UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

TERM OF REFERENCE

Request for Proposal

(RFP_005_2022)

Ref: RPS_242_2022

Assignment Title	Skills Assessment of public sector digital teams[1] and civil servants
Agency/Project Name	Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction/ Digital Government Transformation Project (RFF)
Type of Contract	Professional Service Contract
Contract Period	3.5 months (September-December 2022)
Location	Vientiane
Country	LAO PDR
Starting Date	3 October 2022
Deadline for Submission	25 September 2022
Submission email address	lao.procurement@undp.org

1. Assignment Background

Nations across Southeast Asia are facing unprecedented challenges to ensure the health, safety and security of their citizens' post COVID-19 crisis. The Governments of these nations have realised the importance of digital transformation for smooth and effective delivery of public services. Lao PDR has embarked on a strategy to accelerate digital transformation focusing on key priorities, such as infrastructure readiness, the development of supporting technology, nurturing digital talent and literacy, and improving regulations on digital ecosystem. In addition to the above, cabinet members of Lao PDR recently approved the five-year digital economic development plan (2021- 2025), which will involve using digital technology to drive economic growth, enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of state administration, and strengthen the management of private enterprises.

The Ministry of Technology and Communications (MTC) of Lao PDR has entered into a partnership to strengthen and support Lao PDR's digital transformation acceleration agenda., MTC requested for UNDP's support in conducting the Digital Maturity Assessment and in identification of key gaps in the digital ecosystem across the country, and prioritisation of pilot projects. The next phase of the agenda includes the development of a five-year roadmap for implementation of digital government transformation strategy. Lao PDR's 2020 Human Capital Index (HCI) is below the global

[1] Public sector digital teams refer to the public sector employees directly involved in the implementation of the Government's digital transformation agenda

average primarily because the country lacks focused policies for building digital workforce capacity and skills. This has led to limited availability of ICT/digital professionals who could support the Government in the achievement of its digital transformation vision.

Approximately 60%[2] of ministry/provincial employees are competent in basic ICT/digital skills. However, there is a severe shortage of digitally skilled professionals with intermediate and advanced level skills. Lack of clear structured career paths and incentives for employees to pursue digital government careers, lack of structured recruitment and career pathway for ICT/digital roles, and limited collaboration with private sector to identify the current and future demand for digital skillsets are few other challenges restricting the planning and implementation of digital transformation agenda. Rapid technological changes and staff rotation require governments to regularly update the skillsets of the public workforce and anticipate the requirements associated with the emerging change. Countries such as South Korea, Thailand, and Rwanda have taken significant initiatives to improve the digital skillsets of the government workforce.

Thai Government conducted a skills assessment of the several government authorities and public officials to determine their level of digital skills. They developed a training curriculum that had defined digital skills standards for different job roles across the Thai Government. Rwanda recently launched the National Digital Academy that implemented capacity building for several government employees across the country. Rwanda's Ministry of ICT developed a digital literacy for workforce (DLW) project that aims at training 100,000 public servants in digital literacy by 2024. These countries have realised the importance of digital skills development to boost the digital transformation process. UNDP and MTC are implementing a similar approach in Lao PDR to build ICT/digital manpower, improve workforce capabilities, and support the national ICT/digital competitiveness.

2. Objective/purpose of the assignment

The objective of the assignment is to support the Lao PDR Government to develop highly skilled and digital savvy government workforce to achieve its digital transformation agenda. The target groups for this assignment include public sector digital teams and civil servants.

- Identify the essential skills and abilities required by public sector digital teams and civil servants to achieve the digital transformation agenda;
- Develop a desired digital skills framework taking into account international good practice horizon map with the aim to equip the public sector digital teams and civil servants with basic/intermediate/advanced digital public service delivery skillsets, boosting local capacity to contribute to the digital transformation of the Government;

[2] Lao Government Digital Maturity Assessment Report

- Assess the existing digital skills base of the target groups. Identify skill gaps in public sector digital teams and civil servants using skill mapping ;
- Provide training and skill development recommendations to meet the requirements identified in the digital skills framework for the public sector digital teams and civil servants;
- Provide guidelines for developing a Public Service Digital Academy and other recommendations beyond training in skills, relevant for recruitment, retention, and enhancement of skills of public sector digital teams and civil servants.

3. Scope of work

UNDP and MTC are seeking the services of a qualified firm/service provider to conduct the following tasks:

a) Analysis of skills demand:
   - Identify performance requirements and the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by the public sector digital teams and civil servants to achieve the digital transformation agenda.
     - Conduct horizon scan of international best practices and define competencies, domains and proficiency levels, by referencing local uses and examples.
     - Conduct consultations and discussions with the relevant local stakeholders (private sector, the relevant government entities, and training service providers).

b) Digital Skills Framework:
   - Develop a digital skills framework for public sector and civil servants.
     - Review the existing digital skills policies, plans, strategies, and recruitment policies and identify areas for improvement.
     - Ensure that the framework encompasses all levels of digital skills for the target groups. Few examples are mentioned below:
       i. Public sector digital teams - Network management, cloud computing skills, cybersecurity skills, programming skills, data centre operations, and other relevant ICT skills.
       ii. Civil Servants - Facilitation and design skills, ethnographic research skills, online consultation and citizen engagement skills, and other skills required for public e-service delivery.
     - Map future digital skills need across the digital skills continuum, ranging from basic, intermediate to advanced level.
     - Recommend how this framework could be aligned or linked to the Government's digital transformation agenda.

