

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Final External Evaluation of the Gender-Responsive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (GWASH) Project in Primary and Lower Secondary Schools, Oudomxay Province March 2026

Plan International Laos is seeking a company or qualified consultants to design and conduct the Final External Evaluation (FEE) to assess the impact and results of the Gender-Responsive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (GWASH) project. The primary purpose of this evaluation is to collect data on the project indicators (see Log Frame in Annex 1) and determine the project's achievements toward its objectives, as well as its impact on the target groups and final beneficiaries.

I. Introduction

Plan International works in more than 50 developing countries worldwide to advance children's rights and promote equality for girls. Since 2007, Plan International has operated in Laos, delivering programs across 10 provinces, including Bokeo, Oudomxay, Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Salavan. Our work supports children and youth to realize their rights through programming in Public Health, Education, Livelihoods, and Adolescent and Youth Economic Empowerment.

Across all contexts, and in collaboration with partners, we strive for sustainable and transformative change in social norms, attitudes and behaviors, social and economic protection systems, and policy environments. Our approach includes community-based action, partner capacity strengthening, and policy advocacy, with a strong focus on gender-transformative programming. For more information, please visit www.plan-international.org.

II. Background

The Gender Responsive Hygiene Improvement in Primary and Lower Secondary Schools (GWASH) project is a three-year initiative (March 2023 to May 2026) funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and Plan International Japan. The project aims to improve female friendly Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities and strengthen sanitary and hygiene practices in 24 primary schools and 6 lower secondary schools in La District and Namor District of Oudomxay Province. The project seeks to create a safe and comfortable school sanitation environment for all children, including menstruating girls through improved access to water and sanitation facilities, including gender-segregated toilets.

The project's hygiene education emphasizes menstrual hygiene management and gender responsiveness by encouraging girls to take a leadership role in awareness-raising activities with students. Through these activities, the aim is to deepen children's understanding of proper hygiene practices and body changes, especially girls, so that they will be able to cope with hygiene and health challenges in the future.

Project design and intended outcomes were informed by a detailed situation analysis of the causes and determinants of keys issued, and through consultations with communities and government stakeholders at the sub-national level. A comprehensive Theory of Change has been developed to support and guide the intervention package, and to demonstrate the logical relationship between the achievement of

overarching goals and intended outcomes, and the delivery of outputs and activities. The overall goal of the project aims to improve female-friendly Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities and sanitary and hygiene practices at 24 primary schools and 6 lower secondary schools in La district and Namor district in Oudomxay province.

For primary schools, the plan aims to improve access to safe water, construct gender-segregated toilets, and enhance facility maintenance, with the goal of all schools achieving at least “One Star” in the national “3-Star WASH” assessment tool. Plan International Laos contributed to the development of this tool and has experience implementing it in Bokeo Province.

MoES has also outlined plans to scale up the national curriculum on **Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)**, including menstrual hygiene management at the lower secondary level. Plan International Laos has been a partner in implementing this curriculum since 2018, and expanding this work aligns strongly with the goals of the Development Plan.

The project has three interrelated components with key intervention as follows:

1. Improving school sanitary and hygiene environment

- 1.1 Construction/repair of essential WASH facilities,
- 1.2 WASH facility maintenance training,
- 1.3 Provision of sanitary and hygiene goods.

2. Promoting health practices at school

- 2.1 Training on school sanitary and hygiene assessment at Primary Schools,
- 2.2 Training on Comprehensive Sexual Education/Menstruation hygiene management at Lower Secondary Schools,
- 2.3 Develop supplementary teaching materials (Sanitary and Hygiene education and Menstruation Hygiene Management),
- 2.4 Establishing Student Club raising awareness on Menstruation Hygiene Management and Supporting the activity (Merlin Tool/Phahoo),
- 2.5 Monitoring and support at each school.

