TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS

Title	Funding Code	Type of engagement	Duty Station:
National Consultant for systematic reviews and recommendation of large-scale food fortification policies	SC210527 WBA: 5200/A0/06/881/002	☒ Consultant	Home-based arrangement in Viet Nam

Purpose of Activity/Assignment:

The national consultant will support UNICEF Viet Nam in generating and synthesizing evidence to inform the assessment and strengthening of national large-scale food fortification policy. The assignment will: (i) conduct structured desk review and secondary analysis of evidence and data on iodine status, household and industrial use of iodized salt, regulatory compliance and implementation barriers in Viet Nam; and (ii) provide specific policy recommendations to strengthen large-scale food fortification implementation and monitoring through the Law on Food Safety and related polices.

Background:

Around the world, large-scale micronutrient fortification of food has been recognized as an evidence-informed and cost-effective best practice by international health, nutrition, and regulatory organizations, including UNICEF, WHO, and OECD. In Viet Nam, Decree 09/2016/ND-CP mandates mandatory fortification of 4 specific micronutrients in foods: iodine in salt for direct consumption and food processing, zinc and iron in flour for food processing, and Vitamin A in vegetable oils containing soya oil, palm oil, rapeseed oil, or peanut oil (excluding vegetable oils used in industrial food processing). Despite this effort, related micronutrient deficiencies continue to be significant public health issues in Viet Nam, particularly in iodine status. Goiter prevalence among children aged 8–12 years increased from 3.6% in 2005 to 9.8% in 2014–2015. The 2019-2020 national survey indicated persistently low iodine level among pregnant and lactating women. In 2025, only 83% of households used adequately iodized salt (20–40 ppm). Together, these findings highlight gaps in access to adequately iodized salt and the need to sustain efforts to prevent iodine deficiency.

In 2027, the revision of the Law on Food Safety and related food system policies, including Decree 09, presents an opportunity for the government to address existing barriers and strengthen large-scale food fortification (LSFF) instruments. To provide evidence based for policy development, a systematic review is needed to synthesize evidence on iodine status, household and industrial use of iodized salt, regulatory compliance and implementation barriers, and provide recommendations for strengthening food fortification regulations and their implementation in Viet Nam.

Scope of Work:

- Conduct a structured desk review and secondary analysis of evidence and data on iodine status, household and industrial use of iodized salt, regulatory compliance and implementation barriers in Viet Nam, including assessment of documented technical feasibility and supply constraints affecting the food industry's use of iodized salt.
- Translate the findings into prioritized, actionable recommendations for strengthening LSFF regulations, implementation and monitoring, particularly to inform the revision of the Food Safety Law, the successor/revision to Decree 09/2016/ND-CP and related regulatory instruments.
- Support MOH/UNICEF in stakeholder consultation and related policy processes by preparing a policy brief and other concise technical inputs, presenting findings to relevant government agencies, industry and partners, documenting key stakeholder feedback, and refining recommendations as appropriate.

Purpose and Objectives
Summary of Key Functions/Accountabilities
General objective: To consolidate evidence on iodine status, household and industrial use of iodized salt, regulatory compliance and implementation barriers, and translate findings into prioritized recommendations for strengthening food fortification regulations and their implementation.

Specific objectives:

- Review and analyze the implementation results of Decree 09/2016/ND-CP over the period 2016–2026, identifying key achievements, gaps and implementation barriers.
- Update evidence review and policy recommendations on iodine status, iodized salt use and regulatory compliance, including analysis of industry feasibility and supply constraints.
- Provide information and recommendations for MOH on LSFF-related work, including proposing a strong system monitoring mechanisms to match with the revised Food Safety Law.

Methodology
For the structure review, the consultant will apply standardized methods to conduct literature searches, screen relevant studies, extract data, prepare reports on the study findings. The review will include a desk-based analysis of the implementation results of Decree 09/2016/ND-CP over the period 2016–2026, drawing on available policy documents, administrative and monitoring data and survey results to identify key achievements, gaps and implementation barriers. The consultant is also expected to review available evidence and conduct interviews with relevant government officials and technical experts to assess the use of iodized salt by relevant food-processing sectors, including regulatory compliance, technical feasibility, procurement and supply constraints, salt quality/specifications, and documented barriers to implementing mandatory iodized-salt requirements. Findings and draft recommendations will be validated through stakeholder consultation.
To support MOH in policy development, the consultant will prepare a policy brief with specific recommendations and convene consultations with MOH, relevant ministries, industry and partners, including providing technical inputs to the Decree 09/2016/ND-CP implementation assessment report and presenting at information dissemination meeting for government officials.

Location
The consultant is expected to work primarily from home and attend technical meetings in Ha Noi as required.

Tasks:

- Finalize the detailed analytical plan and implementation workplan based on the approved research outline.
- Complete a structured review on LSFF policy in Viet Nam, the 2016-2026 implementation results of Decree 09/2016/ND-CP, the status of iodine level, iodized salt use and regulatory compliance in Viet Nam, including analysis of industry feasibility and supply constraint; Provide specific policy recommendations on LSFF for the revised Food Safety Law and relevant policies, including propose practical options for strengthening routine monitoring of LSFF implementation and micronutrient-status in the population (indicators, institutional responsibilities, data sources and reporting/feedback mechanisms for regulatory compliance and programme monitoring).
- Produce a policy brief and provide technical inputs, evidence summaries and comments, as requested by UNICEF/MOH during the assignment, to inform ongoing LSFF-related policy

processes, including the Decree 09 implementation assessment and preparation of related regulatory instruments

Travel

No field travel is expected within the scope of this consultancy unless subsequently agreed in writing.

