

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR) – TL-AFSi MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING (MEL) OFFICER

Position Title: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Officer, under UK Health Security Partnership (UK-HSP)

Position Type: National (Open only for Timorise)

Contracting Entity: Instituto de Ciências da Saúde (ICS) Timor Leste, under Fundasaun da Graça Deus (FGD-ICS)

Project Consortium: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry (MALFF), *Autoridade de Inspeção e Fiscalização da Atividade Económica Sanitária e Alimentar* (AIFAESA), Ministry of Health, specifically National Institute of Public Health of Timor-Leste (INSP-TL), and Archipelago Biotechnology Indonesia, Ltd.

Duty Station: Dili, Timor-Leste.

Contract Duration: One year, with possibility of extension

Reporting Line: The MEL Officer will report directly to the TL-AFSi Programme Leader, with a dotted technical line to the FHI 360 MEL Team for compliance with HSP reporting standards. The MEL Officer will work closely with the Project Management Unit (PMU), the Administration & Finance Officer, and all consortium partners.

1. Project Background

1.1 The Problem: A Critical Gap in Food Safety and AMR Surveillance

Timor-Leste is a nation heavily dependent on imported food, with over seventy percent (70%) of its consumables coming from abroad. A significant and growing portion of these imports is frozen food—including poultry, seafood, meat, and vegetables—a commodity class particularly susceptible to carrying foodborne pathogens if cold chains are compromised. The convergence of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and food safety presents a clear and present danger. Zoonotic pathogens such as *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, and *E. coli* in the frozen food chain can act as vectors for the silent pandemic of AMR, transferring resistant genes from the environment and animal sectors directly to human consumers.

Despite this risk, Timor-Leste currently lacks any systematic surveillance infrastructure for AMR in imported frozen foods. The national AMR surveillance system, centered on the National Action Plan (NAP-AMR), is confined to human clinical settings, leaving a dangerous blind spot in the food sector. This gap is particularly alarming given that frozen food products can harbour resilient pathogens that survive freezing temperatures, and the lack of cold-chain monitoring increases contamination risks. The population is unknowingly exposed to resistant

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pathogens, while the health system remains ill-equipped to manage resulting drug-resistant infections.

1.2 The Three Interconnected Problems

The TL-AFSi project is designed to confront three specific, interconnected problems identified in Timor-Leste's National AMR Action Plan and Food Safety Master Plan:

1. **No Systematic AMR Surveillance in Imported Frozen Foods:** The absence of any systematic surveillance means the nation cannot detect, monitor, or respond to AMR threats entering through the food supply chain. This is a critical weakness in Timor-Leste's core capacity under the International Health Regulations (IHR) at Points of Entry.
2. **Fragmented Food Safety Legislation:** The foundational Basic Food Law (Decree-Law 5/2021) is not fully harmonized with international Codex Alimentarius standards or regional ASEAN frameworks. This creates legislative gaps for implementing modern, risk-based import control systems and standardized microbiological criteria for AMR pathogens. Border inspectors lack legally mandated, science-based protocols to intercept contaminated frozen food consignments.
3. **Critical Shortage of Technical Expertise:** The authority mandated for food control, AIFAESA, lacks full laboratory capacity and human resources for routine testing. While the Health Laboratory at INSP-TL provides ad-hoc support with basic microbiological tests (e.g., for *Salmonella*), it does not conduct Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (AST), meaning AMR in the food chain goes entirely undetected. Border inspection staff also lack training in risk-based inspection techniques specifically designed for frozen food commodities.

1.3 The TL-AFSi Project: An Integrated Solution

The **Timor-Leste AMR-Food Safety Nexus Initiative (TL-AFSi)** – under **HSP Grant Reference CG1-014326** – is designed to directly confront this multifaceted threat by establishing a foundational, integrated One Health system where none currently exists. The project is implemented as a single, integrated 24-month initiative that strategically combines core technical activities with a dedicated Peer Exchange component, ensuring that capacity building and partnership development are embedded from the outset rather than added as an afterthought.