3. Promoting sanitary and hygiene practices in the community

- 3.1 Community awareness raising to community representatives,
- 3.2 Sanitary and Hygiene Awareness raising to parents

III. Objectives of the Evaluation.

The main objective of the Final External Evaluation (FEE) is to obtain a comprehensive (both quantitative and qualitative method) to understanding of the results and impact of the GWASH project on beneficiaries, target groups, and key stakeholders, including students, teachers, school leaders, community leaders, and community members. The evaluation team (company or consultant) will analyze and measure the results of the indicators outlined in the project results framework at the overall objective, outcome, and output levels.

The evaluation will also verify the sampling strategies and data collection methodologies applied throughout the project’s implementation. The evaluation team will be responsible for conducting

all data collection, both quantitative and qualitative, in line with Plan International's MERL Policy and international and OECD evaluation standards, specific focus areas of the EOPE will include: (1) *Relevance*; (2) *Coherence*; (3) *Effectiveness*; (4) *Efficiency*; (5) *Impact*; and (6) *Sustainability*. Specific objectives of the FEE are as follows:

A. Assess the school WASH environment

- Evaluate the availability, functionality, accessibility, and gender-responsiveness of school WASH facilities, including latrines, handwashing stations, and water supply systems.

B. Evaluate teaching capacity and learning engagement

- Assess the knowledge, teaching skills, techniques, and engagement of lower-secondary school teachers in delivering Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).
- Examine support from school leadership, including school policies and practices that facilitate SRHR and CSE learning.

C. Assess the role of Village Education Development Committees (VEDCs)

- Examine the involvement and support of VEDC members in promoting and sustaining WASH activities, including Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) at primary schools.

D. Assess the role of School Governance Committees

- Evaluate their engagement in supporting and promoting the implementation of CSE at lower-secondary schools.

E. Assess knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of teachers and parents

- Measure teachers' and parents' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding WASH, MHM, CSE, and gender equality.

F. Assess students' knowledge, practices, and learning satisfaction

- Evaluate students' current knowledge and practices related to WASH, MHM, and CSE.
- Assess students' satisfaction with CSE learning and hygiene education interventions.

IV. Scope of the Evaluation

The Final External Evaluation (FEE) will assess the project's performance, results, and impact in the two target districts of La and Namor in Oudomxay Province. The evaluation will cover all project components related to school and community WASH, 3-Star WASH implementation, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM).

The FEE will examine both the school environment (including 3-Star WASH facilities and hygiene practices) and the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of students, teachers, school principals, village leaders, and community members regarding WASH, CSE/SRHR, and MHM.

The company or consultant(s) will work in close and continuous collaboration with Plan International Laos, the GWASH project team including MEL team, and government partners at district and provincial levels (DESB and PESS) throughout the evaluation process. The consultant(s) will be responsible for leading all data collection processes, including enumerator training, field supervision, data validation, and quality assurance.

Plan International Laos and project partners will provide input and feedback on the evaluation design, data collection tools, analytical approaches, and draft reports.

The key tasks that the company or consultant(s) will be responsible for include:

- Collaborate closely with Plan International Laos, DESB, and PESS throughout the evaluation process.
- Review project documents, including the log frame, M&E framework, baseline, Year-End Assessments (Year 1–2), ROM review, and other relevant materials.
- Develop the evaluation methodology, including sampling, data collection approaches, and tools, ensuring alignment with OECD-DAC criteria and Plan MERL standards.
- Pilot and refine all data collection tools before field deployment.
- Prepare an inception report outlining the methodology, data collection plan, enumerator training, data quality assurance, and analysis plan; obtain required ethical approval.
- Train enumerators (Plan Laos, DESB, and PESS staff) on tools, field procedures, and ethical research standards.
- Supervise field data collection in La and Namor districts, ensuring high-quality implementation.
- Manage and analyze data, including cleaning, validation, statistical analysis, and qualitative synthesis; deliver clean datasets in agreed formats.
- Draft and finalize the evaluation report, including findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- Present key findings to Plan Laos and project partners through dissemination workshops.
- Translate the key finding of final approved report from English into Lao.

