

**Ref: LRPS-2022/9172847**

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) – Extended Bid**

**25 Jan 2022**

### **UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN’S FUND (UNICEF)**

**Wishes to invite you to submit a proposal for**

**Institutional Consultancy for the end line evaluation of the UN Joint Programme "Leaving no one behind: Establishing the basis for social protection floors in Lao PDR"**

**SEALED Proposals** should be sent to:

UNICEF Vientiane, Lao PDR  
Bid Reference Number: **LRPS-2022/9172847**  
Km3 Thadeua Road, Ban Watnak  
Vientiane, Lao PDR  
Telephone +856 21 487500  
Facsimile +856 21 314852

### **IMPORTANT – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION**

The reference **LRPS-2022/9172847** must be shown on the envelope containing the **Technical Proposal** and, on the envelope, containing the **Financial Proposal**, as well as on the outer packaging containing both envelopes.

The bid form must be used when replying to this request for proposal.

The Proposals **MUST** be received at the above address by latest **17:00 Local Time on 21 Feb 2022**. Due to the nature of this RFP, there will be no public opening of proposals.

Proposals received after the stipulated date and time will be invalidated.

It is important that you read all of the provisions of the request for proposal, to ensure that you understand UNICEF’s requirements and can submit a proposal in compliance with them. Note that failure to provide compliant proposals may result in invalidation of your proposal.

### **BID FORM**

**THIS PAGE/BID FORM** must be completed, signed and returned to UNICEF. Bid must be made in accordance with the instructions contained in this Request for Proposal.

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT**

Any Contract or Purchase Order resulting from this INVITATION shall contain UNICEF General Terms and Conditions and any other Specific Terms and Conditions detailed in this INVITATION.

## INFORMATION

Any request for information regarding this INVITATION must be forwarded by email to the attention of the person who prepared this document, with specific reference to the Invitation Number.

The Undersigned, having read the Terms and Conditions of **LRPS-2022/9172847** set out in the attached document, hereby offers to supply the services specified in the schedule at the price or prices quoted, in accordance with any specifications stated and subject to the Terms and Conditions set out or specified in the document.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name & Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel. No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Validity of Offer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Currency of Offer: \_\_\_\_\_

## THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL HAS BEEN:

**PREPARED BY:** Siphachanh Chounlamany  
Supply Officer  
Email: [schounlamany@unicef.org](mailto:schounlamany@unicef.org)  
To be contacted for additional information. NOT FOR SENDING OFFERS

**APPROVED BY:** Helena Soldatova  
Operations Manager  
Email: [hsoldatova@unicef.org](mailto:hsoldatova@unicef.org)

## 1.0 PROCEDURES AND RULES

### 1.1 ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND

UNICEF is the agency of the United Nations mandated to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. Guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF strives to establish children's rights as international standards of behaviour towards children. UNICEF's role is to mobilise political will and material resources to help countries ensure a "first call for children". UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children.

UNICEF carries out its work through its headquarters in New York, 8 regional offices and 125 country offices world-wide. UNICEF also has a research centre in Florence, a supply operation based in Copenhagen and offices in Tokyo and Brussels. UNICEF's 37 committees raise funds and spread awareness about the organisation's mission and work.

### 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The purpose of this RFP is to invite proposals for Institutional Consultancy to support Action Research on "Strengthening school- and district level planning for demand-driven pedagogical advisory support to improve teacher competence and student learning"

### 1.3 FORECAST SCHEDULE

The schedule of the contractual process is as follows:

a) Closing date and time for submission of full proposal:	21 Feb 2022 @17:00 Local Time
b) Opening of Technical proposal:	16 Feb 2022
c) Opening of Financial proposal:	24 Feb 2022 (estimated date)
d) Award Notice:	28 Feb 2022 (estimated date)
e) Signature of contract:	01 March 2022 (TBC)

### 1.4 RFP CHANGE POLICY

All requests for formal clarification or queries on this RFP must be submitted in writing to [laosupply@unicef.org](mailto:laosupply@unicef.org) and copy to [hsoldatova@unicef.org](mailto:hsoldatova@unicef.org). Please make sure that the e-mail mentions the RFP reference number.

Only written inquiries will be entertained. Please be informed that if the question is of common interest, the answer will be shared with all potential RFP bidders.

Erasures or other corrections in the proposal must be explained and the signature of the applicant shown alongside. All changes to a proposal must be received prior to the closing time and date. It must be clearly indicated that it is a modification and supersedes the earlier proposal or state the changes from the original proposal. Proposals may be withdrawn on written request received from bidders prior to the opening time and date. Bidders are expected to examine all instructions pertaining to the work. Failure to do so will be at bidder's own risk and disadvantage.

### 1.5 RFP RESPONSE FORMAT

Full proposals should be submitted in ENGLISH and must be received not later **21 Feb 2022 @17:00 Local Time**, duly signed and dated. Bidders must submit a sealed proposal, with two **separate sealed envelopes inside for (a) the Technical Proposal and (b) the Price Proposal**.

Sealed proposals must be securely closed in suitable envelopes and dispatched to arrive at the UNICEF office indicated no later than the closing time and date. They must be clearly marked as follows:

- Outer envelope: **Name of company**  
**Bid Reference Number: LRPS-2022/9172847**  
**Km3 Thadeua Road, Ban Watnak**  
**Vientiane, Lao PDR**  
**Telephone +856 21 487500**  
**Facsimile +856 21 314852**
- Inner envelope – technical proposal: Name of company, RFP number - technical proposal
- Inner envelope – financial proposal: Name of company, RFP number - financial proposal

**Alternatively**, bidders/consultants are allowed to submit their proposal by email. Bidders/consultants who intend to submit electronic proposals must follow the submission instruction as follows:

- Bidders can submit proposals through email. The proposal shall consist of two separate files i.e. one Technical Proposal and one Price Proposal.
- The file for the Price proposal shall be protected by a password which is retained by the bidder. If the technical proposal passes the minimum technical requirement, UNICEF will then request the password to open the Price Proposal file from the bidder. However, if the company loses the password, fails to submit within a period of 3 days, or in the case that the file does not open with the password provided, UNICEF will not be responsible for this matter.
- The file shall be in the form of pdf files only.
- Max. Files Size per transmission: 5MB
- Please send the electronic proposal to [laosupply@unicef.org](mailto:laosupply@unicef.org) and copy to [hsoldatova@unicef.org](mailto:hsoldatova@unicef.org)
- Please be aware that bids or proposals emailed to UNICEF will be rejected if they are received after the deadline for bid submission. As an email may take some time to arrive after it is sent, especially if it contains a lot of information, we advise all bidders to send email submissions before the deadline.

Please note that the proposal must arrive in the email box before the submission deadline.

Proposals received in any other manner will be invalidated.

Sealed proposals received prior to the stated closing time and date will be kept unopened. The responsible officers will open technical proposals when the specified time has arrived, and no proposal received thereafter will be considered. UNICEF will accept no responsibility for the premature opening of a proposal not properly addressed or identified. Any delays encountered in the mail delivery will be at the risk of the bidder.

Offers delivered at a different address or in a different form than prescribed in this RFP, or which do not respect the required confidentiality, or received after the designated time and date, will be rejected.

All references to descriptive materials should be included in the appropriate response paragraph, though the material/documents themselves may be provided as annexes to the proposal/response.

The bidder must also provide sufficient information in the proposal to address each area of the Proposal Evaluation contained in 1.10 to allow the evaluation team to make a fair assessment of the candidates and their proposal.

## **1.6 BIDDER RESPONSE**

### **1.6.1 Formal submission requirements**

The formal submission requirements as outlined in this Request for Proposal must be followed, e.g. regarding form and timing of submission, marking of the envelopes, no price information in the technical proposal, etc.

### **1.6.2 Bid Form**

The completed and signed bid form must be submitted together with the proposal.

1.6.3 Mandatory criteria

All mandatory (i.e. must/have to/shall/should/will) criteria mentioned throughout this Request for Proposal have to be addressed and met in your proposal.

1.6.4 Technical Proposal

The technical proposal should address all aspects and criteria outlined in this Request for Proposal, especially in its statement of work, terms of reference and paragraph 1.10 of this Request for Proposal. However, all these requirements represent a wish list from UNICEF. The bidders are free to suggest/propose any other solution. UNICEF welcomes new ideas and innovative approaches.

**No price information should be contained in the technical proposal.**

1.6.5 Financial Proposal

The financial proposal should be as per but not limited to paragraph 1.10 of this Request for Proposal.

