1. Background

High-quality laboratory investigation is critical to understanding the impact of a country’s vaccination programme and assessing progress towards disease elimination. It is therefore key to achieving the objectives and targets of the European Vaccination Action Plan (EVAP) (2015–2020).

All European Member States agreed to support and perform all activities required to achieve the elimination of measles and rubella and the prevention of congenital rubella syndrome by 2015 in the WHO European Region (resolution EUR/RC60/R12). This commitment was reaffirmed and featured prominently as a regional priority with the launch of EVAP in 2014 (following resolution EUR/RC64/R5). EVAP sets the elimination of measles and rubella as one of six main goals.

Intensification of surveillance, including laboratory investigation, is a pillar of regional strategies for measles and rubella elimination and an integral part of EVAP. To facilitate high-quality laboratory investigation, the WHO Regional Office for Europe coordinates the European Measles and Rubella Laboratory Network (LabNet), comprising a total of 71 WHO-accredited laboratories whose performance is subject to an annual accreditation review. This programme assesses the performance of participating laboratories based on the number of immunoglobulin M tests conducted, the timeliness and completeness of laboratory data reporting (including virus detection and genotyping), the score in proficiency testing and confirmatory testing, the implementation of quality-control measures, and the score from the on-site review conducted annually by the Regional Laboratory Coordinator or their delegate.

In the context of the verification process of measles and rubella elimination in the Region, a major contribution is increasingly expected from laboratories. To ascertain the interruption of endemic transmission, the Regional Verification Commission (RVC) requires high-quality information from national reference laboratories documenting their performance and viral characterizations. Each country’s national verification committee submits this information to the RVC in its annual status update.

The Regional Office is seeking a consultant with a background in medical microbiology/virology to support both the annual accreditation desk review of LabNet and the laboratory component of the annual verification process.
2. **Deliverables**

1. **Accreditation review**

   **Scope of work and tasks**
   - Review 2016 data from external quality assessment (EQA) reports and annual accreditation checklists submitted by the laboratory members of LabNet (68 checklists are expected from national and subnational laboratories, of which 23 are written in Russian).
   - Identify missing information in the annual accreditation checklists of LabNet and request clarifications from laboratories as needed.
   - Tabulate the data of EQA reports and annual accreditation checklists (populate the accreditation summary Excel database for the current year).
   - Prepare the Regional Office’s individual summary table with recommendations for each laboratory.
   - Discuss key issues and regularly update the Regional Coordinator during the contract period.

   **Deliverables**
   - Clarification requests to laboratories using VPI’s email address (as appropriate during the contract period)
   - A regional compilation table (Excel format) by 1 June 2017
   - 68 individual review summary tables (Word format, 1 A4 page each) by 31 July 2017

2. **Verification process**

   **Scope of work and tasks**
   - Support the preparation of background documents for the RVC.
   - Extract laboratory information from national annual status updates submitted to the RVC and populate an Excel database.
   - Check the completeness and accuracy of molecular data using national annual reports and data available in the global WHO databases of measles and rubella nucleotide surveillance (MeaNS and RubeNS).
   - Process MeaNS data to support measles molecular epidemiology maps.
   - Prepare an individual summary table (country profile) for each Member State compiling laboratory performance and measles and rubella molecular epidemiology.

   **Deliverables** (by mid-May 2017)
• A regional compilation table (Excel format) of laboratory performance
• Regional compilation tables of molecular epidemiology
• MeaNS and RubeNS quality-checked and curated datasets
• 53 individual summary tables and charts on laboratory data with a short description and recommendations for each Member State

3. **Contract duration**

The contract is for 100 days of work between 1 April and 31 August 2017.

4. **Qualifications, experience, skills and languages**

The consultant should have the following qualifications and expertise.

**Qualifications**
- Laboratory specialist in medical microbiology/virology (MD or PhD)

**Experience**
- At least 7 years of documented work experience in and/or with medical microbiology/virology laboratories is required.
- Work experience with WHO or another international public health organization or UN agency is desirable.
- Previous experience with WHO laboratory networks and vaccine-preventable diseases surveillance is an asset.

**Skills/knowledge**
- Laboratory quality management and EQA monitoring
- Laboratory accreditation criteria and procedures
- Microsoft Excel skills (required); Microsoft Access skills (desirable)

**Languages**
- Fluency in verbal and written English is required.
- Working knowledge of Russian is an asset.

5. **Supervision**

The consultant will work under the supervision of Dr Myriam Ben Mamou, Regional Coordinator of the European Measles and Rubella Laboratory Network, WHO Regional Office for Europe.
6. **Location**

The consultant will work on premises (UN City, Copenhagen, Denmark).

7. **Remuneration and budget (travel costs excluded)**

Available on request

8. **Background documents**

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<tr>
<th>Document</th>
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<tr>
<td>Checklist for annual WHO accreditation for national and subnational laboratories in English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Checklist for annual WHO accreditation for national and subnational laboratories in Russian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manual for the laboratory diagnosis of measles and rubella virus infection</td>
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<td>European Measles and Rubella Laboratory Network</td>
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<td>Eliminating measles and rubella. Framework for the verification process in the WHO European Region (2014)</td>
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<td>WHO Weekly epidemiological record – 6 May 2016</td>
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<td>Regional Verification Commission for Measles and Rubella Elimination (RVC)</td>
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<td>4th Meeting of the European Regional Verification Committee for Measles and Rubella Elimination (RVC) (2016)</td>
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<td>Vaccines and immunization</td>
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