**Terms of Reference**

**Short-term Monitoring Evaluation and Learning System Development (USAID Okard)**

**July-August 2024**

**Background:**

World Education, Inc. (WEI) has been operational in the Lao PDR since 1992. WEI has worked in a number of sectors (agriculture, education, health, microfinance, and repatriation) over the past 25 years.

Projects are currently focused on: Disability Inclusion, Explosive Ordnance Risk Education, Capacity Building, and Economic Development. Current projects include:

1. USAID Okard: Promotes the independence and functional ability of persons with disabilities through equal access to health and social services, partnering with the public and private sectors to support persons with disabilities in the areas of health, economic empowerment, and stakeholder engagement.
2. Lawang: Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE): Keeps children safe from unexploded ordnance (UXO) by integrating EORE lessons into the national primary and secondary school curriculum and creating EORE messages and platforms for non-formal education and community engagement.
3. War Victims Medical Fund: Provides critical financial support to survivors of UXO accidents including immediate and ongoing medical care, as well as funeral costs in case of death.

In implementing these activities, World Education works in partnership with relevant counterparts of the Government of Lao PDR. To learn more visit us at www.worlded.org or [www.laos.worlded.org](http://www.laos.worlded.org)

The USAID Okard (ໂອກາດ) Activity is managed and implemented by World Education (October 2017 – September 2027) together with several partners from government and civil society organizations. The project intends to improve and sustain the independent living and functional ability of persons with disabilities, regardless of factors such as age, sex, gender, ethnicity, and their households in Lao PDR.

It is implemented in four target provinces – Central level, Xieng Khouang, Savannakhet and Sekong. The USAID Okard Activity is committed to achieving results across four main components: Health, Economic Empowerment, Stakeholder Engagement and Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID) model.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan and system was developed in USAID Okard Phase I (2017-2023) to track its activities’ progress, impact, and lessons learned for iterative improvement, and generate report to donor and GoL partners.

**Rationale:**

Aiming to improve and strengthen the MEL system of the USAID Okard Phase II (2023-2027), particularly in terms of validity, reliability, integrity, precision, and timeliness, in early 2024, WE and USAID Okard hired a short-term consultant to conduct a MEL system assessment and provide a comprehensive overview and recommendations for improving Okard MEL system's capacity for data collection, analysis, and reporting (click this [link to the MEL system assessment report)](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rmPEIBgYBEHAxLA4QUaCSowHFeEjpO8e/view?usp=drive_link). While several core strengths have been identified, the assessment revealed Okard MEL system challenges below that need to be addressed.

**Data Quality Issues & Timely Reporting:** Inconsistencies Due to Mixed Methods of Data Collection: Utilizing a variety of data collection tools without adequate harmonization leads to inconsistent data sets. This inconsistency complicates data analysis and may affect the reliability of findings.

**Challenges with Data Integration:** Data collected from diverse sources present integration challenges, making it difficult to create a unified database that accurately reflects all dimensions of the project's impact. These challenges can obstruct a comprehensive understanding of project outcomes and impacts.

**Absence of Standardized Digital Forms:** The lack of concise, standardized forms contributes to inconsistencies in the data collected. This absence undermines the efficiency of data collection and analysis processes, affecting the overall quality of MEL activities.

**Human Error in Data Entry:** Errors during data entry, including inaccuracies, data duplication, missing information, mistakes, and confusion, further compromise data quality. Such errors can distort the project’s achievements and impact assessments.

**Time-Consuming Data Management Processes:** The processes involved in collecting, consolidating, analyzing, and updating data in Indicator Tracking Tables (ITT) are time-consuming.

**Consultancy objectives:**

To help Okard improve data management practices and reporting accuracy and/or MEL system's capability to support the project's goals effectively through digital transformation, standardization of data collection tools, optimization of data management practices, system scalability, and enhanced stakeholder engagement. The improvement will allow MEL team and Okard to:

* Adopt the user-friendly digitalized tools and platforms (Kobo and Power BI), to automate data collection and analysis processes reducing reliance on manual methods and minimizing errors
* Move to a more standardized digital forms across all data collection activities
* Enhance data management practices by introducing more robust data validation and cleaning mechanisms, facilitating more accurate and timely analysis and reporting, data security and privacy measures
* Ensure the MEL system is flexible and scalable, capable of adapting to evolving project needs and incorporating new technologies and methodologies as they become available.

**Expected deliverables of the consultant:**

* Transform current Okard monitoring forms and measurement tools (approximately 10 monitoring forms in Microsoft excel and 4 measurement tools in Microsoft Word) into user-friendly digitized Kobo XLS forms for deployment
* Develop a set of master Kobo toolbox forms to link and capture data across various sources/forms of all Okard Kobo XLS forms (those developed above and some other Okard’s existing Kobo XLS forms: for example 6 Modular tools forms)
* Develop a real-time data dashboard platform in Power BI to pull data from different sources for instant insights, and for a purpose of generating/tracking/extracting/reporting Okard’s 16 indicators, CBID database, and other requested data based on certain disaggregates (for example number of doctors, nurses or PTs trained, or number of people enrolled in case management at any given time or receiving rehabilitation / P&O services and their type of health conditions)
* Develop a Standard Operating Procedures (SoP) OR a short end-to-end MEL Guide on data processing that can be introduced to all data collectors for their visualization and accessibility (2 days)
* Improve IT security measures, including data security, privacy measures, user authentication (if applicable), users tracking and role-based access controls as required
* Develop an internal intranet for Okard MEL system for a more interactive and motivative information sharing platform (possible on Google Sites)
* Prepare and conduct a workshop for the MEL team on MEL system management, maintenance, troubleshooting and others (capacity building)
* Set up and test the newly developed MEL system developed above (based on agreed design with MEL team) and modify as needed
* Ongoing support as needed based on identified additional tasks or trouble shooting/modifications to the MEL System as needed in the initial months of use

**Timeframe:**

The consultancy is to be completed between July and August 2024.

**Reports to:**

WE USAID Okard MEL Manager

**Consultant profile:**

* Experienced MEL with at least 5 years experience in designing complex MEL systems for development projects
* Experience in developing Kobo toolbox XLS forms
* Experience in developing a real-time data dashboard platform in Power BI
* Experience in database development preferred
* Advanced degree in IT, MEL, research preferred
* Experience with MEL requirements for USAID funded projects an advantage
* Open to all nationalities but currently living (or have a supporting team) in Laos or speaking Lao an advantage
* Available to start immediately; in person preferred

**World Education is an equal opportunity employer and encourages the applications of women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for persons with disabilities to execute their duties and participate fully in the workplace as required.**