1.6.6 Checklist for submission of proposals

- Bid form filled in and signed
- Envelope for technical proposal
  - o Technical proposal
  - o Technical proposal does not contain prices
  - o Envelope is sealed
  - o Envelope is marked as follows: Name of company, RFP number - technical proposal
- Envelope for financial proposal
  - o Financial proposal
  - o Envelope is sealed
  - o Envelope is marked as follows: Name of company, RFP number - financial proposal
- One outer enveloped
  - o Containing: (i) bid form, (ii) envelope for technical proposal, and (iii) envelope for financial proposal
  - o Envelope is sealed
  - o Envelope is marked as follows:

## 1.7 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Information, which the bidder considers proprietary, should be clearly marked "proprietary", if any, next to the relevant part of the text, and UNICEF will treat such information accordingly.

## 1.8 RIGHTS OF UNICEF

UNICEF reserves the right to accept any proposal, in whole or in part; or, to reject any or all proposals. UNICEF reserves the right to invalidate any Proposal received from a Bidder who has previously failed to perform properly or complete contracts on time, or a Proposal received from a Bidder who, in the opinion of UNICEF, is not in a position to perform the contract. UNICEF shall not be held responsible for any cost incurred by the Bidder in preparing the response to this Request for Proposal.

The Bidder agrees to be bound by the decision of UNICEF as to whether her/his proposal meets the requirements stated in this Request for Proposal. Specifically, UNICEF reserves the right to:

- contact any or all references supplied by the bidder(s);
- request additional supporting or supplementary data from the bidder(s);
- arrange interviews with the bidder(s);
- reject any or all proposals submitted;
- accept any proposals in whole or in part;

- negotiate with the service provider(s) who has/have attained the best rating/ranking, i.e. the one(s) providing the overall best value proposal(s);
- contact any number of candidates as required to achieve the overall evaluation objectives.

## 1.9 PROPOSAL OPENING

Due to the nature of this RFP, there will be no public opening of proposals.

## 1.10 PROPOSAL EVALUATION

After the opening, each proposal will be assessed first on its technical merits and subsequently on its price. The proposal with the best overall value, composed of technical merit and price, will be recommended for approval. UNICEF will set up an evaluation panel composed of technical UNICEF staff and their conclusions will be forwarded to the internal UNICEF Contracts Review Committee.

The evaluation panel will first evaluate each response for compliance with the requirements of this RFP. Responses deemed not to meet all of the mandatory requirements will be considered non-compliant and rejected at this stage without further consideration. Failure to comply with any of the terms and conditions contained in this RFP, including provision of all required information, may result in a response or proposal being disqualified from further consideration. The proposals will be evaluated against the following:

### **Evaluation Process and Methods:**

#### **(1) Content of the Technical Proposals**

**The Technical Proposal should include but not be limited to the following:**

Each proposal will be assessed first on its technical merits and subsequently on its price. In making the final decision, the UNCT considers both **Technical and Financial Proposals**. The Evaluation Team first reviews the Technical Proposals followed by a review of the Financial Proposals of the technically compliant firms. The proposal obtaining the highest overall score after adding the Technical and Financial Proposals scores together that offers the best value for money will be recommended for the awarding of the contract.

**The Technical Proposal should include but not be limited to the following:**

#### **a) Request for Proposals for Services Form**

**b) Presentation of the Bidding Institution** or institutions if a consortium (maximum two institutions will be accepted as part of the consortium), including:

- Name of the institution.
- Date and country of registration/incorporation.
- Summary of corporate structure and business areas.
- Corporate directions and experience.
- Location of offices or agents relevant to this proposal.
- Number and type of employees.
- In case of a consortium of institutions, the above-listed elements shall be provided for each consortium members in addition to the signed consortium agreement; and
- In case of a consortium, one only must be identified as the organization lead in dealing with the UNCT.

#### **c) Narrative Description of the Bidding Institution's Experience and Capacity** in the following areas:

- CPEs or equivalent for UN agency
- Strategic evaluations of complex programs for UN agencies or major bilateral donor Country Programmes
- Previous assignments in developing countries in general, but preferably in Lao PDR
- Previous and current assignments using UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation.
- General work plan based on the one proposed in the ToR, with comments and proposed adjustments, if any; and
- Detailed timetable by activity (it must be consistent with the general work plan and the financial proposal).

- d) **Relevant References** of the proposer (past and ongoing assignments) in the past five years. UN may contact references persons for feedback on services provided by the proposers.
- e) **Samples or Links to Samples of Previous Relevant Work** listed as reference of the proposer (at least three), on which the proposed key personnel directly and actively contributed or authored.
- f) **Methodology**. It should minimize repeating what is stated in the ToR. There is no minimum or maximum length. If in doubt, ensure sufficient detail.
- g) **Work Plan**, which will include as a minimum requirement the following:
- General work plan based on the one proposed in the ToR, with comments and proposed adjustments, if any; and
  - Detailed timetable by activity (it must be consistent with the general work plan and the financial proposal).
- h) **Evaluation Team**:
- Summary presentation of proposed experts against the required qualifications and experience described in ToR.
  - Description of support staff (number and profile of research and administrative assistants etc.).
  - Level of effort of proposed experts by activity (it must be consistent with the financial proposal); and
  - CV of each expert proposed to carry out the evaluation.

The Technical Proposal will be submitted in hard copy and electronic (PDF) format.

Please note that the assignment's duration will be from March 2022 to June 2022, and it is foreseen that the Team Leader and the Team Expert/Team Members will devote roughly half of their time to the evaluation. The presence of a conflict of interest of any kind (e.g., having worked for or partnered with UNCT in Lao on the design or implementation phase of the current Country Programme will automatically disqualify prospective candidates from consideration).

## (2) Content of the Financial Proposal.

The price proposal must be fully separated from the technical proposal. The financial proposal will be submitted in hard copy or in PDF format (Financial Proposal Template of the RFP is attached). Costs will be formulated in USD and free of all taxes. It will include the following elements:

### **The Financial Proposal should include but not be limited to the following:**

- Resource Costs:** Daily rate multiplied by the number of days of the experts involved in the evaluation.
- Conference or Workshop Costs (if any):** Indicate nature and breakdown if possible.
- Travel Costs:** All travel costs should be included as a lump sum fixed cost. For all travel costs, the UNJP will pay as per the lump sum fixed costs provided in the proposal. A breakdown of the lump sum travel costs should be provided in the financial proposal.
- Any Other Costs (if any):** Indicate nature and breakdown.
- Recent Financial Audit Report:** Report should have been carried out in the past two years and be certified by a reputable audit organization.

The financial proposal must be fully separated from the technical proposal. Costs will be formulated in US\$ and free of all taxes.

Each valid proposal will be assessed by an evaluation panel first on its technical merits and subsequently on its price. The weight allocated to the technical proposal is 70 % (i.e. 70 out of 100 points). To be further considered for the financial evaluation a minimum score of 49 points is required. Only proposals with a score of 49 or more points in the technical evaluation will be financially evaluated (i.e. the financial proposal will be opened). For further details and the distribution of points kindly refer to **table 1** below.

The weight allocated to the financial proposal is 30 % as per the following: the maximum number of 30 points will be allotted to the lowest technically compliant proposal. All other price proposals will receive points in



inverse proportion to the lowest price. Commercial proposals should be submitted on an all-inclusive basis for providing the contracted deliverables as described in the TOR.

The proposal(s) obtaining the overall highest score after adding the scores for the technical and financial proposals is the proposal that offers best value for money and will be recommended for award of the contract.

### (3) Evaluation Criteria

A two stages procedure shall be utilised in evaluating the applications received in accordance to the below criteria, with evaluation of the technical proposal being completed prior to any price proposal being compared. **Technical proposals should attain a minimum of 49 out of 70 points to quality and to be considered.**

The evaluation criteria for selecting the institution is as follows:

**Table 1: Technical Evaluation: Maximum 70 points**

CATEGORY	Max. Points
<b>1. OVERALL RESPONSE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding of and responsiveness to the requirements (5)</li> <li>Understanding of scope, objectives, and completeness of response (10)</li> </ul>	15
<b>2. METHODOLOGY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of the proposed approach and methodology (10)</li> <li>Quality of proposed implementation plan, i.e., how the bidder will undertake each task, and time-schedules (10)</li> <li>Risk assessment - recognition of the peripheral problems and methods to prevent and manage peripheral problems/quality controls (5)</li> </ul>	25
<b>3. PROPOSED TEAM and ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team members - relevant experience, skills &amp; competencies (10)</li> <li>Professional expertise, knowledge and experience with similar programmes, contracts, clients, and consulting assignments (20)</li> </ul>	30
<b>TOTAL POINTS FOR TECHNICAL PROPOSAL</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>4. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full marks are allocated to the lowest priced proposal. The financial scores of the other proposals will be in inverse proportion to the lowest price.</li> </ul>	30
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>100</b>

The total amount of points allocated for the price component is **30**. The maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest financial proposal that is opened and compared among those invited firms/institutions which obtain the threshold points in the evaluation of the technical component. All other financial proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price, e.g.:

$$\text{Score for financial proposal X} = \frac{\text{Max. score for financial proposal} * \text{Price of lowest financial proposal}}{\text{Financial of proposal X}}$$

**Total Technical and Financial Proposals = 100 Pts**



Each valid proposal will be assessed by an evaluation panel first on its technical merits and subsequently on its price. The weight allocated to this technical evaluation is 70% of the total evaluation. To be further considered for the financial evaluation, a minimum score of **49 points** from the maximum **70 points** is required.

