

EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Laos PDR National Eye Health Workforce Development April 2021

Introduction

The Fred Hollows Foundation (The Foundation) is a secular non-profit public health organisation based in Australia, which was founded in 1992 by eminent eye surgeon Professor Fred Hollows. The Foundation focuses on strengthening eye health systems and the treatment and prevention of avoidable blindness caused by Cataract, Trachoma, Diabetic Retinopathy, and Refractive Error. The Foundation operates in more than 20 countries across Australia, The Pacific, South and South East Asia, and Africa. The Foundation was named The Australian Charity of the Year 2013 in the inaugural Australian Charity Awards.

The Foundation first visited Vientiane in February 2006 to investigate the opportunity to support blindness prevention activities. This preliminary meeting was followed in April 2006 by site assessments in Vientiane and the north of Lao PDR as well as consultations with partners and other agencies. Subsequently, a PDD was approved for the Phase I of “The Sustainable Comprehensive Eye Care Project” (SCEC) in 2007. In 2014, The Foundation implemented Phase 2 of SCEC in 10 provinces which just ended in December 2020. Apart from the SCEC, The Foundation has been implementing a project on Gender equity and social inclusion in Eye health in partnership with Gender Development Association and a project on Laos PDR National Eye Health Workforce Development in partnership with University of Health Sciences, Nursery Faculty and National Ophthalmology Centre.

Project background

The project under evaluation is “Laos PDR National Eye Health Workforce Development”, will be evaluating the first part of two- phase project which is 2-year project that started in October 2019 and will end in September 2021. The project seeks to increase eye health workforce in the public health system contributing to ending avoidable blindness in Laos PDR through developing competency-based curricula, evaluate and implement in consultation with stakeholders for eye care teams, improved capacity for ophthalmic education in Laos, leadership, advocacy and governance in place for future training programs. The project’s purpose is to bring together the government, the University of Health Sciences, teaching hospitals, ophthalmic institutes, and medical education institutions to develop and implement training and deployment of an eye health workforce to address avoidable blindness in Laos PDR. The workforce development and deployment will be done in alignment with the ‘Laos PDR National Policy on Eye Care’ (2016) and the ‘Sector Reform Framework to 2025’.

This project forms the first part of a two-phase project in 5 years: In phase I (2019-2020), training curricula will be developed, and ophthalmologists and ophthalmic nurses will be supported to become competent ophthalmic educators as future teaching faculty of UHS. In phase II (2021-2023), The project will standardise the training facilities through renovations, enhance academic capacity towards the lecturers and support training of eye-care teams (ophthalmologists and nurses that provide care along a continuum) that work in areas where eye-health services are inadequate, by subsidizing ‘outreach in-service exposure’ to well-functioning facilities.

The Foundation has been supporting eye care services in Laos PDR since 2007 to reduce avoidable blindness and strengthen eye health systems. Through previous projects learning in Laos PDR, FHF observes that there is an uneven distribution of workforce between urban and rural regions for eye health and this has hindered a large proportion of



the population's access to health services and led to disparities in eye health outcomes between those in rural and urban areas.

The feasibility study conducted by Dr Peter S. Cooper in 2013 clearly indicated that human resources in the eye health services are very limited at all levels. Technical support to build the capacity of eye health staff is a major constraint including the lack of adequate training facilities, curriculum development, educational resources and accreditation against international standards. Consultations with UHS and NOC confirmed that the situation Cooper described in his study has not changed. Some key findings from the feasibility study and lessons from FHF's work in Laos PDR a strong eye health workforce is essential if we are to achieve the goal of universal eye health for all. Setting aside funds to train, recruit and employ eye health workers, and motivate them to stay where they are needed, should be seen as an investment rather than a cost¹. The World Health Organization (WHO)'s Global Action Plan 2014-19 (and indeed, all the documents from the original VISION 2020 Initiative in 1999) emphasise the need for skilled human resources for a sustainable and stable eye health delivery system. Therefore, this is the right time for this project to support development of qualified eye health workforce for Laos PDR so that the workforce can greatly contribute to elimination of avoidable blindness in the country and achievement of new strategy of The Fred Hollows Foundation.

The theory of change for this project are:

In phase I (2019-2020),

- Curriculums for ophthalmic nurses and ophthalmologists will be developed, evaluated and implemented. Stakeholders will be brought together to ensure the right leadership and guidance is provided to increase local teaching capacity, have recognised training courses and international affiliations are in place. Capacity within UHS and NOC will be strengthened.
- Ophthalmologists will be supported to become competent ophthalmic educators as future teaching faculty of UHS.
- A preliminary assessment with stakeholders will ground the training plan in evidence, as well as inform stakeholders of critical needs and targets in service delivery and staffing and enable FHF to prioritize the support and resources to meet some of the need. This will be through supporting the UHS, Department of Training and Research and Large eye units at Regional hospitals (potential training facilities) to undertake mapping labour market dynamics for the eye-health sector.
- National Ophthalmology Centre will be supported to develop the first national eye health plan and get endorsed by Ministry of Health.