Management

The consultancy will be supervised by the UNICEF Nutrition Officer under the overall guidance of the Chief/Officer-in-Charge of the Child Survival and Development Section, with technical coordination as needed with relevant government and research counterparts.

Child Safeguarding

Is this project/assignment considered as "Elevated Risk Role" from a child safeguarding perspective?

☐ YES ☒ NO If YES, check all that apply:

Direct contact role ☐ YES ☒ NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:

Child data role ☐ YES ☒ NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information of children (name, national ID, location data, photos):

More information is available in the Child Safeguarding SharePoint and Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates

Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan: ☒ Yes ☐ No, please justify:

Consultant sourcing:

☒ National ☐ International ☐ Both

Competitive Selection:

☒ Advertisement ☐ Roster

Single Source Selection ☐ (Emergency - Director's approval)

Request for:

☒ New SSA – Individual Contract

☐ Extension/ Amendment

If Extension, Justification for extension:

	Start Date: **01 December 2026**	**End Date:** **20 April 2027**

Work Assignments Overview	**Deliverables/Outputs**	**Delivery deadline**	**Estimated Budget (work day)**

Task 1: Finalize the analytical plan and detailed workplan based on the approved research outline.	**01 Inception note/final analytical plan** covering the systematic review and related deliverables (full report, summary report, policy brief, powerpoint presentation).	10 December 2026	
Task 2: Complete a structured review on LSFF policy in Viet Nam, the 2016-2026 implementation results of Decree 09/2016/ND-CP, the status of iodine level, iodized salt use and regulatory compliance in Viet Nam, including analysis of industry feasibility and supply constraint; Provide specific policy recommendations on LSFF for the revised Food Safety Law and relevant policies, including propose practical options for strengthening routine monitoring of LSFF implementation and micronutrient-status in the population.	**01 Full review report & 01 Summary report (English & Vietnamese)** on LSFF policy in Viet Nam, the 2016-2026 implementation results of Decree 09/2016/ND-CP, the status of iodine level, iodized salt use and regulatory compliance in Viet Nam, including analysis of industry feasibility and supply constraints. The report also needs to provide specific recommendations on LSFF for the revised Food Safety Law and relevant policies, including proposing system monitoring mechanisms.	31 January 2027	
Task 3: Produce a policy brief and provide technical inputs, evidence summaries and comments, as requested by UNICEF/MOH during the assignment, to inform ongoing LSFF-related policy processes, including the Decree 09 implementation assessment and preparation of related regulatory instruments	**01 Policy brief, 01 PowerPoint presentation file (English & Vietnamese) and personal presentation at a minimum of 01 meeting** designated by MOH/UNICEF to provide key information and policy recommendations to government officials.	20 April 2027	

Overall deliverables and budget	**Expected final technical products: 01 systematic review report + 01 summary report + 01 policy brief + 01 PowerPoint presentation.** **All materials must be available in both English and Vietnamese.**		

Payment schedule: One lumpsum payment will be made upon satisfactory completion and acceptance of all agreed deliverables, in accordance with the contract and approved financial proposal.

Minimum Qualifications required*:	**Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required *:**
☐ Bachelors ☒ Masters ☐ PhD **Disciplines:** • Master degree in public health, epidemiology, health policy, nutrition, health sciences, or a closely related discipline.	A minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience in nutrition or health policy research, or closely related areas. • Demonstrated experience conducting systematic reviews on health/nutrition/food policy implementation. • Demonstrated understanding of the nutrition and food regulatory systems, especially on LSFF-related policies in Viet Nam and best practices around the world. • Experience with policy research and development for nutrition interventions for vulnerable populations is an asset. • Advanced analytical skills using MS Excel and related tools; strong report-writing and presentation skills. • Fluency in written and spoken Vietnamese and English is required.
*Minimum requirements to consider candidates for competitive process	*Listed requirements will be used for technical evaluation in the competitive process

Evaluation Criteria (This will be used for the Selection Report (for clarification see Guidance)

A) Technical Evaluation: maximum 70 Points B) Financial Proposal: maximum 30 points

1.1 Educational background: 10 points

• Master degree in public health, epidemiology, health policy, nutrition, health sciences, or related disciplines (10).

1.2 Relevant working experiences: 60 points

• At least 5 years of relevant professional experience in nutrition or health policy research, or closely related areas (10).

• Demonstrated experience conducting systematic reviews on health/nutrition/food policy implementation (15)

• Demonstrated understanding of the nutrition and food regulatory systems, especially on LSFF-related policies in Viet Nam and best practices around the world (15).

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<tr><td colspan="2">• Experience with policy research and development for nutrition interventions for vulnerable populations is an asset (10).
• Advanced analytical skills using Microsoft Office suite and related tools; strong report-writing and presentation skills (5).
• Fluency in written and spoken Vietnamese and English is required (5).

Qualifying score in technical evaluation is 49 out of 70 points. The maximum number of points shall be allotted to the lowest Financial Proposal that is opened/evaluated and compared among technically qualified candidates who have attained the required minimum technical score. 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 satisfactory verification/interview if needed.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Administrative details:

Visa assistance required: ☐

☒ Home Based ☐ Office Based:</td><td>If office based, seating arrangement identified: ☐
IT and Communication equipment required: ☐
Internet access required: ☐</td></tr>
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[1] Costs indicated are estimated. Final rate shall follow the "best value for money" principle, i.e., achieving the desired outcome at the lowest possible fee. Consultants will be asked to stipulate all-inclusive fees, including lump sum travel and subsistence costs, as applicable.

Payment of professional fees will be based on submission of agreed 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.

Text to be added to all TORs:
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 to ensure 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, 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.