The weight allocated to the financial proposal is 30% as per the following: the maximum 30 points will be allotted to the lowest technically compliant proposal. All other price proposals will receive points in the inverse proportion to the lowest price. The proposal(s) obtaining the overall highest score after adding the score for the technical and financial proposals in the proposal that offers best value for money and will be recommended for award of the contract.

It is essential that the financial proposal includes all cost implications for successfully completing the required assignment.

UNICEF will conduct a reference check before the contract is awarded to the winning bidder.

The bidders should ensure that all pricing information is provided in accordance with the following:

The currency of the proposal shall be in **US Dollars**. Invoicing will be in the currency of the proposal. The bidder will suggest to provide a payment schedule for the Contract, linked to unambiguous Contract milestones. All prices/rates quoted must be exclusive of all taxes as UNICEF is a tax-exempt organization.

**For the national bidders, the contract will be issued in local currency using UN exchange rate on the day issued the contract.**

#### **1.11 PROPERTY OF DELIVERABLES**

This RFP, along with any responses there to, shall be considered the property of MoES and UNICEF and the proposals will not be returned to their originators. In submitting this proposal, the bidder will accept the decision of UNICEF as to whether the proposal meets the requirements stated in this RFP.

#### **1.12 VALIDITY**

Proposal must be valid for a minimum of ninety (90) days from the date of opening of this RFP and must be signed by all candidates included in the submission. For proposals from institutions, the proposal must also be signed by an authorised representative of the institution. Bidders are requested to indicate the validity period of their proposal in the Proposal Form. UNICEF may also request for an extension of the validity of the proposal.

#### **1.13 CONTRACTUAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The UNICEF Special and General Terms and Conditions are attached and will form part of any contract resulting from this RFP.

#### **1.14 FULL RIGHT TO USE AND SELL**

The bidder warrants that it has not and shall not enter into any agreement or arrangement that restrains or restricts UNICEF or the recipient government's rights to use, sell, dispose of or otherwise deal with any item that may be acquired under any resulting contract.

#### **1.14 PAYMENT TERMS**

Payment will be made only upon UNICEF's acceptance of the work performed in accordance with the contractual milestones. The terms of payment are Net 30 days, after receipt of invoice and acceptance of work. Payment will be made by bank transfer in the currency of billing. Price proposals should include proposed stage payments.

### **1- Country Context**

Lao PDR is a lower middle-income country with a GDP per capita of US\$2,460 (2018). The country has a population of 7.2 million of whom over a third (36.7 per cent) are under 15 years and only 3.7 per cent are 65 or over.

The economy has seen significant growth with GDP growth averaging 7.7 per cent over the last decade. However due to the economic impact of COVID-19, the Lao national GDP is expected to contract significantly, by 4.8 per cent in 2020 and 1.1 per cent in 2021 as estimated by World Bank. This may decline further in the case of a protracted economic crisis.

Poverty has fallen significantly (according to the national poverty measure) 23.4 per cent (2012) to 18.6 per cent in 2020. Research by UNICEF shows that 50 per cent of all children suffer from 3 or more indicators of deprivation further aggravated by persistent geographical disparities based on ethnicity, language, gender, age, educational attainment, disability, and social-economic status.

Malnutrition is a critical issue, with stunting affecting 33 per cent of children under five (2017). Stunting prevalence is lowest in Vientiane Capital (13.6 per cent) and highest in Phongsaly Province (54 per cent). Children in rural areas without roads, whose mothers have no education and from the poorest quintile are two to three times more likely to suffer from stunting than children in urban settings, with high educated mothers and from the richest quintile.

The maternal mortality rate also remains high, at 185 per 100,000 births (2017), the highest in the region. While both men and women have limited access to health services, especially in rural areas, due to women's child-bearing roles, this lack of access to services disproportionately impacts women and their risk of dying.

In Lao PDR, there are several challenges affecting the social protection system, i.e., the system is fragmented, lack of compliance and enforcement in the formal economy, limited coverage (e.g. there are no schemes specifically targeting people with disabilities), and inconsistent and unclear financing of non-contributory schemes.

Based on the Assessment-Based National Dialogue on Social Protection (ABND) conducted in Lao PDR 2015-2016 with support from the UN, while several schemes aim to provide access to nutrition, education and health care for children, due to the limited coverage and often inadequate amount of funding of these schemes, children do not yet enjoy adequate and guaranteed access to these essential goods and services.

Lao PDR is at the initial stages of developing its social protection system. Existing social protection provisions consist mainly of the following:<sup>1</sup>

- contributory social security for formal workers and voluntarily insured persons, including health insurance - National Social Security Fund (NSSF).
  - National Health Insurance Scheme which provides almost universal coverage, including free health care for the poor, for those in maternity, and for children younger than five years.
  - social assistance or social welfare, providing ad-hoc disaster relief and scattered in-kind support to specific vulnerable groups.
  - education-related schemes providing free education, scholarships, and school meals.
  - poverty reduction and livelihood schemes, such as those of the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF); and
  - small-scale pilots of conditional cash transfers (CCTs) supporting education and health outcomes.
- These schemes do not yet form part of an integrated on-budget strategic approach to social protection but are planned and implemented by diverse line ministries and agencies, often with donor funding and support. The formal social security insurance scheme under the NSSF covers workers for medical benefits; pensions; employment injury; occupational disease and non-work-related disease (including long-term disability);

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<sup>1</sup> This section draws on the Assessment Based National Dialogue prepared by ILO in conjunction with the GoL.

sickness; maternity; and survivor's benefits. The NSSF provides health coverage to the formal public and private sector, while the National Health Insurance Board provides health care coverage to informal workers.

Only 1.6 per cent of GDP is allocated to social protection – a mere 0.7 per cent if health (0.9 per cent) is excluded. To date, Lao PDR's investment in social protection is still the lowest in the region and among the lowest in the world.

## **2- Background to the program to be evaluated**

This Terms of Reference (ToR) outlines the purpose and scope of an end of programme/project evaluation that aims to cover the United Nations Joint Programme (UNJP) "Leaving no one behind: Establishing the basis for social protection floors in Lao PDR". The project aims to support the Government of Lao PDR to implement the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) 2025, which defines a vision for sustainable access to social protection for all Lao people. It was adopted by Decree No.224/PM in April 2020. The UNJP supports the implementation of the strategy through an approach focused on system development and implemented through the Mother and Early Childhood Grant (MECG). The UNJP will contribute to the SDGs 1.3, 2.2, 16.9, and 17.3.

The JP is based on the new government-led National Social Protection Strategy with strong national institutional buy-in. The JP focuses on ensuring that SP funding is on-budget and that additional traditional and non-traditional sources of finance are mobilized and blended with public sector budget allocations to implement the NSPS. The MECG acts as a model for SP provision, which can be tested and scaled nationally in the future. The learning from experience feeds into potential subsequent interventions targeting other vulnerable groups, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, migrants, and informal workers.

The innovative elements of this JP are:

- (i) the development of a consolidated system under the auspices of a single ministry that carries the unique mandate for social protection in Lao PDR,
- (ii) the link between cash transfers and other services, particularly community-based social welfare, child protection services, birth registration and parenting education and,
- (iii) the focus being placed on assuring that SP funding is on budget and that additional traditional and non-traditional sources of finance are mobilized and blended with public sector budget allocations to sustainably implement the NSPS

The implementation of the UNJP was led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW) in partnership with relevant ministries, provincial and district authorities, and the UN in Lao PDR. The implementation period is from January 2020 to June 2022.

The UNJP contributes to the implementation of the NSPS, which was adopted for the first time in Lao PDR. It is expected to lead to a position in 2022 where the GoL capacity to implement the NSPS and to roll out social protection coverage to further groups (including scaling up the MECG) is expanded, having developed the capacity of the National Social Protection Commission (NSPC) and other key partners, learned from the experience of the MECG pilot and developed a more sustainable financial basis for the social protection system. By creating the conditions to expand social protection coverage beyond 2022, the UNJP is also expected to contribute to accelerate Lao PDR's capacity to reach the targets expressed under SDGs 1.3 and 2.2.

The participating UN agencies in the Joint Programme are:

**ILO:** The lead agency which supports the implementation of the NSPS.

**UNICEF:** Supports the design and operationalization of an integrated cash transfers for pregnant women and children

**UNCDF:** Supports the government on PFM reforms and to develop a blended finance solution for the NSPS. Joint UN SDG fund and DFAT funds this initiative.

