

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS – SEARCH FOR EXPERTS

Publication Reference: [18-11/LAOS/1/2](#)

Action title : The role of a national health insurance institution in ensuring quality of services

Action code and partner country : **SOCIEUX+ 2018-11 LAOS**

Partner Institution: National Health Insurance Bureau (NHIB), Ministry of Health (MoH)

Activity 1: Overview on National Health Insurance: benefits design, systems management, and quality

➤ **Implementation date: September, 2018**

Responsible Coordinator: Gian Luca PORTACOLONE

Responsible Technical Expert: Xavier COYER

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Application deadline : Until the position is filled

Partnership led by:

ABOUT SOCIEUX+

The European Union (EU) promotes and maintains dialogue on social protection and inclusive employment policies with an increasing number of partner countries. This effort has been confirmed in the European Commission (EC) Communication COM (2016) 740 final - "Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development Our World, our Dignity, our Future". A significant number of cooperation activities in different countries related to these fields are funded by geographic or thematic instruments. However, a gap had been observed in the EU cooperation with third countries with regard to providing support to short-term measures and peer-to-peer cooperation to promote the development of social protection.

SOCIEUX+ - EU Expert Facility on Employment, Labour and Social Protection – (hereafter: "the Facility" or "SOCIEUX+") is a technical assistance facility set-up and co-funded by the EU (through the EC's Directorate for Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid), France, Spain and Belgium and implemented by a partnership composed of four partners: Expertise France, leader of the implementation Partnership (hereafter: "the Partnership"), the Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas (FIIAPP), Belgian International Cooperation on Social Protection (BELINCOSOC) and Belgium Technical Cooperation (BTC).

The general objective of the facility is to expand and improve access to better employment opportunities and inclusive social protection systems in partner countries.

The specific objective is to enhance the capacities of partner countries to better design, manage and monitor inclusive, effective, and sustainable employment strategies and social protection systems through peer-to-peer short-term technical assistance and knowledge development.

SOCIEUX+ supports the efforts of Partner Countries (PCs) of the EU in the reform, development and extension of their social protection systems and the strengthening of labour & employment policies. The Facility aims at enhancing the capacities of partner countries to better design, manage and monitor inclusive, effective, and sustainable employment strategies and social protection systems through peer-to-peer short-term technical assistance and knowledge development. SOCIEUX+:

- Recognises the impact of social protection and employment in reducing poverty and vulnerability;
- Supports the efforts of partner governments in promoting inclusive and sustainable social protection and employment systems;
- Complements the efforts made through other European Union initiatives.

SOCIEUX+ makes European expertise quickly available with minimal transaction costs for partner institutions. It draws on the expertise of public or mandated bodies, non-governmental organisations, and relevant civil-society organisations of EU Member States and international specialised organisations. It can also support South-South and triangular cooperation through the mobilisation of practitioners from partner countries. SOCIEUX+ is operational since September 2016.

The Facility is an expansion of SOCIEUX - Social Protection European Union Expertise in Development Cooperation -, which was established in 2013 and progressively incorporated.

1. ACTION DESCRIPTION

Lao PDR's revised constitution of 2015 states that "the State intends to improve and expand public health services to take care of the people's health" with a special focus on women and children, poor people, and people in remote areas.

Already in 2014, the Ministry of Health (MoH) launched an ambitious sector reform including five priority areas: 1) human resource development, 2) health financing, 3) organization, management and working procedures, 4) health services, 5) information, monitoring and evaluation. Health financing objectives include reducing out-of-pocket payments to 35% of total health expenditure and increasing social health protection coverage to 80% in 2020. Integration and expansion of social health schemes was one of the measures taken by the MoH to attend these objectives.

Based on Prime Minister Decree 470, the integration of social health protection schemes continued over the last years. Schemes covering the formal sector were integrated under the umbrella of the National Social Security Fund. The management of the schemes covering the informal sector has been consolidated under NHIB. Health equity funds, as well as community-based health insurance for the informal sector, free maternal and child health services have been integrated into the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme. The rollout of the NHI scheme has resulted in a rapid increase in coverage in 2016, which nevertheless remains low at the country-level.