In phase II (2021-2023), The project will standardise the training facilities through renovations, enhance academic capacity towards the lecturers and support training of eye-care teams (ophthalmologists and nurses that provide care along a continuum) that work in areas where eye-health services are inadequate, by subsidizing 'outreach in-service exposure' to well-functioning facilities.

Purpose of the evaluation

The key purpose of this evaluation is to determine the extent to which the deliverables of the project have been met, and the extent to which the project achieved its purpose of "Improved capacity for ophthalmic education will be ready to roll- out in Laos PDR." It should also test the theories of change proposed in Phase I of the project. Since Phase I of the project is finishing in September 2021, this is an end term evaluation and planned to complete in June in order that project partners have sufficient time to apply lessons learnt and findings from the final evaluation in the rest of project lifetime.

The findings of this evaluation will be important in informing how training curriculum for eye health workforce developed, recognised, implemented, and increased in country capacity. The result of this evaluation will be implemented in informing how Phase II of project will be supported into future. The decision that these findings are intended to inform include mapping out The Foundation commitment to support Phase II of the project for the

¹ Community Eye Health South Asia Vol. 31 No. 102 2018. Published online 05 November, 2018



following three years. Therefore, the recommendations from the evaluation should focus on the future implementation of Phase II of the project.

The primary audience of this evaluation will be The Foundation's Laos team, Ministry of health, Ministry of Education, and sports as well as DFAT and Head Office. Secondary audiences may include provincial Health Departments, other INGOs who are working on eye health area and other community-based organisations involved in this project.

Evaluation scope and key questions

In line with overall purpose of the evaluation, the end- term evaluation of the project will examine the outcomes of the Phase I project. The evaluation of the project should draw out lesson and provide recommendations for the improvement of future programming. This end- term evaluation will cover the project from the beginning of its implementation since January 2019 until now. The evaluation will take place in Vientiane capital.

Key evaluation questions:

Effectiveness:

1. What is the quality of the ON and ORT curricula?
2. To what extent is the Laos Government committed to the curriculum?
3. To what extent the National eye health plan is developed and endorsed by Ministry of Health?

Relevance / Appropriateness:

1. How appropriate are the curricula for ON and ORT against the needs of Laos PDR?
2. How the National eye health plan is relevant with national health strategies?

Efficiency:

1. To what extent are the developed curricula ready for roll-out?
2. To what extent do the trainers are confident to deliver the training?
3. To what extent will the National eye health plan boost improvement of eye health in Laos?

Sustainability

1. To what extent are the endorsed training curricula used in the long run?
2. To what extent the National eye health plan will contribute to sustainable development of eye health in Laos?

Approach

The approach to this evaluation will be a mixed-method approach, which provides recommendations for future programming. The evaluation will unpack and document the theory of change underlying the project. The evaluation will take the form of a Utilisation-Focused evaluation, which is a type of evaluation that ensures that the evaluation is planned and conducted in a way that enhances the likely utilisation of both the findings and the process itself to inform decisions and improve performance. More information about this type of evaluation can be found here: https://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation

The evaluator chosen to conduct this evaluation will be expected to provide a detailed methodology for data collection and analysis based on the Key Evaluation Questions above. This can be negotiated and refined between TIO, The Foundation and the evaluator as part of the contracting process.

Indication of the type of fieldwork that will be necessary:

- Workshop with The Foundation Laos team (project developers) around unpacking the theory of change and developing the evaluation plan.
- Workshops with stakeholders at points during the process to a) understand stakeholder needs/interests; b) increase ownership of the evaluation, and c) increase understanding of reasoning.
- Interviews with key stakeholders (including FHF staff, project partners)
- Interviews with project beneficiaries (e.g., doctors, nurses)



- Stories of change will be documented as part of the interviews to highlight the process and evidence related to the key learning areas (i.e., training, partnership and collaboration)

All existing project development and project monitoring data will be provided to the evaluator, including:

- Baseline data of the project
- Quarterly progress reports (narrative)
- Quarterly monitoring reports (quantitative MIS data)
- Detailed theory of change for the project
- Project Implementation Plan, including detailed monitoring and evaluation plan.

Ethical approval is not required for this evaluation.

Deliverables

The evaluation Team Leader will develop the following documents:

1. **The evaluation plan:** The evaluation plan will elaborate on this ToR and will represent the agreement between the consultant and The Foundation Laos team on how the evaluation will be conducted based on the FHF evaluation plan template.

The evaluation plan will include: an updated field review schedule; list of persons to participate/consult during the evaluation; definition of evaluation team member roles and responsibilities; and the key evaluation approaches and methodologies, including questionnaires (and/or compile appropriate questions and discussion points) to guide discussions during field review consultations.