The direct beneficiaries of the UNJP are the Government and national partners involved in the implementation of the NSPS at central and sub-national levels, and pregnant women and children aged 0-12 months benefiting from the MCEG program who will be receiving the cash transfer and the integrated social services and welfare package. It is planned to cover 2,000 pregnant women and children aged 0-12 months in three pilot districts (tentatively selected as Sanamxay and Phouvong districts in Attapeu province and Nong district in Savannakhet province).

### **Theory of Change (ToC)**

The theory of change (ToC) (annex 7) of the project is that implementing the activities identified in the results framework and work plan will lead to the outcomes which will involve strengthened GoL capacity and improved policy; proof of concept of the MCEG and related services which will be scalable; and the development of a funding envelope and innovative financing options for the future social protection system. The JP will thus assist the Government to build an overall system capitalized through blending public sector budget, ODA and non-traditional sources, to identify and test new channels for cash-transfers, immediately resulting in a positive impact on pregnant women, mothers, and children under 12 months multiplying its effects across SDGs targets.

The assumptions serving as the basis for this proposal are the following:

- Supporting the piloting of the MCEG and respective monitoring/evaluation helps demonstrate the feasibility and impact of a cash transfer that can be introduced to legislators for additional funding that will secure buy-in and scale up of MCEG.
- An integrated mechanism that associates cash and in-kind services is the best approach to enhance the impact of social protection services in child and family wellbeing, including the impact on chronic malnutrition and responsive parenting.
- The use of modern delivery options (including innovative and context-tailored payment mechanisms) will impact the efficiency, transparency and public perception of the system and enhance political support for the expansion of social protection.
- The design of an innovative funding mechanism is essential to create the pathway towards a sustainable system; contribute to a more coherent use of ODA and create conditions for additional investment from the Government and the national long-term ownership of the system.

Both the policy and discrete financing areas of the project may be duly impacted upon by exogenous risks that reflect internal government decision-making and global economic trends respectively. Within this context two specific sets of assumptions have been identified during the design process in relation to the above-mentioned risks.

### **Key Expected results of the project**

The UNJP expects to achieve 3 transformative results in the national social protection system.

Transformative Result 1: By the end of the JP, enhance government planning, managerial and implementation capacities (including leadership and co-ordination) to implement the NSPS. This is essential to ensure that social protection is embedded in national plans, allowing for gradual but significant expansion of coverage.

Transformative Result 2: By the end of the JP, contribute to ensuring that social protection funding is on-budget and designing a mechanism whereby additional sources of finance are mobilized and blended with public sector budget allocations to ensure sustainability of the NSPS.

Transformative Result 3: By the end of the JP, 2,000 pregnant women and children aged 0-12 months are benefiting from a new integrated welfare package consisting of the MCEG, early childhood wellbeing services and support for birth registration. Once implemented, the integrated welfare package can provide a wholesome approach to graduating out of poverty, while the MCEG infrastructure (such as beneficiary registration system, MIS, social worker network, payment system, among others) can act as a model to be

adapted and scaled up in future, with the lessons feeding into subsequent interventions for other vulnerable groups like the elderly, people with disabilities, migrants and informal workers.

Furthermore, it also seeks to achieve and strengthen coherence of the UNCT and cooperation among UN agencies in delivering support to national partners e.g. as was done through the development of joint UN policy recommendations on developing a shock-responsive social protection system to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

The specific outcomes are (i) strengthened government technical and fiscal capacity combined with improved policy environment for social protection, (ii) proof of concept of the MCEG and related services, designed to be scalable and continual via the system's uptake by the Government

**Outcome 1: Government planning, managerial and implementation capacity (including leadership and coordination) to implement the NSPS is enhanced**

- Output 1.1 – Members of the NSP Committee and other relevant national stakeholders better understand social protection-related topics and how programs are designed
- Output 1.2 – Awareness and understanding of Government officials of the impact of social protection and domestic resource allocation is enhanced
- Output 1.3 – NSPS M&E Framework developed and aligned with SDG 1.3 global measurement methodology
- Output 1.4 – Mechanisms for predictable public sector budget allocations and on-budget conduits for ODA earmarked budget support and IDA associated grants or loans are developed within the PFMR framework and introduction of the new PFMS
- Output 1.5 – NSPF proof of concept, development frameworks and implementation pathways formulated including NSPF capitalization plan to provide viable funding for the implementation of the NSPS.

This outcome will contribute to SDG targets 1.3 and 17.3.

**Outcome 2: At least 2,000 pregnant women and children under 12 months are benefiting from a new integrated package of welfare services, including the new MCEG, early childhood wellbeing services and support for birth registration.**

- Output 2.1: Roadmap for the design and implementation of the MCEG concluded.
- Output 2.2: MIS for the MCEG designed.
- Output 2.3: Institutions and different agents prepared for the implementation of the MCEG.
- Output 2.4: MCEG piloted in three of the poorest districts.
- Output 2.5: MCEG M&E framework developed and being implemented

### **3- Objectives, purpose, and scope of the evaluation**

By gathering the lessons learned during the programme implementation and the proposition of strategic and operational, this evaluation aims to inform the implementation and allocation of resources for similar programmes in the future and the Government SP initiatives and policies.

The key objectives of the final evaluation are:

- a. To assess the extent to which the expected results have been attained during the implementation of the programme. In particular, the evaluation shall provide insights on (i) the contribution to improving the situation of vulnerable groups identified in the JP document (ProDoc), with a focus on disability, (ii) contribution to SDG acceleration, and (iii) contribution to UN reforms, including, UNCT coherence.
- b. Assess the added value of a joint UN approach to programming
- c. To document good practices and generate evidence-based lessons and recommendations to strengthen the National Social Protection Strategy 2025 implementation.

- d. Explore sustainability of the Mother and Early Childhood Grants project interventions in terms of the likelihood to be sustained, scaled up or continue after project life cycle
- e. To identify gaps, critical lessons learned, and main challenges, and provide recommendations on addressing these challenges and pursuing opportunities and recommend key practices that should be incorporated in the future.

The evaluation will mainstream how human rights, child rights, and gender equity have been addressed within the JP.

### **Evaluation scope**

The evaluation will focus on the implementation of the UNJP between January 2020 to June 2022. The evaluation will cover the UNJP conceptualization, design, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of results and will engage all programme stakeholders. The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the programme; explore the key factors that have contributed to the achievement or non-achievement of planned results including the impact of COVID-19 pandemic; addressing crosscutting issues of gender equality and women's empowerment and human rights; and forging partnership at different levels, including with Government, donors, UN agencies, and communities.

The evaluation will also consult key stakeholders from national institutions, development agencies, implementing partners, CSOs at the national and sub-national levels. Depending on COVID restrictions, the base of work will be done remotely.

### **Key users and intended use**

User	Intended use
<b>Primary users</b>	
UN Country Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide accountability and learning from the UNJP, to inform the design and implementation of future SP/JP interventions.</li> <li>• Inform decision-making for the UNCT in terms of programmatic design and resource allocation based on assessment of performance.</li> <li>• Inform UNCT on how to most effectively support the Government of Lao PDR and key stakeholders to improve SP.</li> </ul>
Line Ministries – Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide accountability on achievements of the initiative</li> <li>• Inform on UNCT's commitment to continue improving its programming in support SP in Lao</li> <li>• Reflect on evaluation findings in as much as they also relate to jointly implemented programmes</li> <li>• Engage together with UNCT in the response to the evaluation recommendations</li> <li>• Provide the necessary information for potential scale up of the interventions to other provinces and districts.</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary users</b>	
Joint SDG Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide accountability and learning from the UNJP</li> <li>• Inform on areas that need support and improvements to better support results for SDGs and SP that can be used in funding decisions</li> <li>• Provide objective evidence on UNCT's commitment to learning and improving social protection in Lao PDR</li> </ul>
DFAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide accountability and learning from the UNJP</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform on areas that need support and improvements to better support results for SDGs and SP that can be used in funding decisions</li> <li>• Provide objective evidence on UNCT's commitment to learning and improving social protection in Lao PDR.</li> </ul>
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#### 4- Evaluation questions and criteria

The evaluation will apply the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The evaluation criteria and questions will analyze the extent to which human rights, child rights, and gender equality and equity have been addressed within the program.

The evaluation will provide evidence-based analysis to answer the following questions.

