



Ministry of Health

Request for Expression of Interest

Technical Assistance to review and document Samoa's COVID-19 Pandemic preparation and response and suggest strategy to address future pandemics

Background:

COVID19 was declared an outbreak in Wuhan, China on December 31st, 2019. The Government of Samoa (GoS) immediately implemented stricter border control measures on January 21st, 2020. These measures included regular travel advisory and health screening for all incoming passengers. Following the declaration of a global pandemic for COVID-19 on March 12, 2020, the GoS quickly moved to declare the State of Emergency (SOE) on March 21, 2020. This included the closing of borders to all travellers travelling to and from Samoa. In addition, the government through its relevant sectors including but not limited to Health, Education, Community, Finance etc. were mobilised to ensure the country is prepared, ready and fully informed of what needs to be done to prevent COVID-19 from reaching our shores. The MOH carried out a spectrum of measures as part of COVID-19 Pandemic Preparedness and Response between 2020 to 2023. Some of the key areas of interventions are highlighted below.

Border restriction: COVID19 was declared an outbreak in Wuhan, China on December 31st, 2019. The Government of Samoa (GoS) immediately implemented stricter border control measures on January 21st, 2020. These measures included regular travel advisory and health screening for all incoming passengers at airport and port. In response to the declaration of a global pandemic for COVID-19 on March 12, 2020, the GoS declared the State of Emergency (SOE) on March 21, 2020. This included the closing of borders to all travellers travelling to and from Samoa. Since then, the GoS continues to prioritise and fully commit to preparation and preventive measures, through the activation of the national disaster management mechanisms such as the Disaster Advisory Council (DAC), the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) and the Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC). The border restrictions were lifted only on 22nd September 2022 and since then Samoan borders have been made open to all passport holders.

Quarantine services: Following the border control measures a few flights and boats were allowed to bring back the Samoan from various parts of the world including the expatriates. The incoming passengers were subjected to certain days of quarantine in the Government arranged sites using protocol laid down by MOH.

Surveillance: The surveillance team laid down criteria to identify and report any cases of COVID-19 attending to the Out-Patients / Emergency clinics of the hospitals across the country. In the initial days it was confirmed only through PCR testing and later the rapid test kits were made available to test people for COVID-19.

Laboratory services: The country's capacity in terms of laboratory diagnosis was strengthened through provision of PCR equipment, kits in the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and later the rapid test kits were also brought in to expand the reach and to reduce response time of the testing services in the country.

Management of reported cases: A COVID-19 management protocol was developed for Samoa with the help of the clinical team members of the TTM referral hospital and the same was updated from time to time depending upon the evidence available on the therapeutics. The clinical team including the doctors and nurses were updated on the management of the suspected and confirmed cases through periodic trainings.

Vaccination: Government of Samoa prepared a National Vaccine Deployment Plan (NDVP) with the support from all the development partners to roll out the vaccination program for COVID-19. In accordance with the plan, different COVID-19 vaccines were rolled out in Samoa for the eligible population and achieved a very high coverage of the 2 doses of the primary series of the vaccine.

Risk communication and Community Engagement (RCCE): As COVID-19 was new to the entire world, there were many information, rumours about the disease, its spread, vaccination, therapeutics etc. So, it was highly essential to keep the Samoan population updated about the facts, preventive and treatment measures, efforts being done by Government in various sectors etc. The Communication team with the help of UNICEF, WHO and other stakeholders played an important role in this endeavour.

Human Resource support: As the Government was making all possible efforts to keep the borders free from COVID-19, the role of Frontline workers was highly critical in this effort. In order to ensure that the Frontline workers stay protected and motivated, the Government / MOH took series of measures like risk allowance, periodic rotation for them.

Supply and Logistics: As this was a humanitarian emergency all across the world, there were many items that were required to deal with the situation, which included PPEs, hand sanitizers, sanitizer dispensers, vaccines and associated logistics, therapeutics, cold chain equipment, various biomedical equipment like oxygen concentrators, pulse oximeters etc. Many agencies including COVAX, WHO, UNICEF, WFP, DFAT, MFAT, USAID, JICA, China etc, were involved in the procurement and supply of such items to Samoa.