Grant CG1-014326 operationalizes critical implementation gaps identified in Timor-Leste's National AMR Action Plan and Food Safety Master Plan, transforming policy aspirations into tangible operational capabilities. The integrated workplan delivers the following interconnected activities:

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- **Establishing a systematic, risk-based sentinel surveillance system** for AMR and priority pathogens in imported frozen foods at four key Points of Entry: Tibar Port, Motaain, Motamasin, and Wini. This is done in collaboration with the Unit of Quarantine and Biosecurity (UQB) under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry (MALFF). Through the Peer Exchange component of this grant, this activity is directly supported by peer-exchange partner to observe and adapt risk-based port surveillance SOPs, followed by virtual mentorship to contextualize these protocols for Timor-Leste.
- **Building sustainable national laboratory capacity** for pathogen isolation, Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (AST), Whole-Genome Sequencing (WGS), and other advanced analyses. This involves technology transfer, provision of small/portable equipment and consumables, and intensive hands-on training of Timorese laboratory scientists and technicians at AIFAESA and the Health Laboratory at INSP-TL. Through the Peer Exchange component of this grant, this capacity building is delivered via a technical attachment with peer-exchange partners to achieve proficiency in gold-standard methods for pathogen isolation and AST from frozen food matrices, alongside virtual and in-person WGS bioinformatics training with Northumbria University (UK).
- **Using generated evidence to harmonize existing regulations** and draft enforceable, science-based food safety regulations fully aligned with Codex Alimentarius and ASEAN frameworks, ensuring regional trade compatibility while protecting public health. The Peer Exchange component reinforces this by facilitating joint development of regionally-aligned SOPs and a draft WGS Data Integration Protocol, all of which feed directly into the project's policy drafting and validation workshops.

Under Grant CG1-014326, the Peer Exchange activities are not a separate grant but rather the essential capacity-building engine for the overall project. The 12-month structured workplan within the 24-month project timeline—comprising study visits, technical attachments, virtual mentorship, and an intensive bioinformatics workshop in Timor-Leste—is deliberately sequenced to ensure that learnings are immediately applied to project implementation. Tangible outputs such as the Draft WGS Data Integration Protocol, the customized Timor-Leste Lab Protocol, and the co-developed regionally-aligned SOPs are designed for immediate institutional adoption within the project's surveillance and regulatory streams. A dedicated integration phase ensures these outputs are synthesized into the overall workplan, while a co-created "Sustainability and Mentorship Plan" with all partner institutions guarantees ongoing support beyond the project period.

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1.4 Expected Outcomes

By strengthening core IHR capacities at borders and mandated laboratories, the TL-AFSi project will advance the specific Health Priorities of Food Safety (HP 21) and Combatting AMR (HP 11) outlined in regional frameworks. Expected outcomes include:

- The first-ever national baseline dataset on AMR prevalence and antimicrobial resistance patterns in the frozen food supply chain.
- A functional national testing capability embedded within existing laboratory infrastructure (AIFAESA/INSP-TL) for ongoing surveillance and outbreak response.
- Data-driven interception protocols for non-compliant imports that pose unacceptable health risks.
- Formally drafted evidence-based regulations submitted for government adoption through appropriate legislative channels.
- A trained cadre of laboratory technicians, border inspectors, and relevant officers equipped with standardized operating procedures, quality assurance protocols, and continuous professional development pathways.

1.5 Alignment with National and Regional Policies

The project directly operationalizes critical components of Timor-Leste's National AMR Action Plan (NAP-AMR) and Food Safety Master Plan that are currently missing from the public health architecture. It is explicitly designed to ensure compliance with the ASEAN Food Safety Policy and leverages the technical risk assessment framework of the ASEAN Risk Assessment Centre for Food Safety (ARAC). By anchoring legislative reform in both project-generated data and the benchmarks of the Codex Alimentarius, the project strengthens the legal foundation for a modern, science-based food safety control system, directly enhancing Timor-Leste's capacity to meet its regional obligations and contribute to ASEAN health security.