##### Relevance:

- To what extent was the programme design in line with the national development priorities, the national social protection strategy, the needs of national stakeholders and beneficiaries?
- Is the ToC for programme components adequately described and is there clarity of logic across the results levels?
- To what extent are results, indicators, and activities measurable?
  - Are indicators in place? Have the indicators been defined (e.g. numerators and denominators) with clearly understood standards? Has a target value for the indicator been provided at Outcome and Output levels?
  - Are the indicators reliable for decision making for the programme improvements?
  - To what extent are cross-cutting priorities (namely: Gender, Disability and DRR) and equity measurable against clear targets?
- To what extent did the program design target persons with disabilities?
- To what extent have the implementing partners participating in the joint programme contributed added value to solve the development challenges stated in the programme document?
- In what way had the COVID-19 pandemic affected project relevance and to what extent did the project make adjustments to remain or to be even more relevant?
- **Efficiency** To what extent has the programme delivered results in an economic and timely way. Put it #1 EQ for the criteria?
- What factors have contributed to increase/decrease the efficiency of the programme?
  - What type of (administrative, financial, coordination and managerial) obstacles did the joint programme face and to what extent have these affected its efficiency?
- To what extent did the programme activities reinforce synergies amongst UN agencies to achieve optimal utilization of available resources?
  - Did the programme complement other initiatives (by other NGOs, national organizations, local Government)?
- To what extent was the joint programme's management model (governance and decision-making structure, i.e. lead agency, Joint Programme Coordinator, Programme Advisory Committee and its Secretariat, financial management and allocation of resources, i.e. one work plan, one budget) efficient in comparison to the development results attained?

##### Effectiveness:

- To what extent have the expected results been realized through the programme?
  - Did the programme reach the expected targets, indicators and results? To what extent were the 3 transformative results achieved?
  - To what extent are the partners and intended beneficiaries satisfied with the results?



- What factors have contributed to the programme results achieved.
- To what extent has the JP contributed to accelerating the SDGs at the national level?
- To what extent has the joint programme contributed to the advancement and the progress of fostering national ownership processes and outcomes (the design and implementation of National Development Plans, Public Policies, UNDAF, etc.)
- To which extent did the program contribute to support inclusion of persons with disabilities via:
  - Ensuring basic income security
  - Coverage of health care costs, including rehabilitation and assistive devices
  - Coverage of disability-related costs, including community support services
  - Facilitate access to inclusive early childhood development, education, and work/livelihood

#### **Impact:**

- What is the likely impact (positive or negative, intended, and unintended) on Government and national partners involved in the implementation of the NSPS at central and sub-national level?
- What is the likely impact (positive or negative, intended, and unintended) on partners and stakeholders?
- What lessons can be learned from the best practices' achievements, challenges, and constraints of the program in relation to "strengthen the National Social Protection Strategy 2025 implementation"?

#### **Sustainability:**

- To what extent are the intervention results likely to continue after the funding has been withdrawn?
- What mechanisms were set up to ensure the continuity of the programme's activities and results?
- To what extent have institutions and stakeholders taken and shown ownership of the action objectives? Are there willingness and capacity to sustain financing at the end of the intervention? To what extent are they actively engaged in the activities of the action?

#### **Humans Rights approach, Gender equity, disabilities and COVID 19 response**

- To what extent human rights, child rights, climate change, DRR, and gender equality and equity have been addressed within the program?
- To what extent is the program and intervention disability-inclusive? To what extent did support to data collection and analysis, registries, and information system feature disability?
- What were the program's response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic? What were the lessons learned from this?

### **5- Evaluation methodology<sup>2</sup> and approach**

Based on the objectives of the evaluation, this section indicates broad guidelines on methods and processes for the evaluation. Methodological rigor will be given significant consideration in the assessment of proposals. Hence bidders are invited to interrogate the approach and methodology proffered in the ToR and improve on it or propose an approach they deem more appropriate. In their proposal, the bidder should clearly refer to triangulation, sampling plan, ethical consideration, and methodological limitations and mitigation measures. Bidders are encouraged to also demonstrate methodological expertise in evaluating initiatives related to the focus areas.

This evaluation should follow a participatory, utilization-focused, and theory-based approach, with mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) of data collection and analysis. Under a utilization-focused approach, the evaluation will facilitate senior management decision-making on developing future initiatives.

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<sup>2</sup> Bidders are required to present their best ideas as part of the technical proposal. The quality of the methodology section will, together with the quality of the proposed team, determine whether a bidder is deemed technically qualified. Consequently, this Methodology section is intentionally under-detailed.

The evaluation team will need to draw on available quantitative data from recent publications, reviews, research, studies, progress reports, situation reports, national datasets, surveys, and other sources. Bidders will be encouraged to propose any feasible stakeholder consultation approaches that could generate useful quantitative data on key issues and help form qualitative inquiry areas.

Multiple and high-quality data collection and analysis methods with a range of stakeholders should be used to facilitate triangulation of data. These may include document review, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, a survey with frontline workers/beneficiaries, and consultative workshops or focus group discussions. Key stakeholders to be involved in the data collection should be selected from Joint SDG Fund and other UN staff, key national and sub-national government agencies, and other relevant partners such as civil society organizations/NGOs. Case studies may also be considered to understand recurrent patterns.

In consultation with the evaluation manager and reference group, the selected consultant(s) will develop a detailed methodology for the assignment, with prioritized evaluation questions from those in the framework above. The methodology will be further refined in the inception phase, based on the findings of the Evaluability Assessment and consideration of constraints posed by the country context.

The Evaluation Team will be expected to conform to guidelines and standards set by the UN the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016), UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system (2008), UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020), UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator (2018), and UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation (2014).

#### **Data collection methods**

At a minimum, the evaluation will draw on the following methods:

- **Comprehensive desk review** of available documentation – UNJP Implementation Strategy and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, annual reports, UNJP communication tools, and products, UNJP support materials and training, UNJP guidelines, researches, and studies. Key government documents also need to be reviewed, SDG reports, government statistics and publications.
- **Stakeholders mapping and analysis.** It is useful to identify and categorize the programme key stakeholders, their role, and level of involvement in achieving the objectives. This mapping can also aid when sampling and targeting the information sources for this evaluation.
- **Interviews and focus group discussion.** It is important to note that data collection might need to be done remotely in case of travel/ movement restrictions due to COVID-19. Innovative and appropriate remote data collection methods need to be proposed and considered from the onset. Given the Covid-19 context, the inception phase will occur without field visits from the evaluation team. According to the COVID19 situation evolution, the evaluation team might be able to access local areas during the data collection. In case that is not feasible, consultation with local stakeholders and beneficiaries shall be made remotely.
  - The evaluation team shall conduct individual key informant interviews with staff representatives of UN agencies, government officials, local authorities, implementing partners, Civil society organizations, NGOs, beneficiaries, community leaders, and other partners (the bidder shall indicate the field work and provinces to visit for data consultation).
- **Household survey.** A survey can be launched to complement the evidence collected through the above-mentioned data collection tools.

Data collection and analysis should be human rights-based and gender-sensitive. Any data collected should be disaggregated by age, gender, state/region, disability, etc., where possible. Data triangulation will be of crucial importance. Data analysis should also include aspects of gender, equity, and human rights into consideration.

A sampling strategy should be included in the Technical Proposal, setting out how institutions and organizations, and different stakeholder groups will be sampled. This applies to both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

### **Gender and Human Rights, Child Rights**

Human Rights, child rights, and gender equality will be incorporated in the evaluation through a mainstreaming approach to these issues in the evaluation questions, data collection processes, and analysis. In the conclusions of the evaluation, the Evaluation Team will draw out specific findings and recommendations on human rights, child rights, and gender equity. The conduct of the evaluation will be guided by the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation (2014).

### **Ethical considerations**

The bidder will set out how they expect the evaluation process to be designed and undertaken in accordance with ethical guidelines as set out in UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020). During the evaluation process, full compliance with all UNEG ethical guidelines will be required. All informants should be offered the option of confidentiality for all methods used. Dissemination or exposure of results and any interim products must follow the rules agreed upon in the contract. In general, unauthorized disclosure is prohibited. Any sensitive issues or concerns should be raised, as soon as they are identified, with the evaluation management team. (See annex 6 for Ethical Code of Conduct)

### **DELIVERABLES**

- i. An inception report presents the short evaluability assessment, and the complete methodology approach to conducting the work, with all tools fully drafted. All design issues under discussion to that point to be answered, any revisions to the issues and questions, and issues of reference group role and supervisory quality assurance.

The Inception Report will be key in confirming a mutual understanding of what is to be evaluated, including additional insights into executing the evaluation. At this stage, evaluators will refine and verify evaluation questions, confirm the scope of the evaluation, further improve on the methodology proposed in the ToR, and their own evaluation proposal to strengthen its rigor and develop and validate evaluation instruments.

