Call for Expressions of Interest and Proposal

VN#025 - Job Title: National Consultant for mapping diagnostic governance and laboratory strengthening initiatives in Viet Nam

To support health security and emergency team with national expertise to review the diagnostic governance mechanisms, frameworks, networks, and strengthening/capacity building initiatives in Viet Nam as to enhance WHO’s interventions in the country towards building sustainable national laboratory systems.

1. Background:
National laboratory system is an essential and fundamental part of overall health infrastructure and their goal to improve health in a country. Reliable and timely results from laboratory investigations are crucial elements in decision-making in almost all aspects of health services, disease prevention & control programmes and health emergencies.

In Viet Nam, a recent mapping exercise done by WHO and PATH revealed diverse laboratory capacities at national and sub-national levels, strengths, operational gaps, and challenges. Further, recent responses to infectious diseases like diphtheria, avian influenza, measles etc., has highlighted the institutional level capabilities and challenges in a coordinated national laboratory response. Maintaining optimal laboratory capacity and essential resources has become increasingly challenging due to systemic constraints, including acceptance of donations from developmental partners, affecting emergency responses.

Given these challenges, it is important to understand the governance structure and the policies that drive diagnostic and public health laboratories, to better device the interventions by WHO and other international partners. A systematic approach of comprehensively studying all available regulatory elements will enable a collective and cohesive decision-making process for WHO’s future work in the country.

The activity will build on previous mapping exercises and available data, to additionally study the governance mechanisms, frameworks and networks that drive the national laboratory system. Further, gather and consolidate different initiatives undertaken by government and international developmental partners, as an effort to harmonize interventions towards building a robust architecture for national laboratory system’s sustainable functions and resilience.

This activity aims to generate a baseline information and will to be updated on a periodic basis. Outcomes of the exercise will be used to inform national policy makers on the systemic gaps in the governance structures and considerations for sustainable development.

Term of reference

Under the overall supervision of the Health Security Team Coordinator and technical guidance from
The consultant is expected to:

- Systematically gather and consolidate the existing national laboratory system governance structure (inclusive of preventive, curative, academic, drug testing etc.), including the law, decree, circulars, and guidelines under the government of Viet Nam. The technical areas must (but not limited to) include invitro diagnostics, biosafety/biosecurity, quality management, networking, emergency preparedness, specimen referral system and AMR.
- Map the national level initiatives/projects/programme that are ongoing and upcoming related to infectious disease surveillance and laboratory capacity building.
- Based on historical mapping exercises, consolidate chronic gaps and challenges relating to systemic issues, to support developing high level strategic interventions for sustained development of laboratory system.

At the end of the assignment submit a comprehensive report of the existing policies, frameworks, strategies, networks, and strengthening/capacity building exercises (by international developmental partners and government).

**Expected outcome(s)**

The consultant, in constant technical coordination with the laboratory technical officer at WHO VNM is expected to deliver the following:

**Output 1:** Development of a tool to systematically collect all available policies and strategies (including laws, decrees, circulars, and guidelines) in Viet Nam with comparative gap analysis conducted using available data from historical mapping exercises, literature, and policies/strategies.

**Deliverable 1:** Finalized tool for the collection of all policies and strategies.

**Output 2:** Consolidation of various initiatives aimed to strengthen different aspects of laboratory system, which are currently ongoing and planned in near future by ministerial and international developmental partners.

**Deliverable 2:** Comprehensive final report with the list of gathered policies/strategies, capacity building initiatives and gap assessment findings.

2. **Planned timeline:**

   (Subject to confirmation): 2 months, from 21 Aug to 21 Oct 2024

3. **Specific requirements**

   a. **Qualifications required:**

      Essential
      - Advanced university degree (Master’s level or above) in the area of health/bio-medical laboratory sciences or related field.

      Desirable:
- PhD degree in public health, microbiology, virology or molecular sciences from an accredited/recognized institute.
- Specialized training or education in public health laboratory management

**b. Experience required:**

**Essential:**
- Minimum seven years of demonstrated experience working in public health or clinical laboratories at national level in the country
- Relevant experience in policy and regulatory development or implementation for national laboratory services

**Desirable:**
- Experience in engagements with international developmental partners within the country
- Experience in surveillance and response to emerging and/or re-emerging diseases in the country.

**c. Skills / Technical skills and knowledge:**
- Extensive knowledge on national laboratory system governance in Viet Nam
- Ability to collect, collate and consolidate information from policies and strategies to synthesize evidence for decision making
- Excellent communication, interpersonal and diplomatic skills.
- Strong writing skills including for presentations, proposals, concept notes, reports, and other documents.
- Ability to assess and differentiate systemic and operational challenges in laboratory systems
- Ability to work flexibly, autonomously, and efficiently, in a fast-paced environment, with the ability to adapt to shifting priorities.
- Ability to work harmoniously as a member of a team

**d. Language requirements:**
- Advanced level (writing, listening and speaking) of English and Vietnamese

**e. Competencies**
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Ability to work independently
- Producing results and technical competence

4. **Place of assignment**
   Offsite (home-based) when not attending relevant meetings/workshops etc.

5. **Medical clearance**
   The selected Consultant will be expected to provide a medical certificate of fitness for work.

6. **Travel**
   The Consultant is not expected to travel

7. **Budget**
   USD 2,881/month x 2 months = USD 5,762 payable in VND
   Please take note of the following when submitting application:
- The contractor will be responsible for paying taxes, if any.

Those who are interested can contact our focal person before/by 7 August 2024

Administrative Officer
World Health Organization
wpvnmapplicants@who.int

Subject: Application for VN#025 (National Consultant for Comprehensive review of the diagnostic governance mechanisms, frameworks, networks, and strengthening/capacity building initiatives in Viet Nam)