- Provide guidance on the operationalization of the framework to enable public and private education and training providers to develop curricula, training methods, and assessments for public sector digital teams and civil servants.

c) Assessment of skills supply:

- Conduct an assessment of the existing digital skills base of public sector digital teams and civil servants.
  - Conduct consultations/survey/focus group discussions/performance assessments across sample group of public sector digital teams and civil servants covering 1 pilot ministry in agreement with UNDP and MTC. Ensure that the sample design includes public sector digital teams and civil servants at different levels/positions from all departments within the concerned ministry/departments. The assessment will be gender segregated (involve equal participation of both males and females at all levels). The sample design and sample size should be finalised in consultation with UNDP and MTC.
  - Identify digital skill gaps among the public sector digital teams and civil servants at basic, intermediate and advanced level based on the skills requirements defined in the digital skills framework
- Map the training/skills requirement at basic, intermediate and advanced level for the public sector digital teams and civil servants. Provide recommendations on the training and digital skills development requirements that will equip them with the necessary (basic, intermediate, advance level) digital skills and help them contribute to the digital transformation agenda.
- Provide guidelines for developing a Public Service Digital Academy that will help the civil servants and other public employees gain the knowledge, skills and mindsets they need in the digital age. The Digital Academy should support all civil servants and public employees at all stages of their learning and at all levels of their careers.
- Provide high level recommendations in terms of the institutional set up and leadership support required to recruit, retain, and enhance skills of public sector digital teams and civil servants.

4. Deliverables and Timelines

Deliverables/ Outputs	Suggested Timeframe	Review and Approvals Required
Inception Report	2 weeks from the issuance of the NTP	UNDP and MTC pilot team

Deliverables/ Outputs	Suggested Timeframe	Review and Approvals Required
Submission and approval of skills needs analysis report & skill map	5 weeks from the issuance of the NTP	UNDP and MTC pilot team
Submission and approval of the Digital Skills Framework for: i. Public sector digital teams ii. Civil servants	9 weeks from the issuance of the NTP	UNDP and MTC pilot team
Submission and approval of draft comprehensive digital skills assessment report and conducting stakeholder validation workshop	12 weeks from the issuance of the NTP	UNDP and MTC pilot team
Submission and approval of final comprehensive digital skills assessment report along with recommendations	14 weeks from the issuance of the NTP	UNDP and MTC pilot team

5. Institutional Arrangement

The consulting firm/service provider will work under the supervision of the UNDP and MTC pilot team. Advice and support may also be provided by MOES[3] / any other relevant Government agency as decided during the project initiation stage and relevant educational institutes.

6. Contract Duration

The consulting firm/service provider shall be engaged for a period of 3.5 months reckoned from the issuance of the Notice to Proceed (NTP) or commencement of the undertaking according to the date indicated in the NTP.

7. Duty station and expected places of travel

Based in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR. Some field visits outside Vientiane might be envisaged under the contract. In case of international, the contractor is at all times required to observe UNDP security rules and regulations.

[3] Ministry of Education and Sports

8. Minimum qualifications of the Consulting Firm

UNDP wishes to contract a consulting firm/service provider who can bring in their expertise and knowledge for conducting the skills assessment of public sector digital teams and civil servants in Lao PDR. The consulting firm may be an international firm or a local firm (registered business entity in Lao PDR).

- Minimum of Five (5) years of experience in undertaking skills assessment, training & skill development, human resource development, human resource management and related activities
- Minimum of Five (5) years' work experience in ICT/digital, or related field. A background and experience focusing on the public sector is necessary
- Demonstrated expertise in undertaking Digital / ICT capacity assessments, developing Digital / ICT skillsets to perform required tasks to be aligned with organizational needs, specifically in digitizing the public service would be advantageous
- At least 1-2 team members should be proficient in Laotian (Lao language)
- Experience working with UN Agencies, similar multilateral agencies and government entities would be considered an asset
- Prior experience in Lao PDR and/or Southeast Asia is desirable.

Important Note:

The firm shall propose a team comprising of at minimum one team leader, two technical experts, plus any additional support staff the consultancy deems necessary to deliver the assignment. As noted above, the consulting firm/service provider is encouraged to utilize local staff, where appropriate.

1. Team Leader

Duties and responsibilities: The Team Leader shall be responsible for planning and conducting the digital skills assessment. He/She shall be the main representative of the service provider firm that will coordinate and communicate with MTC and UNDP pilot team.

Education: A postgraduate degree in Education, ICT, Engineering, Economics, Management, Trade or related field.

Work Experience: A seasoned professional with at least 7 years of relevant knowledge and experience of current issues relating to digital skills development and implementation of digital skills framework, preferably at a national scale. Experience of working with Governments/UN agencies or international development organizations is desirable. Experience of working in developing countries will be an added advantage.

