable #3 Final Policy Gap Analysis Report	4 February 2027
Conduct KII and FGD Interviews with relevant stakeholders, Draft Policy Gap Analysis recommendations, Convening a validation Workshop, Final Policy Gap Analysis report	Deliverable #4 Final Policy Gap Analysis Report	4 February 2027
Draw a Policy Brief and Roadmap for Action on Harmful Social and Gender Norms Transformation in Lesotho	Deliverable #5 Policy Brief and Roadmap	25 February 2027

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.

- Contracts are conditional upon the selected candidate's willingness to comply with any current or future vaccination requirements that may be established by UNICEF, where applicable. Failure to comply with applicable vaccination requirements, where required and without an approved medical exemption by UNICEF, may result in the withdrawal of the consultancy offer or termination of the contract in accordance with the General Terms and Conditions of Contract.
- 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

Minimum requirements:

Education:

- Advanced university degree (Master's or higher) in Public Health, Social and Behaviour Change, Social Sciences, Gender Studies, Health Policy, Development Studies, Sociology or any other related field.

Work Experience: At least 5–7 years of relevant professional experience in:

- Demonstrated experience conducting policy reviews and policy analysis.
- Experience undertaking qualitative research, including KIIs and FGDs.
- Experience in SRHR, HIV, adolescent health, gender equality and social norms programming.
- Experience working with government institutions, UNICEF, UN agencies or development partners.
- Strong report writing and facilitation skills**.**

Skills:

- Proven experience working with adolescents and youth, particularly young women and/or young mothers, in low-resource settings.
- Strong facilitation, communication, and interpersonal skills, with the ability to deliver participatory and inclusive training.

Language Requirements:

- English and Sesotho.