The report will include, among other elements: i) short evaluability assessment, ii) evaluation purpose and scope, confirmation of objectives of the evaluation; iii) evaluation criteria and questions; iv) evaluation methodology (i.e., sampling criteria, stakeholders mapping), along with a description of data collection methods and data sources (incl. a rationale for their selection), v) an evaluation matrix that identifies descriptive and normative questions and criteria for evaluating evidence, data analysis methods and a data analysis plan, a discussion on how to enhance the reliability and validity of evaluation conclusions, a description of the quality review process, a discussion on the limitations of the methodology and ethical considerations; vi) proposed structure of the final report; vii) evaluation work plan, and deliverables timeline; viii) detailed evaluation budget; ix) annexes (i.e., draft data collection instruments, for example, questionnaires, with a data collection toolkit, matrix for evaluation questions, data collection toolkit, data analysis framework); and x) a summary of the evaluation process (evaluation briefing note) for external communication purposes;

- ii. Presentation with preliminary findings, conclusions, and recommendations. After the data collection process, the evaluation team shall present the preliminary findings, conclusions, and recommendations that can feed into the CP prioritization process.

The presentation should include findings from the desk review and data collection (primary and secondary), with an initial attempt to triangulate findings. The presentation should also present a matrix of data collected for responding to each evaluation question and point to gaps that challenged the data collection phase.

- iii. Draft and final report. The report shall comply with the UNEG evaluation standards of ideally 40 pages but not more than 50 plus executive summary and annexes (the Executive Summary both in English and Lao) that will be revised until approved.
- iv. An Infographic with the main evaluation findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned. That is distinct from the executive Summary in the evaluation report and it is intended for a broader, non-technical and non-UN audience. The infographic shall be produced in both English and Lao.

Important notes:

- i. Monitoring deliverables about work progress are not listed but will be periodically required.
- ii. Page limits, if any, to be established during the inception period. In general, there will not be artificial limits, but the report should aim for conciseness, readability, and visual appeal.
- iii. All deliverables must be in professional-level standard English, and they must be language-edited/proof-read by a native speaker.

## 6- Duration

It is expected that the full evaluation process will last six months. Nevertheless, evaluation deliverables will be produced and available throughout the process:

Step	Timing	Due (indicative)	date
Kick off telecon / Videocon	As soon as possible after the team is contracted	TBC	
Desk review - Development of the draft inception report	Two weeks after kick-off	TBC	
Comments and QA on inception report draft (including ethical clearance for data collection tools)	One week after the draft submitted	TBC	
Final inception report with obtained ethical clearance	One week after the comments	TBC	
Pilot data collection tools	One week after the IR is approved	TBC	
Adjust data collection tools	One week after the piloting	TBC	
Data collection: KIIs, FGDs, survey	1 month after inception report	TBC	
Draft evaluation report	Two weeks after data collection is finalized	TBC	
Comments and QA on draft	Two weeks after submission of draft	TBC	
Final report produced	Two weeks after comments	TBC	
Infographic and an animated video	Two weeks after comments	TBC	

## 7- Qualification requirements or Specialized skills/experience Required:

This contract will be awarded to an organization and not to an individual or team of individuals not sponsored by an institution.

A consortium of 2 or more institutions may make a joint bid. In this case, there must be a lead institution named that will be the sole point of contact with UN for contract management purposes.

The firm must have a history of working in Lao. If a consortium, at least one partner must have a history of working in Lao.

## Team Leader

### a) Mandatory requirements

- Master's degree in International Development, Social/Public policy, Public Administration, Development Programme & Evaluation, or any related social science discipline.
- A minimum of 12 years of overall professional experience
- Excellent understanding of evaluation principles and methodologies, including capacity in an array of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods
- A minimum of 8 evaluations led at the program and/or outcome levels with international organizations.
- Experience in conducting evaluations for UN agencies or major bilateral donor country programs, and familiarity with UNEG Norms and Standards
- Strong English report writing skills and a track record of producing high quality reports

### b) Desirable requirements

- Experience in conducting joint programme evaluations of UN organizations is strongly preferred
- Previous experience of working in Lao PDR is strongly preferred
- Experience in leading and managing SDG program evaluations is strongly preferred
- Ability to communicate in Lao with professional standard is an asset, if not, the firm(s) shall provide a translator for interviews when needed

## Team member

### c) Mandatory requirements

- Master's degree in International Development, Public Administration, Development Programme & Evaluation, or any related social science discipline.
- Minimum 5 years of technical expertise in the field of evaluation focused on international development, development programming, and implementation.
- Proven experience in conducting evaluations of programmes with international organizations.
- Experience in implementing a range of qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques and methods in programme evaluations.

### d) Desirable requirements

- Preferably, the team member should be a national consultant based in Lao PDR. He/she needs to have a good command of Lao in both written and spoken communication.
- Knowledge of the United Nations System mandate and the political, cultural, and economic contexts of the region and the country.

Given the COVID19 situation, it is desired that both team members are based in Lao, if not possible, at least one team member shall be based in Lao, and the technical proposal shall detail in the methodology how to conduct the process remotely.

In the review of the RFP, while adequate consideration will be given to the technical methodology, significant weighting will be given to the quality, experience and relevance of individuals who will be involved in the evaluation.

## 8- Administrative issues

- Bidders are requested to provide a detailed technical proposal in **Annex C** – Technical proposal response form.
- Bidders are requested to provide a detailed cost proposal in **Annex D** – Financial proposal response form.

- The bidder is requested to provide an all-inclusive cost in the financial proposal. The bidder is reminded to factor in all cost implications for the required service/assignment.
- The bidder is required to include the estimate cost of travel in the financial proposal noting that i) travel cost shall be calculated based on the most direct route and economy class travel, regardless of the length of travel and ii) costs for accommodation, meal and incidentals shall not exceed applicable daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, depending on the location, as promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission (<https://icsc.un.org/>).
- Unexpected travels shall be treated as above.

## **EVALUATION MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENT**

The following summaries set out the main roles and responsibilities for those involved in the evaluation.

**The Evaluation Team (ET):** leading role and responsibilities include:

### **Team Leader**

- Delivering against the evaluation requirements set out in the ToR and ensuring these are compliant with UN standards
- Ensuring deliverables (see above) are completed within agreed timeframes, budget, and quality standards
- Responding to, and factoring in, stakeholder feedback in redrafting deliverables

### **Team Member**

- Contributing technical inputs to all deliverables and helping ensure requirements & standards are met
- Assuming lead role in specific technical and / or cross cutting areas as assigned by the team leader, and contributing analysis on these areas

### **The Evaluation Manager**

The RC shall organize the evaluation management and UNICEF will administer the process jointly with ILO. Primary functions include:

- Help develop scoping for the evaluation
- Set out and update a detailed plan for the process, and day to day management and communication of this process with stakeholders
- Leads on recruitment of the Evaluation Team, and provides supervision and support to the ET
- Day-to-day oversight and management of the evaluation process and budget, in coordination with EMG members and other key stakeholders. Leading on quality assurance throughout the process, assuring the quality and independence of the evaluation and guarantee its alignment with UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Guidelines and other relevant procedures, managing stakeholder engagement in this (gathering and collating feedback), and ET performance against ToR deliverables

### **The Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)**

An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) should be set up and comprise a small group of key UN internal stakeholders led by the RC and including the in-country PUNOs. Primary responsibilities include:

- Make decisions on scope, timing, and resourcing of the evaluation
- Conduct consultations with Government and partners as appropriate
- Contributions to, and approval of, the ToR

- Select candidates for the ERG (see below)
- Ensuring lists of contacts, data and information is prepared for the ET, organising the in-country introduction of the evaluation team, arranging interviews, briefings, meetings
- Agreeing and scheduling field visits; providing logistical and admin support
- Contributing to Quality Assurance through comments and feedback on draft deliverables
- Develop the Evaluation Management Response in consultation with stakeholders, with the Representative signing off on this and monitoring progress in the coming two years

## Quality Assurance

Quality assurance through the process will be undertaken by:

- **UNICEF in consultation with ILO**, leading on quality assurance of all deliverables, will provide quality assurance in line with UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Guidelines and other relevant procedures checking that the evaluation methodologies, findings and conclusions are relevant and recommendations are implementable, and contribute to the dissemination of the evaluation findings and follow-up on the management response. S/he will review the initial deliverables (such as draft inception report, first draft of the final report) and work with ET on necessary revisions to ensure the deliverables meet minimum quality standards. Once the minimum standards are met, the Evaluation Manager requests feedback from stakeholders, consolidates all comments from Reference Group, Regional Evaluation Advisor and other RO staff and key stakeholders on a response matrix and requests the ET to indicate actions taken against each comment in the production of the penultimate, and final draft.
- **ERG** provides provide comments and substantive feedback to ensure the quality – from a technical point of view – of key evaluation deliverables including the inception report and draft report.
- **The RC** is responsible for final quality assurance checking and final sign off on all deliverables of the evaluation

## 9- Payment Schedule

No.	Payment	Tentative schedule	Remarks
1.	30%	One month from the start	upon approval of the inception report
2.	30%	Three months from the start	upon receipt of draft versions of all deliverables
3.	40%	Six months from the start	upon acceptance of all final deliverables

- The payment schedule must be based on completed deliverables.
- If the bidder wishes to propose an alternative payment schedule, it must be included in the financial proposal. The final payment schedule is to be reviewed and agreed with Joint SDG Fund.
- Payment terms 30 days net upon receipt of approved invoice.

