

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTERNATIONAL PAHO CONSULTANT, NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR HEALTH LABORATORY SERVICES

1. BACKGROUND

Laboratory health systems are the backbone of disease surveillance systems, as laboratories provide biological, microbiological, immunological, chemical, hematological, immune-hematological, pathological evidence for disease diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and control, thus supporting and promoting disease surveillance efforts.

As a well-functioning disease surveillance system is critical to planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating health intervention systems, laboratory systems must be seen as integral to national health systems and disease surveillance. An integrated approach to laboratories can aid in streamlining disease surveillance and response, an approach that can be supported and achieved through the development and implementation of a National Strategy for Health Laboratory Services.

The Ministry of Health (MOH), Guyana requested PAHO's support in the development and implementation of a National Strategy for Health Laboratory Services that reflects and supports national health goals, including those that pertain to One Health, pandemic preparedness, prevention, and response, disease elimination, and the roll out of the country's package of essential health services.

2. PURPOSE / OBJECTIVE OF THE CONSULTANCY

The primary purpose of the consultancy is to facilitate the development and finalization of Guyana's National Strategy for Health Laboratory Services, based on the findings and recommendations of various laboratory assessment missions conducted jointly by PAHO and MOH during the COVID-19 pandemic; and the Joint External Evaluation / Voluntary External Evaluation of IHR capacities, among others.

3. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, TIMELINES AND DELIVERABLES

The specific objectives of the consultancy are to:

1. Compile documents relevant to the laboratory sector including national health regulations; laboratory sector regulations; licensing, certification, and accreditation standards; quality management and biosafety and biosecurity standards. (These documents were identified during the JEE/VEE).
2. Compile assessments of the national laboratory systems and/or laboratories conducted by PAHO, WOH, CARPHA, GF, PEPFAR, etc.) and covering human, animal, and environmental health systems.
3. Compile statistics on the laboratory system(s), including numbers, functions, types and locations of laboratories.
4. Assess laboratories at different levels of the laboratory systems on-site to complement existing assessments and complete a situational analysis of the laboratory systems. (JEE/VEE report will also be useful here).
5. Coordinate with the MOH the development of the strategy (ideally, the national laboratory working group).
6. Meet the MoH programs to map the different laboratory needs and services they are mandated to provide per level of care.
7. Draft the country's National Strategy for Health Laboratory Services, based on international guidance on laboratory systems and using a One Health approach. The minimum content of the strategy is defined below.
8. Coordinate planning and implementation of the consultation process for discussing and finalizing the National Strategy for Health Laboratory Services
9. Coordinate the consolidation a 24-month implementation plan that will facilitate the implementation of the National Strategy for Health Laboratory Services
10. Perform other related duties, as assigned.

4. MINIMUM CONTENT OF THE STRATEGY

In the preparation of the strategy the following topics should be considered by the consultant:

1. Define the national framework for laboratory services, including policy formulation roles, regulatory mechanisms, focal points, planning functions.
2. Propose minimum physical infrastructure, procurement and supply management processes, Information systems and communication for laboratory services at primary care, district, regional and national levels.
3. Define laboratory networks, the minimum equipment, staffing, and training needs for laboratory services at primary care, district, regional and national levels.
4. Propose the principles and basic rules of a supervisory system of laboratory services at national, regional and district levels, including reporting needs, monitoring and evaluation and retaining of staff.
5. Propose the guiding principles, rules, and mechanisms for the organization of transportation of samples for laboratory testing across levels of care.
6. Define quality assurance rules for health laboratory services including Quality standards. Training, Documentation and its control, and assessment.
7. Propose principles and rules for the rational use of laboratory services across health service providers and community awareness.
8. Define rules for laboratory safety, including biosafety, Biosecurity, Occupational health and safety, Waste management including environmental protection.

5. PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Qualifications:

1. A master's degree in public health, health systems management, or a related field
2. A minimum of 8 years relevant experience working in laboratories, with at least one year in a managerial or supervisory position
3. Experience in developing National Strategic Plans
4. Excellent knowledge of laboratories
5. Fluency in English is required.
6. Excellent knowledge of Microsoft office applications (MS-Office Word, Excel, and Power Point) Desirable:
7. Experience working with PAHO/WHO and multiple stakeholders.

6. DELIVERABLES

1. Development and submission of a work plan for the development of the National Laboratory Strategy
2. Development of a situation analysis based on the available assessment reports and and complementary discussions with national counterparts.
3. Submission of the first draft of the development of the National Strategy for Health Laboratory Services
4. Submission of the final draft of the National Strategy for Health Laboratory Services
5. Submission of the corresponding operational plan that will facilitate the implementation of the National Strategy for Health Laboratory Services

Deliverables	Estimated time
Updated / Finalized work plan	1 week

Situation analysis based on the assessment reports and complementary discussions with national counterparts	3 weeks
Provisional draft of the National Strategy for Health Laboratory Services	2 weeks
Planning and implementation of the consultation process for discussing and finalizing the National Strategy for Health Laboratory Services	4 weeks
Final draft of the National Strategy for Health Laboratory Services	3 weeks
Implementation plan that will facilitate the operationalization of the National Strategy for Health Laboratory Service	3 weeks
Total	16 weeks

7. DURATION OF CONSULTANCY

The total duration of the assignment is four months commencing on 1 August 2023. The consultancy will conclude on 30 November 2023 with the submission of the final product(s)

8. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The consultant will receive a consultancy fee of US\$ 4000 monthly commensurate (Band B, 72% FTE, where base fee at 100% FTE is US\$ 5500) 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.

9. PROJECT OFFICERS

With guidance from and in collaboration with the Project Manager, the Consultant will work in collaboration with the PAHO-GUY CDE and HSS teams, the National Public Health Reference Laboratory, and other collaborative agencies.

10. PROJECT MANAGER

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