Language: Proficient in English while working knowledge of Laotian will be an added advantage.

2. Digital Skills Expert

Duties and responsibilities: The Digital Skills Expert shall be responsible for planning and conducting the digital skills assessment. He/she shall be the main representative of the service provider firm that will coordinate and communicate with MTC and UNDP pilot team.

Education: A postgraduate degree in Education, ICT, Engineering, Economics, Management, Trade or related field.

Work Experience: At least 5 years of relevant professional experience, focused on digital skills development. Experience of conducting national digital skills assessments. Extensive knowledge and experience of current issues relating to digital skills development (particularly advanced digital skills) and related best practice. Experience of working with Governments/UN agencies or international development organizations is desirable. Experience of working in developing countries will be an added advantage.

Language: Proficient in English while working knowledge of Laotian will be an added advantage.

9. Scope of proposal price and Schedule of Payments

The total amount quoted shall be all-inclusive and include all costs components required to work in Vientiane, living allowances, communications, consumables, and any other applicable cost that may be possibly incurred by the consultant in completing the assignment.

The contract price will be fixed output-based price regardless of changes in the cost components. Payments will be done upon completion of the deliverables/outputs in above table.

Deliverables/Outputs	**Target Dates**	**Payment** (% of Contract Cost)
Output 1 – Submission and approval of Inception Report	**End of September**	**30%**
Output 2 - Submission and approval of skills needs analysis report & skill map	**October**	
Output 3 - Submission and approval of the Digital Skills Framework for: i. Public sector digital teams ii. Civil servants	**November**	**30%**
Output 4 - Submission and approval of draft comprehensive digital skills assessment report and conducting stakeholder validation workshop	**November**	**40%**

Deliverables/Outputs	Target Dates	Payment (% of Contract Cost)
Output 5 - Submission and approval of final comprehensive digital skills assessment report along with recommendations	**December**	

10. Recommended Presentation of Offer

Interested bidders/firms are required to submit the following documents as part of their bidding proposal:

1. Form A: Technical Proposal Submission Form
2. Form B: Bidder Information Form
3. Form E: Technical Proposal Format (with CVs of Key Personnel)
4. Form G: Financial Proposal (with protected password)

The password for opening the Financial Proposal should be provided only upon request of UNDP.
UNDP will request password only from bidders whose Technical Proposal has been found to be technically responsive. Failure to provide correct password may result in the proposal being rejected.

11. Criteria for Selection of the Best Offer

The following criteria shall serve as basis for evaluating offers:

Summary of Technical Proposal Evaluation Forms		Points Obtainable	Points Awarded
1.	Bidder's qualification, capacity and experience	30	
2.	Proposed Methodology, Approach and Implementation Plan	20	
3.	Management Structure and Key Personnel	20	
	Total	**70**	

Section 1. Bidder's qualification, capacity and experience		Points obtainable	Points Awarded
1.1	Reputation of the Consulting firm	8	
1.2	Relevance of specialized knowledge and experience on similar engagements done in the region/country	8	
1.3	Experience working with the Government of Lao PDR or Development partners	7	

Section 1. Bidder's qualification, capacity and experience		Points obtainable	Points Awarded
1.4	Ability to collaborate with other team members and a broad range of stakeholders.	7	
	Total Section 1	**30**	

Section 2. Proposed Methodology, Approach and Implementation Plan		Points obtainable	Points Awarded
2.1	Understanding of the requirement: Have the important aspects of the task been addressed in sufficient detail? Are the different components of the project adequately weighted relative to one another?	5	
2.2	Description of the Offeror's approach and methodology for meeting or exceeding the requirements of the Terms of Reference	7	
2.3	Assessment of the implementation plan proposed including whether the activities are properly sequenced and if these are logical and realistic	5	
2.4	Quality assurance procedures and risk mitigation measures	3	
	Total Section 2	**20**	

Section 3. Management Structure and Key Personnel			Points obtainable	Points Awarded
3.1	Composition and structure of the team proposed. Are the proposed roles of the management and the team of key personnel suitable for the provision of the necessary services?		10	
3.2	Qualifications of Team Leader		10	
	- General Experience	6		
	- Specific Experience relevant to the assignment	3		
	- Regional/International experience	1		
	Total Section 3		**20**	

Combined Scoring Method:

- Where the Technical Proposal will be weighted a maximum of 70% and combined with the price offer which will be weighted a maximum of 30%

Technical Evaluation of Proposals:

- All Technical Proposals comprising the information/documentation provided will be evaluated to ascertain the suitability of the bidders/firm to carry out the assignment. The bidders/Firms who obtain a minimum of 49 points of the full mark (70 points) will be considered technically compliant, and the "password" for opening their Financial Proposal will be asked. Then, their Financial Proposals will be evaluated thereafter.

Financial Evaluation of Proposals:

- The Financial Proposals of all bidders/firms who pass the technical evaluation will be scored. The maximum 30 points will be allotted to the lowest financial bid, and all other bids shall receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest fee e.g. [30 Points] x [USD lowest] / [USD other] = points for other proposer's fees. The contract shall be awarded to the applicant who receives the highest cumulative score.