V. Design and Methodology

The company or consultant(s) will be required to propose a detailed and rigorous methodology for data collection, data management, and data analysis as part of their technical proposal. The methodology must directly respond to the project indicators, evaluation questions, and OECD-DAC evaluation criteria.

A full and detailed methodology will be further elaborated in the Inception Report, which the consultant(s) must submit and have approved before commencing fieldwork. This should include:

- sampling strategy and justification,
- data collection tools and procedures,
- data quality assurance mechanisms,
- ethical considerations,
- data management and analysis plan (quantitative and qualitative).

All methods must comply with Plan International's MERL Standards, ensuring ethical practices, safeguarding of respondents, informed consent, confidentiality, and do-no-harm principles, especially when engaging with children and vulnerable groups.

The proposed methodology should be built upon, but not limited to, the approaches summarized below.

Quantitative Methods

The survey will be conducted in at least 12 primary schools and 3 lower secondary schools, with priority given to schools selected from the baseline assessment, though the final number may vary depending on the methodology applied. The survey will be carried out in La and Namor districts, where the project has been implemented. A representative sampling design covering up to 30 schools will be applied, based on three selection criteria, including geographical location (distance from the district center).

Qualitative Methods

Interviews will be conducted with stakeholders and beneficiaries, including (but not limited to) those identified in the project log frame. Detailed indicator definitions in the log frame will guide the interviews, and qualitative data will be used to complement and explain the quantitative findings, particularly to understand changes in results over time. Key stakeholders to be consulted include the following:

- 1. Relevant departments such as PESS and DESB...**
- 2. Community authority including VEDC**
- 3. Community member both youth and adult**
- 4. Student**

VI. Ethics and Child Protection

Plan International is firmly committed to protecting the rights, safety, and well-being of all individuals involved in data collection and analysis. This commitment aligns with the Framework for Ethical MERL, the Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People, and the Global Policy on Preventing Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse. Therefore, all applicants must clearly describe in their proposal how they will ensure ethical practice and child protection throughout the data collection process.

Applicants should explain how they will guarantee safe, appropriate, and non-discriminatory participation of all stakeholders, with particular attention to children and other vulnerable groups. They must also outline the measures they will take to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of all participants.

Furthermore, the data collection plan must demonstrate strong consideration for gender and disability inclusion, child protection, safeguarding principles, and ethical standards. This includes procedures for obtaining informed consent, designing surveys with appropriate length and content, applying “do no harm” approaches, ensuring meaningful participation of marginalized groups, avoiding raised expectations, and ensuring gender- and inclusion-sensitive interviewer/interviewee arrangements.

VII. Deliverables

The company or consultant(s) are expected to deliver the following key outputs throughout the evaluation process:

1. Inception Report, informed by a comprehensive literature review, including but not limited to:
 - Detailed FEE methodology, data collection tools, and plan, covering the design of surveys, as well as interview questionnaires;
 - A basic outline for enumerator training;
 - Proposed methods for data analysis;
 - Justification for the selected methods and techniques, including underlying assumptions, values, and rationale for interviewee selection;
 - Explanation of how gender and disability inclusion, child protection, safeguarding, and ethical standards will be integrated into data collection;
 - Stakeholder and beneficiary mapping (project team will provide initial inputs).
2. Pre-testing data collection tools and revision of instruments is necessary.
3. Facilitation of a half-day inception workshop with Plan team lead including Senior project coordinator, technical specialist, Project manager and Program director Delivery of a one-day training session for enumerators on data collection tools, procedures, and protocols.
4. Supervision of enumerators throughout the data collection process, covering surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, including travel to target areas as required.
5. Draft FEE Report (maximum 20 pages), including but not limited to:
 - Executive summary;
 - Updated results framework with final indicator results;
 - Analysis of FEE data presented with charts, tables, and graphs;

- Analysis of findings against the evaluation methodology, including OECD evaluation criteria;
- Completed consent forms (for children, caregivers, and adults) using Plan standard form;
- Cleaned datasets (e.g., Excel, SPSS files), transcripts of qualitative data, and codebooks/syntax files;
- Final sampling methodology, including unit of sampling, sampling frame, and sample size;
- Final data collection tools.

