CALL FOR INTERESTS

**Scope of Work:** Assessment of the Center of Excellence for Breastfeeding model implementation in Lao PDR

**Location:** Lao PDR.

**Contracted Days:** Approximately 20 days

**Contract Period:** September/October – November 2021

**Submission due date:** September 25, 2021

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**About Alive & Thrive**

Alive & Thrive (A&T) is an initiative to save lives, prevent illness, and ensure healthy growth and development through the promotion and support of maternal nutrition, breastfeeding, and complementary feeding practices recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). The A&T initiative, managed by FHI Solutions (a wholly-owned subsidiary of FHI 360), is currently funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Irish Aid and other donors.

Since 2009, A&T has demonstrated that innovative approaches to improving maternal, infant, and young child nutrition (MIYCN) practices can be delivered at scale and have an impact. A&T has evolved from at-scale implementation work in three countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam), to providing a robust and evidence-rich package of technical assistance in five countries (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria and Madagascar) and two regions (Southeast Asia and West Africa). A network of local and national partners lends further voice and credence to the A&T initiative.

Efforts to strengthen systems, empower policy advocates, and promote the strategic use of data provide the foundation for A&T to promote sustainable, evidence-based strategies for MIYCN.

In Southeast Asia (SEA), A&T provides strategic technical assistance to seven countries (Viet Nam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and the Philippines) to support policy and system reforms to create an enabling and supportive environment for MIYCN. To achieve this, A&T SEA works in close collaboration with UNICEF, Save the Children and other partners in these countries to identify and execute an agreed upon work-plan that focuses primarily on regulating inappropriate marketing practices of breastmilk substitutes, maternity protection, and breastfeeding-friendly health systems. This also includes support for improving early essential newborn care practices in hospitals by establishing Centers of Excellence (COE) for breastfeeding in Viet Nam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar. To improve the access to human breastmilk for at-risk infants (pre-term, low-birthweight, sick infants), A&T SEA provides strategic technical assistance to setting up human milk banks and related services in Viet Nam and Myanmar, and to establishing a regional network in the SEA region.

In addition to the above, A&T SEA is also mandated to provide technical assistance for social and behavior change communications (SBCC) to some member countries of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. The aim is to increase uptake of proven tools and approaches for national-level advocacy, and development of multi-sectoral SBCC strategies and country plans for scaling up MIYCN. A&T is currently providing such support to Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and the Philippines in the SEA region.
About Center of Excellence for Breastfeeding model

With funding from Irish Aid, A&T is working to strengthen the capacity of health systems in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam to deliver high-quality breastfeeding-friendly services to mothers and infants. A&T provides strategic technical assistance to the governments of these countries to establish and sustain a network of 30-40 COE that deliver high-quality breastfeeding and early essential newborn care (EENC) services within a supportive policy environment by 2021. Through these efforts, A&T hopes to achieve the results stated in the result framework below:

Project Title:
Alive & Thrive - Strategic Technical Assistance to Establish Breastfeeding Friendly Centres of Excellence in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam.

Project objective(s):
To increase and maintain high levels of early initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding at hospital discharge for both vaginal and C-section deliveries in Viet Nam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar by strengthening health systems and cultivating enabling environments where skilled providers can practice early essential newborn care (EENC).

