

## **Call for Expressions of Interest and Proposal**

**VN030** – Short-termed Consultant (STC) – To provide technical assistance and facilitate laboratory issues in context of COVID-19 response, including support to Ministry of Health, national and regional institutes and partners.

### **1. Background:**

Viet Nam has made considerable progress in strengthening health emergency preparedness over past years. The Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases and Public Health Emergencies (APSED III) has long served as a framework for action, to advance implementation of IHR (2005) core capacities. The progress in IHR core capacities has been demonstrated by Viet Nam early and successful response to the COVID-19 emergency to date, which has included a strong laboratory response. Viet Nam currently has capacity for approximately 50,000 RT-PCR tests daily at more than 175 laboratory sites and has capacity for VOI/VOC detection and viral characterization with three facilities conducting NGS, as routine.

However, there are a number of lessons learned from the COVID-19 global emergency and it is clear that efforts in country should continue to further strengthen public health emergency preparedness and response, including the laboratory technical area. Specifically, the COVID-19 emergency has highlighted the need for an official public health referral laboratory system, with clear testing algorithms, a functional reference network, surge capacity plans, evidence-based introduction of new laboratory methods and close linkage with surveillance and risk assessment. The last year has also demonstrated the need to continue to improve the laboratory biorisk management; ensuring laboratory biosafety and biosecurity systems are in place for a safe and secure laboratory testing, in line with the new WHO Laboratory Biosafety Manual 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. In addition, throughout the COVID-19 situation, the fundamental importance of laboratory quality management has been highlighted and further efforts are necessary to ensure laboratory techniques in Viet Nam are always quality assured.

Lastly, although COVID-19 remains critical for future laboratory support, efforts must continue across other priority areas, such as supporting the improvement of country capacity to detect, prevent and control infections with antibiotic resistance bacteria. In particular, work will focus on improving laboratory-based AMR surveillance and contributing the surveillance component of a new national strategy to combat AMR, together with MOH and other international partners.

### **2. Work to be performed**

- Liaise closely with national counterparts at the MOH as well as regional institutes, in particular the NICs, to provide technical support for emergency response, including for the COVID-19 in the area of laboratory testing such as through supporting guideline development, training, testing strategy design as well as assistance in response to media requests, with WHE team.

- Support WHE team in providing technical assistance to Ministry of Health (MOH) in strengthen IHR core capacities for laboratories and public health microbiology, in line with the Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases and Public Health Emergencies III (APSED-III), including laboratory-based surveillance of priority pathogens.
- Promotes coordination among partners from national laboratories and international/regional laboratories towards strengthening national systems for laboratory biosafety, biosecurity and quality and AMR laboratory-based surveillance.
- Performs other related duties as may be required.

**3. The main methods to carry out this activity will be:**

The consultant will be required to report to the office of WHO Viet Nam located in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, as requested by a supervisor. The work will involve but not limited to; participation in meetings and workshops, reviewing reports and documents, providing technical advice and attending online webinars and working groups.

The consultant will work closely with MOH departments such as the General Department of Preventative Medicine (GDPM), the Vietnamese Medical Association (VAMS) and the four regional institutes. The consultant is expected to facilitate and ensure a good working relationships with related developing partners.

**4. Planned timelines (subject to confirmation)**

Start date: 15/07/2021

End date: 31/12/2021

**5. Specific requirements**

**a. Qualifications required:**

*Essential:* University degree in molecular biology, virology, bacteriology, infectious diseases, and/or epidemiology from a recognized university.

*Desirable:* Postgraduate training or qualification in molecular biology, virology, bacteriology, infectious diseases, and/or epidemiology.

**b. Experience required:**

*Essential:* Minimum of five years of experience working in laboratory diagnostics or related epidemiological analysis at public health or clinical laboratories in national or international level.

*Desirable:* Experience in the area of surveillance and response to emerging and/or re-emerging diseases in Viet Nam. Experience in working with Ministry of Health or regional institutes to strengthen public health laboratories is an asset

**c. Skills / Technical skills and knowledge:**

- Sound knowledge of standards, methodology and techniques of health laboratories, including those in molecular biology, virology, bacteriology and biorisk management.
- Knowledge in communicable disease prevention and control, including the concept and principles of surveillance, risk assessment, rapid response and preparedness.
- Ability to communicate effectively to facilitate positive changes and strategic partnerships with government officials, UN agencies, development partners, private sectors, nongovernmental organizations;
- Experiences in operational planning, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation;
- Demonstrated success in developing reports and scientific publications;
- Ability to establish harmonious working relationships as part of a team and with other teams within the Organization;
- Ability to adapt to diverse educational and cultural backgrounds and maintain a high standard of personal conduct.

**d. Language requirements:**

Written and spoken fluency in English and Vietnamese is essential.

**e. Competencies**

- Teamwork
- Respecting and promoting individual and cultural differences
- Communication
- Knowing and managing yourself
- Producing results

**6. Place of assignment**

Hanoi, full time

**7. Medical clearance**

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

**8. Remuneration**

The consultancy fee will be based on UN-EU cost norm rate for consultancy.

Those who are interested can contact our focal person with contact detail at the end of the announcement before/by 27 June 2021.

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