The overall vision for the NHI has been defined in the National Health Insurance Strategy 2017 – 2020. It identifies six specific objectives: 1) strengthen the necessary legal and governance frameworks for the operations of NHI & NHIB; 2) ensure sustainable funding of the NHI policy; 3) build and sustain NHIB capacity at all levels (national, provincial, and district); 4) ensure effective expansion, operation and management of the integrated NHI scheme nationwide; 5) ensure quality of services provided to members and responsiveness of health facilities; 6) raise awareness about NHI.

The MoH is the national authority responsible for the governance and overall guidance of the health sector. In line with government policies, the MoH drafts and approves sectoral policies and implements programmes aiming to improve the health of the population. The MOH has provincial and district health Offices based at the local government offices.

Management of the social health schemes in Lao PDR is ensured by NHIB, a department under MoH for schemes covering the informal sector, and by the National Social Security Fund under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. Discussions on handing over the management of the formal sector health insurance scheme to NHIB are ongoing.

The organization and operation of the NHIB at central level is set in the Decree 1666/MoH. NHIB has branches at provincial and district level which are closely involved in planning, fund transfers, verification and monitoring.

NHIB's main priorities for 2018 include the submission of the Law on National Health Insurance to the National Assembly; adjustment to the mandate, operational guidelines and internal procedures of NHIB to reflect the management of the integrated scheme; developing complains and information mechanisms; continuation of adjusting provider payment mechanisms and rates; rollout of an electronic information database; and continuation of capacity strengthening at all levels.

1.1 General Objective

Support NHIB to institutionalize a transparent and accountable process for developing and adjusting a benefit package for all its members under an integrated NHI scheme.

1.2 Specific Objectives

Developing a process for adjusting the NHI benefit package which is transparent, understood and supported by key stakeholders.

Provide guidance related to institutional, technical and administrative challenges of merging benefit packages of different schemes.

Support NHIB in clarifying its role and tools available for increasing quality of services provided to its members.

1.3 Expected Results

Increased understanding among relevant stakeholders and NHIB staff on the need for having a clearly defined benefit package, on the functions of a health insurance management agencies, and on their role in ensuring quality of services.

Guidelines for adjusting and developing a benefit package are proposed to the National Health Insurance Management Committee.

Roadmap providing guidance and/or options for addressing institutional, administrative and technical aspects of the handing over of the management of the formal sector schemes to NHIB in line with the agreements between the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare/National Social Security Fund and MoH/NHIB, is developed.

The technical assistance provided to MoH/NHIB shall unfold in three distinct activities, which focus on the role of health insurance agencies, the definition of a health benefit package, and a new architecture of NHI in view of the hand-over of the management of the formal sector schemes to NHIB. Their common thread is to empower NHIB in view to specify NHI benefits, to enlarge its mandate and management responsibility, and to ensure quality of the health services.

The first Activity shall overview the National Health Insurance in Lao PDR, with particular regards to three fundamental issues: design of benefits package, management of the health systems, and quality in the delivery of health services. The technical assistance shall start and accompany a structured reflection within MoH/NHIB - and eventually other national and international stakeholders to be mobilized by the Partner - in view to review and address some of the challenges identified in the NHI Strategy 2017–2020, namely:

- Operability. Core benefit package to be defined; Discrepancies in payment rates; Lack of harmonization in information systems; Need for M&E to generate evidence.
- Services availability and readiness. Limited readiness to provide basic services and lack of health workers and facilities; Unequal distribution of facilities with urban/rural discrepancies.
- Legal and governance structure. Lack of legal framework for UHC in Lao PDR; Unclear NHIB status despite need for greater autonomy; Limited accountability mechanisms.
- Financial sustainability. At central level: no NHI fund autonomy; Limited budget for capacity and operational costs (planning, supervision etc.); Need for long-term investment
- Capacity. Limited capacity at all NHIB levels (central, provincial, districts) in the following areas: Advocacy and leverage of funds; Technical operations (contracting, costing, provider payment mechanism, M&E etc.); Implementation (management, IT system, claims management, reporting and monitoring).
- Social mobilization. Need for better public understanding and awareness of NHI – including eligibility, services available, rights, obligations etc.; Need for feedback mechanism and reception in facilities; Need to enhance trust and to promote utilization of services.