2. Overall Objective of the Position

To lead the implementation of the project's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework, ensuring systematic tracking of all workplan activities, outputs, and outcomes. The MEL Officer will manage data collection, verification, and reporting processes; coordinate pre- and post-exchange capacity assessments; support quarterly and final reporting; and facilitate learning and adaptation across the TL-AFSi consortium.

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3. Key Responsibilities

3.1 MEL Framework Implementation & Indicator Tracking (35% of working time)

- Revise, Finalize and Operationalize the integrated MEL framework (MEL plan, log frame and risk register) during the Inception Phase, Month 1-3 for the TL-AFSi Project, ensuring alignment with HSP logframe requirements and FHI 360/Itad reporting standards.
- Track all performance indicators, including but not limited to:
 - Number of border inspection staff trained on risk-based sampling procedures.
 - Number of laboratory personnel trained in AST, pathogen isolation, and WGS bioinformatics.
 - Number of frozen food samples collected, tested, and reported with AMR profiles.
 - Number of SOPs developed, revised, and formally endorsed.
 - Number of policy briefs, draft regulations (e.g., Ministerial Diploma), and regulatory gap analyses completed and submitted.
 - Number of peer exchange visits/attachments completed and documented.
- Maintain and regularly update the project's MEL tracking table, GANTT chart progress, and risk register in collaboration with the Programme Leader

3.2 Data Collection, Quality Assurance & Management (25% of working time)

- Develop and manage data collection tools (e.g., training pre/post-test forms, sample tracking databases, survey questionnaires, interview guides) for all project activities, including surveillance, laboratory capacity building, and policy workshops.
- Coordinate with the TL-AFSi Digital Resource Portal development to ensure MEL data fields are integrated and that quarterly surveillance reports can be generated for stakeholders.
- Conduct regular data quality audits to ensure completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of data from Points of Entry (UQB), laboratories (AIFAESA/INSP-TL), and peer exchange partners.
- Oversee the administration of pre- and post-exchange capacity assessments (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) for all training events, study visits, and technical attachments.
- Maintain a secure, organized MEL digital filing system (using SharePoint/OneDrive or equivalent) with version control for all data, reports, and supporting documentation.

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3.3 Reporting & Learning (20% of working time)

- Lead the preparation and submission of integrated quarterly progress reports (narrative and technical) to the Programme Leader for review, then to the President of FGD, Rector of ICS, and FHI 360/HSP. Ensure alignment between activity reports, indicator tracking, and financial reports.
- Document lessons learned, success stories, and case studies – particularly from peer exchanges (e.g., adaptation of Indonesian quarantine SOPs, WGS training outcomes) – for dissemination to stakeholders and for use in advocacy (e.g., Policy Brief).
- Preparing the complete draft of Inception Report (Month 3), Sustainability and Mentorship Plan (Month 22), and Comprehensive Final Report (Month 24) to the Programme Leader for review.
- Facilitate regular reflection and learning sessions with the PMU and consortium partners to review MEL data, identify course corrections, and adapt implementation as needed.

3.4 Stakeholder Coordination & GEDSI Integration (10% of working time)

- Work with the Programme Leader to support the Project Steering Committee (PSC) secretariat by preparing MEL dashboards, tracking action items, and documenting decisions.
- Collaborate with national stakeholders (AIFAESA, INSP-TL, UQB-MALFF, etc) and international peer-exchange partners to harmonize data reporting formats and ensure MEL requirements are understood and met.
- Ensure GEDSI (Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion) integration across all MEL activities – including disaggregation of training participant data by sex, age, and disability status; ensuring feedback mechanisms are accessible; and documenting inclusivity outcomes in reports.