Outcome:
By December 2021, Alive & Thrive and partners will have supported the Governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam to establish and sustain a network of 30-40 centres of breastfeeding excellence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Desired results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Number of centres of breastfeeding excellence established in each country and in the region.</td>
<td>30-40 centres of breastfeeding excellence.</td>
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<td>2. Rate of early initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding at hospital discharge for both vaginal and C-section deliveries.</td>
<td>80% rates for early initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding at hospital discharge.</td>
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<td>3. Number of health facilities implementing the EENC guidelines with breastfeeding counselling and support.</td>
<td>30-40 health facilities implementing EENC guidelines with counselling and support.</td>
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<td>4. National codes for marketing of breastmilk substitutes (BMS) enacted with enforcement mechanism in line with World Health Assembly resolutions.</td>
<td>National codes for marketing of BMS enacted and enforced in 3-4 countries.</td>
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<td>5. Evidence of enforcement of national codes for marketing of breastmilk substitutes at health facilities.</td>
<td>Evidence of enforcement of national codes at health facilities in 3 countries.</td>
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<td>6. Evidence of EENC criteria and data included in national hospital standards and accreditation system to institutionalize the Baby-Friendly Hospital principles.</td>
<td>EENC criteria included in hospital standards and accreditation systems in 2 countries.</td>
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<td>8. A regional EENC network established.</td>
<td>One regional EENC network established.</td>
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The CoE model was developed in response to the WHO/UNICEF recommendation for countries to increase the coverage of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) through the integration of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding into national health systems. In Viet Nam, the model builds upon the foundation established by the national hospital quality standard on maternal and newborn care and uses performance-based and output-based measurement to achieve consistent implementation of breastfeeding counseling, prolonged skin-to-skin contact, early initiation of breastfeeding, rooming-in, and adherence to the International Code of marketing of breast-milk substitutes. These practices help mothers and newborns begin and maintain breastfeeding successfully regardless of whether they delivered vaginally or via cesarean section during their hospital stay and after discharge.

Building on the initial success of the COE initiative in Viet Nam, A&T has been working with Ministries of Health, hospital leaders, and development partners to expand the initiative to Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar. Taking into account the unique health system, context, and priorities of each country, A&T’s approach to the establishment of COEs in the three countries builds upon existing programs and monitoring systems and aims to strengthen the overall enabling environment for breastfeeding, without creating standalone or parallel systems.

In Lao PDR, the CoE effort is led by supported by Save the Children International (SCI) in Lao in close partnership with various MOH departments. Model breastfeeding Hospital recognition is done with the National Nutrition Center to promote and encourage effective implementation of quality Early Essential Newborn Care regarding the breastfeeding. SCI also works closely with the RMNCAH Strategic Newborn Committee and the Department of Healthcare to improve policies and develop care guidelines in support of breastfeeding. The efforts seek to encourage best practices on counselling, immediate and sustained skin-to-skin contact, early initiation of the breastfeeding, and successful establishment of breastfeeding during in-patient care.

A&T plans to conduct an assessment of the CoE project in Lao PDR with the following objectives:

1. To determine whether the results that A&T committed to Irish Aid have been achieved in Lao PDR.
2. To identify the key enablers and barriers, areas for improvement of the COE model implementation, possibilities for sustainability, dissemination and adaptation in Lao PDR.
3. To understand the added values of the approach versus if it is not implemented by A&T and Irish Aid.

**Scope of work**

An international consultant has been contracted to lead the assessment. A&T is seeking for a local consultant to support assessment of the COE project in Lao PDR with specific tasks as below:

1. Translate data collection tools in collaboration with A&T team and international consultant.
2. Making appointments with key informants and conducting interviews (in local language) in-person or virtually, as required by local COVID-19 restrictions.

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1 This indicator (result) is for Lao PDR only. An endline assessment was completed for this indicator.
3. Summarize interviews (in English).
4. Translate key messages from interviews into English.
5. Develop a draft report along with international consultant.

**Deliverables and due dates:**

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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>LOE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Translated data collection tools and proposed list of key informants</td>
<td>October 7, 2021</td>
<td>5 days</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Completed interview forms (English) with key informants: hospitals, MOH, stakeholders</td>
<td>October 30, 2021</td>
<td>10 days</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Draft report including key findings, developed in consultation with international consultant and A&amp;T</td>
<td>November 25, 2021</td>
<td>5 days</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>20 days</td>
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**Expected Profile of the consultant**

The Consultant is expected to demonstrate the following competencies:

- Experience in conducting evaluations and expertise in design, field experience in data collection, data collation and analysis and good report writing. This includes being able to demonstrate strategic thinking as well as producing practical and realistic recommendations.
- Experience/expertise in relevant areas, including:
  - Maternal and infant nutrition, breastfeeding, Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative, Early Essential Newborn Care.
  - Social behavior change programs/evaluations.
- Demonstrated knowledge on the health sector in Lao PDR.
- Good understanding and evaluation of health systems, health service provisions, hospital standards and accreditation in programs.
- Experience in participatory evaluative approaches, including strength-based ways of working with NGOs, government and health facilities.
- Ability to communicate in Lao language. Professional level English language speaking and writing skills. If consultant requires translation, they must provide this themselves within their bid.