2. EXPERT MISSION

Number of mobilized experts and workload

2 experts will be mobilized

Both experts will be expected to work 20 days

Tasks

The minimum tasks expected from the experts shall include:

General tasks

- Preliminary contacts with the Partner in view of the definition of the technical assistance methodology and agenda, to be transmitted ahead of mission to the SOCIEUX+ team for approval;
- Taking part to the pre-departure briefing with SOCIEUX+ team (1 week before the mission);
- Facilitate, wherever possible, a cooperation dynamic that aims to individual and institutional capacity development;
- Submission to SOCIEUX+ of the Activity's final deliverables (10 w/days after the mission);
- Review any relevant background documents provided by the SOCIEUX+ Team.

Specific tasks

- Ahead of the mission, to get knowledge of NHI in Lao PDR, including policies and programs, legal basis, as well as well as institutional responsibilities;
- To timely involve the Partner in the organisation of the above-mentioned structured reflection within MoH/NHIB, by mobilizing relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- To dialogue with the WHO Country Office, based on its role as "supportive institution" in the Partner's Request of assistance to SOCIEUX+;
- To contact the EU Delegation in Vientiane and be available for a meeting for the presentation of the mission's outcomes;
- To channel to SOCIEUX+ any material that can be useful to inform the public about the activity (pictures, interviews, brief notes or articles).

Deliverables

Intermediary deliverables (to be presented in the pre-departure briefing)

- A methodological note, including a risks analysis (max. 3 pages);
- An agenda of the mission agreed with the Partner (meetings, persons involved).

Final deliverables:

- *D1*: A compendium of international and EU cases and best practices regarding the definition of a health insurance benefit package, functions of a health insurance management agencies, and ensuring quality of health services.
- *D2*: A 3-day structured reflection session for NHIB/MoH staff on the definition of a health insurance benefit package, functions of a health insurance management agencies, and ensuring quality of services
- Experts' mission report (ExMR), based on a SOCIEUX+ template.

3. EXPERT PROFILE

Expert n°2:

Area of expertise: QUALITY OF HEALTH SYSTEMS

Requirements (essential/required):

- Education: university level (Masters or PhD relating to the subject are considered a plus)
- At least 15 years of professional experience in a public EU administration of National Health Insurance;
- Relevant experience in contributing to policy formulation and reforms in the health sector;
- Specific experience in formulating and managing quality-related policies in the health sector;
- Relevant experience in advising decision-makers on health-related issues;
- Fluent in English, written and oral;
- Acute sense of diplomacy and institutional relations.

Additional assets (advantageous in selection):

- Good communicator; a previous experience in animating information sessions/trainings
- Sensitiveness for capacity building and/or institutional development;
- A previous experience in delivering short-term technical assistance in international cooperation;
- A previous professional experience in South-East Asia or Lao PDR.

4. APPLICATION

Submission of applications

Interested experts submit their application on the website: <https://pmt.socieux.eu>.
The application process is the following:

1. If not already created, experts create their own personal SOCIEUX+ account (by clicking on "create an account"). To have access to all SOCIEUX+ Call for Applications, experts are required to fill out at least the fields marked with an asterisk.
2. Once their account is created and approved by the SOCIEUX+ team, experts sign in their personal account, click on the "Call for Applications" tab, identify the **18-11/LAOS/1/2** position, and click on "Apply."

5. SELECTION PROCESS

Public civil servants or employees (active or retired) and private individual experts are eligible and preferred for this position. Private consultants may also apply.

Incomplete applications will not be considered. Only short-listed applicants may be contacted. The selection process may include interviews by phone or other communication means.

Contracted public civil servants or employees (active or retired) are entitled to standard fixed allowances of 250 Euro per working day. Fees for private consultants will be negotiated based on the number of years of relevant expertise of the selected applicant.

6. DISCLAIMER

The proposed activity and mission is subject to the final review and approval of SOCIEUX+ Quality Assurance Committee. A confirmation of dates of missions and contracting of experts may only be confirmed upon the formal approval.

Short-listed candidates will be contacted and may be required to provide contact of employer or proof of their ability to be directly contracted under their status as civil servant or public employee.