

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT TO SUPPORT SURVEILLANCE ON COVID-19, INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY, AND OTHER DISEASES IN GUYANA

BACKGROUND:

WHO defines surveillance as “the systematic ongoing collection, collation, and analysis of data for public health purposes and the timely dissemination of public health information for assessment and public health response as necessary. Such concept alludes to the importance of systematic collection of significant data, data analyses and timely dissemination of results to guide interventions. Establishing strong disease surveillance system is very critical to help countries to monitor and evaluate the disease trends and patterns, particularly of emerging communicable diseases.

In Guyana, among the most common causes of illness, disability and death are communicable diseases such as COVID-19, Influenza, Respiratory Infections, Malaria, Dengue, TB, HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Vaccine Preventable Diseases, among others. There is also a strong commitment towards reinforcing capacities against emerging infectious diseases; rolling out a comprehensive health package that covers the most relevant health conditions across the various regions; and the elimination of some Neglected Infectious Diseases such as Lymphatic Filariasis, Leishmaniasis, Leprosy, Chagas and Soil Transmitted Helminths. An effective disease surveillance and response system is deemed to be of utmost importance in these undertakings and requires optimal functioning of core activities including case detection, registration and confirmation, reporting, data analysis, feedback and outbreak response.

The information should flow efficiently from the periphery to the center, with provision of timely feedback. These activities should be supported by adequate standards and guidelines, supervision, training, monitoring and evaluation and other financial and material resources. The consequence of weak functional surveillance system will hinder from understanding the burden and natural history of disease which lead to inability to take quick action and appropriate intervention to stop the spread of disease.

In February 2022, the Ministry of Health expressed to PAHO its intention to reinforce the country’s surveillance system. From May to July 2022, the MOH Epidemiology Unit and PAHO collaborated in planning and conducting a joint assessment and supportive supervision mission in different regions and health facilities towards understanding, reinforcing, and facilitating synergies across general surveillance and vertical programs such as Communicable Diseases at the national level, selected regions, and health facilities

Having obtained updated information as regards the current status of health surveillance in the country, including strengths, gaps, challenges, and opportunities, an International Consultant is

being hired to support the implementation of key recommendations and priority solutions to existing challenges.

OBJECTIVE OF THIS CONSULTANCY:

The Consultant will provide support to the implementation of key recommendations and priority solutions to existing health surveillance challenges noted during the MOH-PAHO joint assessment and supportive supervision missions and Surveillance Workshop, paying particular attention to the short-term priorities and establishing the building blocks for key medium and long-term efforts.

Under the general supervision of the PAHO/WHO Representative in Guyana and the direct supervision of the PAHO/WHO Advisor, Health Surveillance, Disease Prevention and Control, the Consultant is responsible for, but not necessarily limited to, the following assigned duties:

1. Provide technical support in the planning, development, and operational implementation of surveillance program activities, including but not limited to COVID-19, influenza, and emerging diseases, at national, regional and health facility levels.
2. Provide technical support in restructuring the surveillance unit, developing organogram and job description at the national and regional levels.
3. Collaborate in finalizing the country's National Strategic Plan for Health Surveillance
4. Provide technical assistance in development of surveillance guidelines, case investigation forms, line list, contact tracing and SOPs.
5. Support capacity building activities in syndromic surveillance, event-based surveillance, epidemic intelligence from open sources, community-based surveillance, and indicator-based surveillance.
6. Reinforce implementation of syndromic surveillance, vertical program surveillance, and vaccine preventable disease surveillance.
7. Provide technical assistance for the establishment and functionality of Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) for potential hazards such as infectious diseases, zoonotic events, food safety events and chemical events.
8. Provide technical support in establishment and implementation of flu surveillance, EIOS, Hepatitis surveillance and ESAVI surveillance.
9. Support data management and use for action, establishment of situation room for data visualization, mapping of regions and health facility based on the risk assessment.
10. Provide technical support in implementation of DHIS2 (or other) software for data base and analysis, as may be decided with MOH
11. Support supportive supervision and follow up visits to regions and health facilities
12. Support the MOH surveillance unit in coordinating with various programs that perform health surveillance functions
13. Collaborate in preparing and disseminating disease outbreak news, technical documents, updates, and assessments to key decision-makers in the organizational hierarchy and to the national health authorities, as required using standard tools and templates
14. Perform other related duties, as assigned.

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE:

- A Master's degree in public health, epidemiology, or a related field
- The Consultant should possess a minimum of five years relevant working experience in disease surveillance, with at least one year in an international setting.
- Experience working as a field epidemiologist will be an asset
- Excellent knowledge of Microsoft office applications (MS-Office Word, Excel, and Power Point) and statistical software, data collection, and data visualization tools
- Excellent knowledge of health information management systems such as DHIS 2
- Fluency in English is required; working knowledge of Spanish or Portuguese is desirable
- Experience working with PAHO/WHO, other United Nations Agencies and multiple stakeholders would be an asset.

DELIVERABLES:

1. National Strategic Plan for Health Surveillance
2. Monthly progress reports, with specific focus on:
 - Development and implementation of surveillance operational plans with costed activities at national, regional and health facilities level.
 - Review, development, printing and distribution of surveillance guidelines, training materials, tools and SOPs to the regions and health facilities.
 - Training of surveillance focal persons at national and regional level
 - Supportive supervision, post training assessment training and follow up visits to regions and health facilities
3. Periodic epidemiological updates and establishment of situation rooms
4. Submission of an end of consultancy report and brief to PAHO

DURATION OF CONSULTANCY:

The total duration of the assignment is eleven (11) months and will commence on 23 January 2023. The consultancy will conclude on 22 December 2023 with the submission of the final report.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

The consultant will receive a consultancy fee of US\$ 4,000 monthly, commensurate with experience and qualifications. Payments will be released monthly on the recommendation of the Project Manager and approval of the PAHO/WHO Representative, Guyana, in accordance with the satisfactory completion of the deliverables outlined in these terms of reference.

Consultant will also receive applicable subsistence allowance, and roundtrip airfare coverage for the flight into Guyana and back to home at the end of the contract.

PROJECT OFFICERS:

The Consultant will work in collaboration with the MOH Epidemiology Unit, and other collaborative agencies.

PROJECT MANAGER:



Dr. Rainier P. Escalada
Advisor, Health Surveillance, Disease Prevention and Control

Approved by:



Dr. Luis Felipe Codina
PAHO/WHO Representative, Guyana