3.5 Risk Management & Compliance (10% of working time)

- Maintain and regularly update the project risk register (delivery, political, fiduciary, safeguarding, data security risks) in collaboration with the Programme Leader and monitor the effectiveness of mitigation measures.
- Support the Administration & Finance Officer by verifying that activity completion (as per MEL data) matches payment requests and procurement records.
- Ensure all MEL activities comply with HSP, FHI 360, and FGD-ICS data protection, confidentiality, and safeguarding policies

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4. Key Deliverables

- Inception Report (MEL section) – including final MEL framework, indicator reference sheets, data collection tools, and baseline capacity assessment results.
- Quarterly MEL dashboards and integrated progress reports (narrative + indicator tracker).
- Pre- and post-exchange capacity assessment reports for each peer exchange activity.
- Data quality audit reports (quarterly) and documentation of corrective actions.
- Documentation of lessons learned and at least 3 case studies (e.g., adaptation of inspection SOPs, WGS capacity transfer, regulatory drafting process).
- Final MEL report – including final indicator achievements, analysis of pre/post capacity gains, GEDSI outcomes, and recommendations for sustainability.

5. Qualifications & Experience

Essential:

- Bachelor's degree in Monitoring & Evaluation, Public Health, Statistics, Epidemiology, International Development, or a related field. A master's degree is an advantage.
- Minimum 4 years of progressive experience in MEL for international health or development projects, preferably in AMR, infectious diseases, food safety, laboratory systems, or One Health.
- Demonstrated experience in developing and implementing MEL frameworks, logic models, and indicator tracking systems for complex, multi-partner projects.
- Proficiency in quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, including survey design, KII/FGD guides, and pre/post-test assessments.
- Strong data management and analysis skills using software such as MS Excel (advanced), SPSS, STATA, R, or Power BI. Familiarity with digital data collection platforms (e.g., Kobo Toolbox, ODK, CommCare) is highly desirable.
- Experience in data quality assurance (DQA) processes and routine data audits.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English (report writing is essential). Proficiency in Tetum or Bahasa Indonesia is highly desirable.
- Ability to work collaboratively with government counterparts and international partners

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Desirable:

- Previous experience with FHI 360, HSP, UK-FCDO, or similar donor reporting requirements.
- Familiarity with laboratory information systems (LIMS), WHONET, or genomic surveillance data.
- Experience in GEDSI-responsive MEL and safeguarding reporting.
- Existing network or experience in Timor-Leste or Southeast Asian health projects.

6. Working Arrangements & Conditions

- Working Hours: Full-time, Monday to Friday, 08:30–12:00 and 14:00–17:30, with possible extra hours during mission travel or reporting deadlines.
- Annual Leave: 20 working days of paid leave annually, subject to prior request and approval by the Programme Leader and FGD-ICS.
- Sick Leave: 6 days sick leave annually, with submission of medical certification for absences exceeding 2 consecutive days.
- Termination: In case of weak performance or non-delivery, three verbal/written warnings will be issued. If performance does not improve within three weeks of the third written warning, FGD-ICS has the right to terminate the contract and cease payments.
- Breach & Dispute Resolution: Any breach will first be resolved through friendly consultation; if unresolved, either party may submit the dispute to a court with jurisdiction.

7. Commitment to Safeguarding & GEDSI

The MEL Officer shall adhere to FGD-ICS's safeguarding and PSEA (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) policies, complete mandatory GEDSI and safeguarding training, and ensure that all MEL activities (including data collection, surveys, and interviews) are conducted in a manner that is inclusive, accessible, confidential, and free from harassment, exploitation, or abuse. Any safeguarding concerns observed or reported during MEL field visits must be immediately escalated to the Programme Leader and FGD-ICS Safeguarding Focal Point.

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This TOR is Approved by:



Dr. Ali Budhi Kusuma, M.Sc., ALS., CFP.Med

(On behalf - TL-AFSi Project Management Unit Team)

Date: 10/06/2026

Consortium members:

