SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND PROJECT PLUS (SWEDD+)

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MASTER'S E-MODULES TO BE OFFERED ON THE REGIONAL E-LEARNING PLATFORM FOR THE NURSING AND MIDWIFERY PROGRAMME

West African Health Organisation (WAHO)

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I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The Sahel region faces major health challenges, including some of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world (ranging from 509 to 1,140 per 100,000 live births), severe shortages of qualified health workers (an average of fewer than 5 professionals per 10,000 inhabitants, compared with 44.5 per 10,000 inhabitants) and limited access to quality health education. These challenges are particularly acute for women and adolescent girls, who face additional barriers to accessing health care and educational opportunities.

The integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into health education systems has become essential to address these challenges facing health systems in the West African region. ICT offers innovative solutions to overcome the critical shortage of qualified health educators (with a current gap of more than 3,000 qualified health teachers in the region), to deliver high-quality education without requiring learners to travel, and to improve access to educational resources for health professionals in remote and underserved areas.

The West African Health Organisation (WAHO), as the specialised institution of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) responsible for health matters, is mandated to provide the highest standard of health care delivery to the populations of the sub-region. Recognising the potential of e-learning to revolutionise health education, the World Bank, through the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend Project (SWEDD), has provided financial support to WAHO to develop and deploy a comprehensive e-learning platform across the fifteen (15) ECOWAS Member States and the countries participating in the SWEDD Project.

Since the launch of SWEDD, one of WAHO's roles in this initiative has been to set up a functional e-learning platform, to develop and validate digitised training modules, and to train staff for the operationalisation of the platform in collaboration with the participating countries.

One of the achievements of the SWEDD Project is the deployment on the e-learning platform of the electronic version of the training modules of the WAHO harmonised curricula for the Bachelor's degree in nursing and midwifery, which has been completed but not yet operationalised.

Building on this success, these Terms of Reference have been prepared for the recruitment of an individual consultant to design and develop the structure, content and practical tests of a Master's programme for the regional e-learning platform. This represents a crucial expansion of the platform's educational offer to include advanced training for health professionals in the region, particularly in areas critical to women's health, maternal and child health services, health systems management and public health leadership.

II. OBJECTIVES

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To develop a comprehensive Master's programme structure, content and practical tests in nursing and midwifery on the WAHO e-learning platform for higher education institutions in ECOWAS Member States and in the countries participating in the SWEDD project.

B. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. Design an innovative and comprehensive Master's programme structure in nursing and midwifery, ensuring alignment with international standards (ECOWAS, ICM, ICN), addressing the needs of adolescents from a gender perspective, and responding to the specific regional health care needs identified in the ECOWAS Health Strategic Plan 2021–2025.
2. Develop detailed content modules for the Master's programme, including core courses by specialisation with comprehensive lectures, region-specific case studies, evidence-based readings and interactive multimedia resources that work effectively in low-bandwidth environments.
3. Create a robust assessment framework comprising formative quizzes, summative examinations, practical competency assessment tools and scenario-based assessments for each module, with clear assessment rubrics that meet international accreditation standards.
4. Successfully integrate the Master's programme and content into the existing e-learning platform, ensuring a seamless user experience, mobile compatibility and both online and offline functionality.
5. Provide comprehensive training and support to at least 50 faculty members from participating educational institutions, equipping them with the skills needed to effectively deliver, adapt and assess the Master's content developed hereunder in their respective contexts.

III. ACTIVITIES

The consultant will be responsible for supporting WAHO and all educational institutions in the beneficiary countries in the development and implementation of a high-quality Master's programme on the WAHO e-learning platform, based on the WAHO harmonised curriculum. The consultant shall contribute to the establishment of a system that facilitates the pedagogical, technical and administrative management of the Master's programme.

A. CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Use a detailed harmonised curriculum structure for each specialisation of the Master's programme, including:

    - Competency frameworks based on international standards
    - Course sequencing and prerequisites
    - Credit allocation aligned with regional accreditation requirements
    - Flexible learning pathways suited to working professionals

- Clinical/practical components and their integration into e-learning

2. Create comprehensive e-content for each module using evidence-based approaches:
    - Develop course materials in multiple formats (text, audio, video)
    - Curate relevant readings, taking copyright and open access into account
    - Create case studies that are regionally relevant and reflect local health challenges
    - Design practical exercises applicable in resource-limited settings
3. Establish clear learning objectives, performance indicators and assessment criteria for each module, based on Bloom's taxonomy and the principles of competency-based education

B. ASSESSMENT

7. Design interactive learning activities using appropriate e-learning methodologies:
    - Problem-based learning scenarios
    - Interactive case studies with decision points
    - Virtual simulations, where applicable
    - Collaborative learning activities with peer feedback mechanisms
8. Develop comprehensive assessment tools:
    - Knowledge-based quizzes and tests with a variety of question types
    - Performance-based assessments of clinical skills
    - Reflective assignments and portfolios
    - Authentic assessment tasks reflecting real-world challenges
9. Create multimedia resources optimised for varying bandwidth conditions:
    - Video lectures with downloadable versions
    - Interactive diagrams and infographics
    - Audio podcasts as alternatives to video content
    - Mobile-friendly design elements

C. PLATFORM INTEGRATION AND TESTING

10. Work closely with the WAHO IT Unit and the West African Health Informatics Team (WAHIT) to:
    - Integrate the developed programme into the WAHO Moodle-based e-learning platform
    - Ensure SCORM compliance for all learning objects
    - Implement appropriate data security measures
    - Configure user roles and permissions for the various stakeholders
11. Conduct systematic usability testing with representative users (students, teachers):
    - Assess navigation and the user interface
    - Test functionality across all devices and bandwidth conditions
    - Evaluate accessibility features for users with disabilities
    - Document and resolve technical issues
12. Pilot complete modules with selected educational institutions:
    - Train pilot faculty in content delivery
    - Enrol pilot student cohorts
    - Gather comprehensive feedback through multiple channels
    - Refine the content and platform based on the pilot results

D. IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

13. Develop comprehensive implementation resources:
    - Administrator guides for institutional management

- Faculty manuals for content delivery and assessment
- Student orientation materials and technical support resources
- Quality assurance frameworks and evaluation tools

14. Deliver training programmes to key stakeholders:
    - Training-of-trainers sessions for faculty champions
    - Technical workshops for IT support staff
    - Administrative training for programme managers
    - Assessment calibration for evaluators
15. Establish a sustainability framework:
    - Content update and review protocols
    - Faculty development pathways for new instructors
    - Monitoring and evaluation systems
    - Knowledge management protocols for continuous improvement
    - Financial models for ongoing platform maintenance.

IV. DELIVERABLES

The consultant shall produce the following deliverables according to the specified timeline

Deliverable	Description	Timeline	Acceptance Criteria
1. Inception Report	A detailed document setting out the methodology, work plan, stakeholder engagement strategy, risk assessment, quality assurance mechanisms and timeline for the development of the Master's programme.	Week 2	- Comprehensive methodology- Realistic timeline- Clear milestones- Risk mitigation strategies- Approval by WAHO
2. Curriculum Framework Document	Based on the WAHO harmonised curriculum, a comprehensive plan detailing the competency frameworks, course structure, credit system, learning pathways and educational philosophy for each Master's specialisation.	Month 3	- Alignment with international standards- Regional relevance- Logical learning progression- Integration of theory and practice- Approval by academic experts
3. Module Development Plan	A detailed plan for each module, including learning objectives, content outlines, teaching methodologies, resource requirements and assessment strategies.	Month 3	- Clear learning objectives- Appropriate content selection- Diverse teaching strategies- Alignment with the programme framework- Technical feasibility

Deliverable	Description	Timeline	Acceptance Criteria
4. Complete Content Modules	Full development of all educational content for each module, including course materials, readings, case studies, practical exercises and multimedia resources in appropriate digital formats.	Month 6	- Accuracy and currency of content- Pedagogical effectiveness- Technical quality- Cultural appropriateness- Bandwidth optimisation- Copyright compliance
5. Assessment Toolkit	A comprehensive set of assessment tools comprising formative quizzes, practical assessments, case analyses, summative examinations and rubrics for each module.	Month 6	- Validity and reliability- Alignment with learning objectives- Variety of assessment methods- Clear grading criteria- Security features for high-stakes assessments
6. E-learning Integration Documentation	Technical specifications and implementation guides for integrating all developed materials into the e-learning platform, including SCORM packages, database requirements and user management protocols.	Month 7	- Technical accuracy- Platform compatibility- Security considerations- Performance optimisation- Testing protocols
7. Pilot Implementation Report	A detailed analysis of the pilot implementation with the selected institutions, including user feedback, technical performance, evaluation of learning outcomes and recommendations for improvement.	Month 7	- Comprehensive data collection- Objective analysis- Actionable recommendations- Timeline for implementing changes- Validation by pilot participants
8. Training Package	A complete set of training materials for faculty, administrators, IT support staff and students, including workshop programmes, demonstration videos, manuals and reference guides.	Month 7	- Clarity and ease of use- Comprehensiveness - Adaptation to different user groups- Effectiveness in capacity building- Available in the required languages
9. Sustainability and Quality	A detailed framework for the ongoing operation, updating, evaluation and expansion of the Master's programme, including governance structures, technical	Month 8	- Practical implementation mechanisms- Clear roles and responsibilities- Identified resource requirements- Monitoring and evaluation