## 10- Contract Supervisor

Maryam Abdu, Chief of Social Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation.



## 11- Any other Information

### Annex 1: Inception Report structure

The Inception Report ensures that the evaluation team has a clear understanding of the TOR of the evaluation. It translates the TOR into an operational plan which determines how the evaluation will be carried out. The Inception Report forms the agreement between the Evaluation Manager and the Evaluation team on the operational plan for the evaluation. The structure for the inception report is:

- **Table of contents**
- **Abbreviations and acronyms**
- **Introduction**
  - Purpose of the Country Programme Evaluation
  - Scope of the evaluation
- **Country context**
  - Highlight key features of the country context which are relevant to Social Protection
  - Identify any key changes in context during the period being covered by the evaluation (e.g. any conflicts or disasters, major changes in policies affecting children etc)
- **UN Joint Programme**
  - UN Joint programme in context of UN response
  - UN Joint programme strategy, objectives, goals, reach and achievements
- **Stakeholder analysis**
  - Identify key stakeholders, their interests and how they will be involved in the evaluation
- **Evaluation Approach and Methodology**
  - State the evaluation approach and rationale for the approach with reference to the degree of stakeholder participation
  - State the evaluation questions which the evaluation will address; if these differ substantially from those noted in the Terms of Reference, indicate why they have been changed.
  - Indicators
  - Sources of data and data collection methods
  - Data analysis approach and tools to be used to answer the evaluation questions
  - (If applicable) Sampling strategy or plan and rationale for it
  - Limitations
- **Quality assurance**
  - Sets out the key quality assurance milestones, processes, and responsibilities for QA of the evaluation
- **Work Plan**
  - Indicate timing of key steps and deliverables for the evaluation
  - Outline responsibilities of each member of the evaluation team and level of effort
- **Annexes**
  - Terms of Reference
  - Bibliography
  - Evaluation matrix (evaluation questions, indicators, data sources and data collection methods)
  - Draft data collection tools/ instruments (e.g. Key Informant Interview protocols, draft survey instruments)

## Annex 2: Evaluation Report Format

Report length: 40-50 pages excluding annexes

- **Executive Summary (up to 4 pages)**
- **Acknowledgments**
- **Table of contents**
- **Abbreviations and acronyms**
- **Map**
  
- **Introduction (6-7 pages)**
  - Purpose of the Country Programme Evaluation
  - Scope of the evaluation
  - Methodology and approach to the evaluation
  
- **Country context and UNJP (6-7 pages)**
  - Draw from the appropriate sections of the Inception Report, with relevant updates based on the subsequent fieldwork and analysis
  
- **Findings (25-30 pages)**
  - Answers to each of the evaluation questions
  
- **Conclusions (5- 6 pages)**
  
- **Lessons (3-4 pages)**
  
- **Recommendations (3-4 pages)**
  
- **Annexes**
  - Terms of Reference
  - Inception Report including Evaluation Matrix
  - Bibliography
  - (As appropriate) methodological tools (including the reconstructed Theory of Change)

### Annex 3: Assessing Risks and mitigating against these.

The table sets out some risks based on previous evaluation experience that need to be assessed and mitigation measures that the evaluation team need develop

Risk and implications	Mitigation measures
<p>Covid-19 Virus spreading, or risk of spreading, results in restricted access and it is being impossible for evaluation country visit and meet stakeholders.</p> <p>Major impact on methodologies and/or timing</p>	<p>Delay implementation of the evaluation by an agreed period</p> <p>Consider options on ET working remotely through desk review and telecoms/video cons and surveys to engage with stakeholders (and include consideration of further reduction of scope)</p> <p>Consider delaying the timing of the start of the evaluation</p> <p>Build in regular review times (e.g., at start and end of inception) to assess and decide on progressing, delaying, or cancelling the process, and review proposed methodologies designed to cope with access constraints</p>
<p>The evaluation is over-ambitious in what it is attempting to cover or wrongly focused resulting in insufficient depth of analysis and/or missed opportunities on key areas</p>	<p>Use inception report to ensure relevance/responsiveness to stakeholder needs and to test feasibility, including assessing and factoring in where other evaluation processes already provide data and findings</p> <p>Reduce or change scope, clearly prioritise areas for evaluation focus, and clarify areas deprioritised</p>
<p>Insufficient time and attention paid to the evaluation at critical points in the process</p>	<p>Plan well in advance and ensure strong messaging by leadership.</p> <p>Ensure evaluation tasks incorporated into the team and key individual objectives</p> <p>Ensure other evaluation processes are scheduled outside the evaluation implementation</p>
<p>Major crisis in the country, requiring response by UN and partners leaving reduced capacity and attention on the evaluation</p>	<p>Delay implementation of the evaluation by an agreed period</p> <p>In case of a high-level crisis, postpone evaluation to the next cycle or greatly reduce scope Allocate dedicated staff to be kept free from crisis response to focus on the evaluation</p>
<p>Poor performance by the Evaluation Team (ET) likely to result in poor timeliness and quality of deliverables and poor return on the evaluation investment</p>	<p>Ensure due diligence in ET recruitment and onboarding</p> <p>Invest time in regular interaction with ET and closely monitoring progress in all phases of the process</p> <p>Monitor changes in team members and set requirements on like-for-like replacements</p> <p>Change evaluation team (or individuals) if necessary</p>

## Annex 4 – Disability evaluation *and guiding questions on Persons with Disabilities*

As persons with disabilities are among the most vulnerable and marginalized groups across countries and considering the critical role that social protection can play in supporting their inclusion, most joint programs had identified them as direct or indirect beneficiaries.

In line with the Leaving No One Behind principle and the obligations stemming from the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, even programs that do not target directly persons with disabilities should ensure that persons with disabilities within targeted population can access the program without discrimination.

The evaluation will therefore assess to what extent:

- Joint programme design, implementation, and monitoring have been inclusive of persons with disabilities (accessibility, non-discrimination, participation of organizations of persons with disabilities, data disaggregation)
- Joint programme effectively contributed to the socio-economic inclusion of persons with disabilities by providing income security, coverage of health care, and disability-related costs<sup>3</sup> across the life cycle.

### Guiding questions

- To what extent did the program target persons with disabilities?
  - Not specifically targeted
  - One of the groups of direct beneficiaries targeted
  - Main target group for the program
- To what extent did the design and implementation of activities of the joint program supported include disability-related accessibility and non-discrimination requirement?
  - No requirements
  - General reference
  - Specific requirements
- To what extent have persons with disabilities, in particular children and women with disabilities, been consulted through their representative organizations?
  - Not invited
  - Invited
  - Specific outreach
- To what extent did support to data collection and analysis, registries, and information system feature disability?
  - No reference to disability
  - Disability included via Washington group short set or similar but no analysis
  - Disability included via Washington group short set or similar
    - Part of general analysis
    - with specific analysis
- To which extent did the program contribute to support inclusion of persons with disabilities via:
  - Ensuring basic income security
  - Coverage of health care costs, including rehabilitation and assistive devices
  - Coverage of disability-related costs, including community support services
  - Facilitate access to inclusive early childhood development, education, and work/livelihood

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3 [Joint statement on inclusive social protection system for full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities](#)

## Annex 5: UNEG Ethical Code of Conduct

### UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Foundation Document

**UNEG, March 2008**

The Code of Conduct was formally approved by UNEG members at the UNEG Annual General Meeting 2008. Further details of the ethical approach to evaluation in the UN system can be found in the *Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation in the UN System* (UNEG/FN/ETH [2008]).

**UNEG/FN/CoC(2008)**

#### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EVALUATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

1. The conduct of evaluators in the UN system should always be beyond reproach. Any deficiency in their professional conduct may undermine the integrity of the evaluation, and more broadly evaluation in the UN or the UN itself, and raise doubts about the quality and validity of their evaluation work.
2. The UNEG<sup>4</sup> Code of Conduct applies to all evaluation staff and consultants in the UN system. The principles behind the Code of Conduct are fully consistent with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service by which all UN staff are bound. UN staff are also subject to any UNEG member specific staff rules and procedures for the procurement of services.
3. The provisions of the UNEG Code of Conduct apply to all stages of the evaluation process from the conception to the completion of an evaluation and the release and use of the evaluation results.
4. To promote trust and confidence in evaluation in the UN, all UN staff engaged in evaluation and evaluation consultants working for the United Nations system are required to commit themselves in writing to the Code of Conduct for Evaluation<sup>5</sup> (see Annexes 1 and 2), specifically to the following obligations:

#### Independence

5. Evaluators shall ensure that independence of judgement is maintained, and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.