2. **Presentation of initial findings and recommendations:** to be presented to The Foundation Laos team for validation and discussion, prior to commencing the evaluation report.
3. **The evaluation report:** The development of this report will include facilitating and incorporating comments, and feedback from the evaluation team members and project partners. The final report, following initial feedback from The Foundation Laos team, the FHF M&E team, and ANCP coordinator, will be submitted to The Foundation Laos team about 4 weeks after field work ends at the latest.

The evaluation report must be written in English and Lao language and provided in The Foundation template and in electronic format (Microsoft Word). **A PowerPoint summary report** to support dissemination of findings to stakeholders.

The Foundation Laos will be responsible for subsequent sharing of the report and its recommendations with relevant national stakeholders in Laos. The consultant may be invited for the evaluation finding sharing workshop if needed.

Schedule

The proposed timeline for the evaluation and deliverables is as below. The more exact dates will be identified during contract negotiation process:

Particular	May				June			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Confirmation of Vendor consultant	x							
Police check, e-learnings		x						
Sign contract (and Safeguarding policy) and start of work			x					
Pre- workshop, tools, design and plan by consultant				x				
Field Activities					x			
Data Analysis						x		
Sharing first draft							x	
Suggestions/feedback on first draft							x	
Sharing the final Report								x



Evaluation team & qualifications

This evaluation will be contracted to an independent evaluator or team who will work closely The Foundation staff during the design and implementation of the evaluation. The Foundation seeks to engage the services of an independent consultant, who have following experiences and expertise in project/program evaluation.

Qualifications of evaluation team leader

- At least Master Degree Education in related subjects e.g. Social Science or Development Economics, Public Health
- At least 7 years of work experiences specially on evaluating development projects, impact evaluation project funded by any INGOs, bilateral, multilateral organizations
- Experience of evaluation in the health and education sector, and preferably knowledge of eye health in Laos or South East Asia.
- Demonstrated track record of producing high quality evaluations
- Knowledge and understanding of the political and cultural context of Laos
- Experience working on health sector improvement projects, with the ability to understand from a program and/or health facility manager's perspective what would be useful information and recommendations from this evaluation.
- Ability to analyse quantitative and qualitative data
- The consultant is also required to produce a copy or excerpt of at least 2 recent evaluation reports that they have completed.

Management and logistics

The management arrangements for the evaluation will be as follows:

Stakeholder	Key Contact	Role/responsibility in the evaluation
The Foundation Laos	The Foundation Evaluation Focal Point: Souphonsa Xaypannha - Country Manager of The Foundation in Laos	Focal person for coordination and support to undertake the evaluation. Provide access to relevant documents. Ensure milestones are met. Coordinate review and approval of deliverables.
Consultant Evaluator	TBA	Manage the evaluation Provide quality evaluation products Deliver agreed deliverables on time Coordinate with stakeholders and The Foundation in the design and implementation of the evaluation Advise stakeholder and The Foundation on any issues arising that affect the evaluation process

Application procedures

This evaluation will be conducted within 12 days (2 days for desk review, 3 days for field visit and 7 days for writing up the reports) in June 2021. Consultants who are interested in this evaluation will provide to The Foundation Laos the following application documents:

- Application for this evaluation.
- The CV/s of proposed evaluation consultant or team.
- Financial proposal for this evaluation.



- Examples of relevant reports and a list of relevant evaluations and research that the consultant has done previously.

The Foundation Laos will cover domestic travel costs, accommodation, and food for evaluation team during the field work as The Foundation Laos cost norms.

Confidentiality

The evaluator/s agree to not divulge confidential information to any person for any reason during or after completion of this contract with The Foundation. Upon completion or termination of this contract, the evaluator/s undertake to return to The Foundation any materials, files or property in their possession that relate to the business affairs of The Foundation.

Intellectual Property

All intellectual property and/or copyright material produced by the evaluator/s whilst under contract to The Foundation remain the property of The Foundation and will not be shared with third parties without the express permission of The Foundation. The evaluator/s are required to surrender any copyright material created during the term of the contract to The Foundation upon completion or termination of the contract.

Insurance

Any consultants involved in this evaluation will be required to have in place insurance arrangements appropriate to provision of the requirements in this ToR including travel insurance.

Safeguarding People

The Fred Hollows Foundation is committed to ensuring that its activities are implemented in a safe and productive environment which prevents harm and avoids negative impacts on the health and safety of all people, particularly children, vulnerable people and disadvantaged groups. The Foundation has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of any kind. All personnel including contractors/consultants are expected to uphold and promote high standards of professional conduct in line with The Foundation's Safeguarding People Policy including Code of Conduct. Contractors/consultants will be expected to sign and adhere to The Foundation's Safeguarding Code of Conduct and provide any background checks as required.