**How to apply**

Applications to this Call for Interest should be submitted by email to the attention of Binh Ta (Ms.), tbinh@fhi360.org and cc: Mien Nguyen, ntmien@fhi360.org, no later than September 25, 2021, 17:00 (Hanoi time) with the following information:

1. A brief cover letter demonstrating you meet the competencies above and describing your proposed methodology.
2. Proposed timeline and confirmation of your ability to work in the dates provided and meet the required deadlines.
3. A copy of your CV and a completed and signed biodata form with proposed daily rate included (form posted with this RFP).
4. Two references, including contact information.
5. A sample of a recent, similar evaluation report you have written.
Note: Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, it is expected that the consultant is already in Lao PDR with a valid work permit if required.

Applications received after this date and time may not be accepted for consideration. FHI Solutions/FHI 360 will acknowledge receipt of your application by email. Applications must be submitted in electronic format.

**CONTRACT MECHANISM**

FHI Solutions LLC/FHI 360 anticipates issuing a firm fixed price work order. The work order will be issued in USD to the responsive consultant whose quote meets the above requirements and offers a competitive price. Once an award is issued, it will include a fixed price payment based on completion of the scope of work, with payments linked to timely submission and approval of deliverables.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

Applications will be evaluated and ranked by a committee on a best value basis according to the criteria below. Only consultants who are able to provide all of requirements listed above will be considered.

Selection shall be based on the following weighted categories:

1. Competencies: 40%
2. Rate: 40%
3. References: 20%

*NOTE: FHI Solutions LLC/FHI 360 will not compensate the individual for its preparation of response to this Call for Interests nor is the issuing of this Call for Interests a guarantee that FHI Solutions LLC/FHI 360 will award a contract.*

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Consultants are responsible for review of the terms and conditions described below and in the award template attached.

**The proposed payment terms of the anticipated agreement:**

- 25% payment after signing contract and upon submission of the first deliverable.
- 50% payment upon submission of the second deliverable.
- 25% payment upon submission of the third deliverable.

**Withdrawal of Applications**

Applications may be withdrawn by written notice, email or facsimile received at any time before award.

**False Statements in Applications**

Consultants must provide full, accurate and complete information as required by this solicitation and its attachments.

**DISCLAIMERS AND FHI SOLUTIONS/FHI 360 PROTECTION CLAUSES**

- FHI SOLUTIONS/FHI 360 may cancel the solicitation and not make an award
- FHI SOLUTIONS/FHI 360 may reject any or all responses received
- Issuance of a solicitation does not constitute an award commitment by FHI Solutions
- FHI SOLUTIONS/FHI 360 reserves the right to disqualify any offer based on offeror failure to follow solicitation instructions
• FHI SOLUTIONS/FHI 360 will not compensate offers for response to solicitation
• FHI SOLUTIONS/FHI 360 reserves the right to issue an award based on initial evaluation of offers without further discussion
• FHI SOLUTIONS/FHI 360 may choose to award only part of the activities in the solicitation, or issue multiple awards based on the solicitation activities
• FHI SOLUTIONS/FHI 360 may request from short-listed offerors a second or third round of either oral presentation or written response to a more specific and detailed scope of work that is based on a general scope of work in the original RFP.
• FHI SOLUTIONS/FHI 360 has the right to rescind an RFP or rescind an award prior to the signing of a subcontract due to any unforeseen changes in the direction of FHI SOLUTIONS’s client, be it funding or programmatic.
• FHI SOLUTIONS/FHI 360 reserves the right to waive minor proposal deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition
• FHI SOLUTIONS/FHI 360 will be contacting offerors to confirm contact person, address and that bid was submitted for this solicitation.

END OF CALL FOR INTERESTS******