6. A PowerPoint presentation (approximately 10–15 slides) summarizing the key findings of the FEE.
7. Presentation of key findings during a half-day dissemination workshop with Plan, Final FEE Report revised based on Plan's feedback and submitted within one week after receiving comments.

VIII. Timeframe

The consultancy will be carried out over **25 working days** between **January–March 2026**, as outlined below:

Tasks	Days
Review project documents and conduct initial desk research.	1
Draft the inception report (including development of data collection methodology, analysis plan, and tools such as surveys and questionnaires). Surveys and questionnaires must also be submitted in Lao language.	3
Test the data collection tools and make any necessary adjustments.	1
Facilitate the inception report presentation and consultation workshop with Plan (including preparation).	1
Train enumerators on the data collection tools and processes (including preparation).	2
Supervise data collection (including desktop studies, interviews, and surveys) in Lar and Namor districts, Odomxay province (including travel days).	9
Draft the FEE report.	5
Facilitate the FEE presentation workshop with Plan, PESS, and DESB (including preparation).	1
Finalize and translate the report based on feedback from Plan (two versions submitted: Lao and English).	2
Total Estimated Working Days	25

Note: Additional travel days can be added only if deemed necessary by the project.

IX. Qualifications of the Consultant

The consultant or consulting team should meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Hold at least a master's degree in international development, Education Development (including a 3-Star WASH approach, CSE and SRHR), or a related field.
- Have a minimum of 5 years of experience in project design, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Demonstrated experience conducting external evaluations of development projects.
- Previous professional experience related to Education development, 3-Star WASH approach, CSE, and SRHR in Laos.

- Strong knowledge and expertise in participatory, qualitative, and quantitative data collection methodologies, tools, and analysis.
- High-level research, analytical, and report writing skills.
- Proven experience in implementing and supervising data collection activities.
- Previous work experience in Laos is an advantage.
- Excellent spoken and written English; Lao language skills (written and spoken) are an advantage.
- The company or consultant(s) must be legally authorized to operate in Lao PDR. It is the responsibility of the company/consultant(s) to ensure all non-Lao personnel have valid work visas and permits.

Child Protection

Plan International maintains a zero-tolerance policy toward child abuse. All Plan staff and consultants are selected and engaged in accordance with Plan's Child Protection Policy, which includes mandatory reference checks and background verification.

X. Application Process

Plan International invites interested and qualified applicants to submit a complete proposal package consisting of the following components:

1. Technical Proposal
 - A brief description of the proposed methodology and approach for conducting the consultancy.
 - An indicative work plan and timeframe.
 - Maximum length: 5 pages.
2. Financial Proposal
 - An indicative budget, including the proposed daily rate and any related travel costs.
 - The budget must be inclusive of all applicable taxes, including VAT.
3. Consultant(s) CV / Company Profile
 - For individual consultants: a current CV outlining relevant qualifications and experiences
 - For consulting firms or companies: a company profile including:
 - Company name
 - Registered office address and physical address
 - Telephone numbers
 - Date of registration and registration number
 - Copy of the company registration certificate
 - Names of directors/proprietors
 - Name and contact details of the focal person

Please send your complete application to Laos.procurement@plan-international.org and copy to Somkhit.Vilasak@plan-international.org and Souksana.Siripanya@plan-international.org. The application deadline is **Friday, January 20th 2026**, and please include the text "**Final External Evaluation of the Gender-Responsive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (GWASH)**" in the email subject line.

Note: All applications received after the time of the deadline will not be accepted without exception. Please note that only the successful applicant will be contacted.