Donor Coordination: The high-level donor coordination mechanism established earlier called Health Program Advisory Committee (HPAC) was used to coordinate among the donor partners present in Samoa to ensure smooth flow of information and accountability.

Finance: The three years of interventions towards COVID-19 pandemic preparedness and response for Samoa were resource intensive. A comprehensive analysis of the COVID-19 response will be possible only when the financial aspect of the entire preparedness and response is also reviewed.

Objectives: Recently WHO announced that COVID-19 is now an established and ongoing health issue which no longer constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), almost after 3 years of declaring it as a global health emergency. At this point, as the MOH has decided

- to review and capture all efforts and activities carried out in terms of preparedness and response to COVID-19 pandemic in Samoa and
- identify areas for further strengthening and improvement to address potential future outbreaks of COVID-19 or any such deadly pandemics.

These needs structured and detailed interaction with various key stakeholders within the MOH and also other relevant partners who supported the MOH in this endeavour. A workshop is also planned to gather the MOH staff and review the preparedness and response activities with regards to COVID-19 pandemic in Samoa and obtain their inputs and feedback about the future strategies and explore strategy to integrate COVID-19 vaccination into routine program / service delivery.

In this regard, the Ministry of Health invites suitable individual consultants who are interested to assist the MoH, Samoa with the key deliverables outlined below. Consultant must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the given services (i.e. availability of appropriate skill set with relevant qualifications, description of similar assignments if she/he has done before sharing, brochures, reports etc.

Key Deliverables:

The following deliverables need to be provided and complied with:

- Interact with key stakeholders and gather documents around COVID-19 preparatory work and response activities in Samoa
- Review and document the MoH Samoa efforts in implementing COVID-19 vaccination against the National Vaccine Deployment Plan
- Organize a workshop with all relevant stakeholders to explore challenges, opportunities and lessons learned from implementing response activities. Facilitate the workshop and submit a report about the proceeding and outcome
- Organize meetings with public health program managers and PHC staff on possible integration of COVID-19 vaccination in different PHC platforms.
- Submit a report on recommending the MoH Samoa in managing any outbreak/pandemic preparedness and response activities including COVID-19 in the future based on the lessons learned
- Also explore strategy to integrate COVID-19 vaccination into routine immunization program / service delivery.

Duration of the consultancy: The consultancy work will be undertaken on a full-time basis and the duration of the consultancy will be for 2.5 months.

Eligibility criteria:

Following **qualifications and experiences** are mandatory for this assignment.

- A Master's Degree in Public health, Health Management and other related areas
- Have at least 5 years of working experience in the areas of public health programs.
- Have the experience of providing technical support to the Government Ministries and carrying out stakeholder consultations
- Experience of working for any outbreak preparedness and response would be an asset.
- Excellent written and oral communication skill in English with proven drafting / reporting skills are essential.

The three documents that are required for your proposal to be considered eligible are set out below. If the evaluation panel deems any proposal to be non-suitable, then it will not be considered. It is therefore important that you submit all documents are set out below.

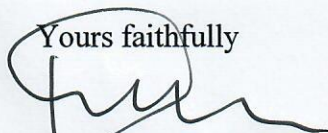
1. The cover letter introducing your proposal, listing your attachments and be no more than one page.
2. The proposal must provide evidence of capability and experience in as set out in the selection criteria as well as presenting the methodology and approach for this ToR.
3. The CV should be prepared to address the qualifications and experiences that are required for this assignment. The CV must be accompanied by a declaration by the Bidder that the consent is correct and true.
4. Three recent and relevant referees should be provided in support of the application within the last 12 months.

These have to be provided by hard copies in one envelope labelled "Technical Assistance to review and document Samoa's COVID-19 Pandemic preparation and response and suggest strategy to address future pandemics". All applications must be addressed and delivered to the Ministry of Health, MOH headquarter, Procurement Unit as in the address below by ~~Thursday~~ **TUESDAY**

29th 24th August 2023 12.00 PM.

The Director General
Ministry of Health
Motootua
Apia, Samoa

Yours faithfully



(Aiono Dr Alec Ekeroma)
Director General
Ministry of Health