Deliverable	Description	Timeline	Acceptance Criteria
Assurance Plan	maintenance, content review protocols and financial models.		framework- Approval by key stakeholders
10. Comprehensive Final Report	Complete documentation of the entire project, including the processes followed, challenges encountered, solutions implemented, results achieved and recommendations for future development.	Month 9	- Completeness and accuracy- Critical reflection on the process- Evidence of success- Forward-looking recommendations- Summary for policymakers

Digital content must comply with WAHO technical standards and accessibility requirements. The consultant will present the main deliverables to the WAHO technical committee and incorporate feedback prior to finalisation.

V. REQUIRED EXPERTISE

The assignment shall be carried out by an individual consultant who must have at least the following qualifications and competencies:

A. Academic Qualifications

1. Hold a doctorate (PhD) in health sciences, education, public health, nursing, midwifery or a closely related field from an internationally recognised institution.

B. Professional Experience

1. Have at least eight (8) years of post-qualification experience in curriculum development for higher education, with demonstrable experience in the electronic design of at least two postgraduate programmes in health-related disciplines that have been successfully implemented.
2. Demonstrate expertise in e-learning instructional design and online pedagogy, with evidence of having developed at least three successful online courses or programmes in the past five years, preferably in health sciences education.
3. Have successfully led at least one major Master's programme development project in a resource-limited setting within the past five years.
4. Have at least five (5) years of experience in developing competency-based training frameworks specifically for the health professions, with evidence of implementing assessment methodologies aligned with international standards (such as the WHO, ICM or ICN competency frameworks).

C. Technical Skills

1. Demonstrate advanced proficiency in Learning Management Systems (LMS), particularly Moodle (the platform used by WAHO), including course set-up, content integration, assessment configuration and user management.
2. Have expertise in e-learning content development tools, including:

- H5P or similar interactive content authoring tools
- Video production and editing for educational purposes
- Creation of SCORM-compliant learning objects
- Development of mobile-optimised learning content

3. Demonstrate skills in assessment design, including the development of valid and reliable test instruments, rubrics and performance-based assessment methods.

D. Regional Knowledge and Language Skills

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of health systems, challenges and educational needs in the West African region, preferably through previous professional experience in at least two countries of the region.
2. Have professional proficiency in English (written and spoken, minimum level C1). Working proficiency in French (minimum level B2) is required. Knowledge of Portuguese will be an additional asset.

E. Management and Interpersonal Skills

1. Demonstrate excellent project management skills by having successfully completed at least two complex educational projects involving multiple stakeholders, timelines and deliverables.
2. Have strong analytical, communication and interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to collaborate effectively with diverse stakeholders, including government representatives, academic leaders, health professionals and technical experts.
3. Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and experience working in multicultural environments, particularly in developing-country contexts.

F. Additional Desirable Qualifications

1. Experience working with international organisations, particularly on health education projects in developing countries.
2. Certification in instructional design, e-learning development or related fields.
3. Publication record in health professions education, curriculum development or e-learning.
4. Experience in developing accreditation standards or quality assurance frameworks for higher education programmes.

Note: The consultant must provide concrete evidence for each of the required qualifications, including examples of previous work, references from former clients and demonstration of specific technical skills, where applicable.

VI. DURATION OF THE CONSULTANCY

The assignment will last a total of twelve (12) months from the date of signature of the contract:

VII. LOCATION AND TRAVEL

The work is expected to be carried out remotely. However, travel to any of the ECOWAS Member States and the SWEDD+ participating countries may be required.

VIII. TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

A consultancy contract will be concluded between WAHO and the selected individual consultant in accordance with World Bank guidelines.

IX. BUDGET

The assignment will be financed by the West African Health Organisation (WAHO) from SWEDD+ project funds, for an estimated amount of USD 67,000.