#### Impartiality

Evaluators shall operate in an impartial and unbiased manner and give a balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the policy, program, programme or organizational unit being evaluated. **Conflict of Interest**

7. Evaluators are required to disclose in writing any experience, of themselves or their immediate family, which may give rise to a potential conflict of interest, and to deal honestly in resolving any conflict of interest which may arise. Before undertaking evaluation work within the UN system, each evaluator will complete a declaration of interest form (see Annex 3).

#### Honesty and Integrity

8. Evaluators shall show honesty and integrity in their own behaviour, negotiating honestly the evaluation costs, tasks, limitations, scope of results likely to be obtained, while accurately presenting their procedures, data and findings and highlighting any limitations or uncertainties of interpretation within the evaluation.

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4 UNEG is the United Nations Evaluation Group, a professional network that brings together the units responsible for evaluation in the UN system including the specialized agencies, funds, programmes and affiliated organisations. UNEG currently has 43 such members.

5 While the provisions of the Code of Conduct apply to all UN staff involved in evaluation, only UN staff who spend a substantial proportion of their time working on evaluation are expected to sign the Code of Conduct, including staff of evaluation, oversight or performance management units directly involved in the management or conduct of evaluations. All evaluation consultants are required to sign when first engaged by a UNEG member.

**Competence**

9. Evaluators shall accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge and work only within the limits of their professional training and abilities in evaluation, declining assignments for which they do not have the skills and experience to complete successfully.

**Accountability**

10. Evaluators are accountable for the completion of the agreed evaluation deliverables within the timeframe and budget agreed, while operating in a cost-effective manner.

**Obligations to participants**

11. Evaluators shall respect and protect the rights and welfare of human subjects and communities, in accordance with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights conventions. Evaluators shall respect differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, gender roles, disability, age, and ethnicity, while using evaluation instruments appropriate to the cultural setting. Evaluators shall ensure prospective participants are treated as autonomous agents, free to choose whether to participate in the evaluation, while ensuring that the relatively powerless are represented. Evaluators shall make themselves aware of and comply with legal codes (whether international or national) governing, for example, interviewing children and young people.

**Confidentiality**

12. Evaluators shall respect people's right to provide information in confidence and make participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality, while ensuring that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source.

**Avoidance of Harm**

13. Evaluators shall act to minimize risks and harms to, and burdens on, those participating in the evaluation, without compromising the integrity of the evaluation findings.

**Accuracy, Completeness and Reliability**

14. Evaluators have an obligation to ensure that evaluation reports and presentations are accurate, complete, and reliable. Evaluators shall explicitly justify judgements, findings and conclusions and show their underlying rationale, so that stakeholders are able to assess them.

**Transparency**

15. Evaluators shall clearly communicate to stakeholders the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied and the intended use of findings. Evaluators shall ensure that stakeholders have a say in shaping the evaluation and shall ensure that all documentation is readily available to and understood by stakeholders.

**Omissions and wrongdoing**

16. Where evaluators find evidence of wrong-doing or unethical conduct, they are obliged to report it to the proper oversight authority.

**(Each UNEG member to create its own forms for signature)**

**Annex 1: United Nations Evaluation Group – Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System****Evaluation Staff Agreement Form**

To be signed by all staff engaged full or part time in evaluation at the start of their contract.

**Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System**

Name of Staff Member:

\_\_\_\_\_

**I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Evaluation Group Code of Conduct for Evaluation.**

Signed at (place) on (date)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**(Each UNEG member to create its own forms for signature)**

**Annex 2: United Nations Evaluation Group Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System  
Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form**

To be signed by all consultants as individuals (not by or on behalf of a consultancy company) before a contract can be issued.

**Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System**

**Name of Consultant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Consultancy Organization** (where relevant): \_\_\_\_\_

**I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.**

Signed at (place) on (date)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



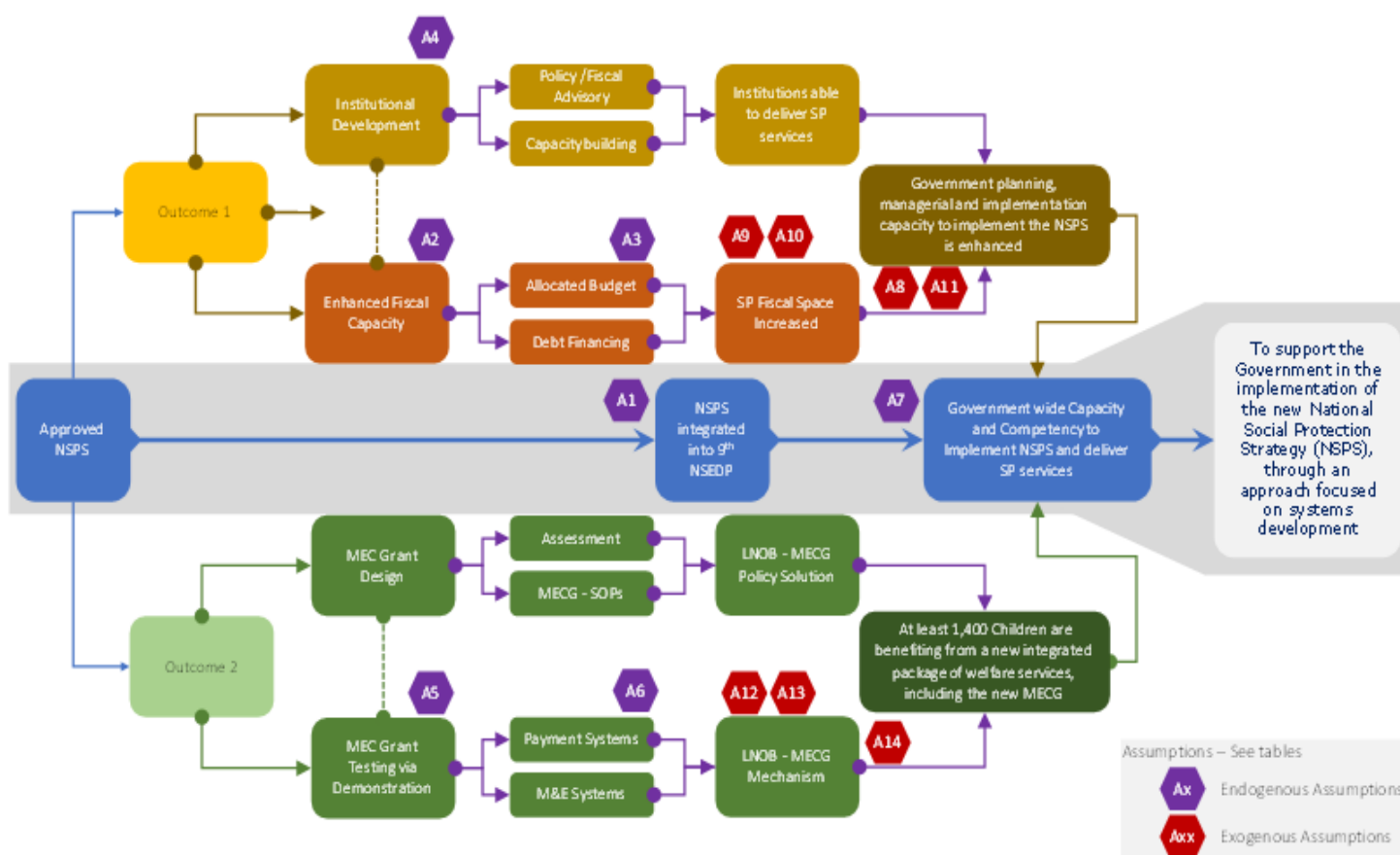
## Annex 6 – Other resources for inception and evaluation reports

- UNJP project documents, blogs, HIS, reports

### Other useful documents:

- United Nations Evaluation Group. 2008. *Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation in the UN System*, (<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/102>).
- United Nations Evaluation Group. 2014. *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*, (<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616>).
- United Nations Evaluation Group. 2016. *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*, (<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>);
- United Nations Evaluation Group. 2018. *UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator - Technical Note and Scorecard*, (<http://www.uneval.org/document/download/2148>)

## Annex 7 Theory of Change



## **Financial Proposal Template:**

<b>RFP Financial Proposal Template</b>				
RFP number:				
Company name:				
UNGM reference number:				
Main contact person and title:				
Email address of contact person:				
Direct telephone number of contact person:				
Date of proposal:				
Validity of proposal:				
Currency of proposal:				
Commercial proposals should be submitted on an <b>all-inclusive basis</b> for providing the contracted Deliverable as described in the TOR.				
<b>Service Fee Description</b>		<b>Costs to be provided based on Deliverables</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>				
Please indicate proposed payment term				
Breakdown of above rates to be provided for information purposes				

## **ANNEX II: SPECIAL NOTES**