UNICEF EVALUATION OFFICE
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Subject: Evaluation of the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI)
Date of the EOI: 17 August 2016
Closing Date of the EOI: 15 September 2016, 10:00 am New York Time
Address EOI by e-mail to: evalrecruit@unicef.org; kletshabo@unicef.org

I. PURPOSE OF THIS EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) CALL

1. UNICEF Evaluation Office (New York) plans to commission a global evaluation of the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI). This is an invitation to eligible institutions (consulting firms, research institutes universities, or vendors with similar capacities) to submit “expressions of interest” to provide services to conduct the evaluation. Institutions/companies that meet the requirements of this EOI in terms of demonstrating their profile, past experience and capacity to conduct this complex evaluation will be shortlisted and invited to submit full technical and financial proposals. This EOI document provides a short description of the evaluation scope of work; detailed terms of reference (ToRS) will be provided to institutions that will be invited to the next stage – that of submitting full proposals.

II. BACKGROUND

2. OOSCI was launched in 2010 by UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). It aims to ‘turn data into action’ by developing detailed ‘profiles’ of out-of-school children, identify barriers that are pushing them out of school, and propose changes in partner government policies and strategies to address these barriers. The ultimate goal of OOSCI is to generate a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children out of school in each partner country.

3. The OOSCI results framework features three outcomes. The first outcome is that partner countries develop sustainable capacity and robust processes for deriving profiles of children out of school and for analysing the barriers that have led to their exclusion. The second outcome addresses the need for countries to identify and implement effective policies and strategies to increase the number of children who attend school, and mobilize necessary resources to enable and completion of lower secondary education, and to integrate necessary changes within education sector plans. The third outcome aims to bring about greater international attention and enhanced advocacy that will translate into commitments (national and international) to address the issue of out-of-school children.

4. UIS has taken the lead on the statistical methodology for creating profiles of out-of-school children. Given its strong field presence and global advocacy capacity, UNICEF typically takes the lead on managing country studies and promoting more equitable and inclusive education policies and strategies on the basis of the study findings. An important partner, the Global Partner for Education (GPE), joined the OOSCI in 2013. GPE has provided a grant of $3.3 million over the past 30 months to accelerate progress on achieving OOSCI outcomes.

5. OOSCI was initially joined by 26 countries across UNICEF’s seven regions. By the end of 2015 there were 87 OOSCI partner countries, 35 of which are GPE developing country partners. To date, 37 OOSCI country studies have been completed, 27 of which have been published. Additional studies are in progress in approximately 20 more partner countries, while three countries are in the process of updating their OOSCI study using new data.
6. **Theory of change**

   to achieve a reduction in the number of children that are out of school: National governments are ultimately accountable for setting education goals, targets and plans, developing education policies and strategies, mobilizing the required resources, and implementing education plans. A ‘theory of change’ for OOSCI postulates that the provision of detailed data and evidence on why children are out of school and extensive advocacy efforts will prompt governments to implement the changes necessary in their education systems to bring these children into school. Indeed, UNICEF reporting highlights instances where OOSCI studies appear to have contributed to beneficial changes in government policy and practice, and where there is progress in the desired results in terms of having more children enrolling in school for the first time, or re-entering school. Inputs and outputs described below are required to achieve the OOSCI outcomes and to contribute to the reduction of risks that drive children to drop out of school, and the desired impact of sustainable participation in school for all children.

   a. **OOSCI inputs:** OOSCI inputs begin at the country level with the governments in partner countries commissioning a country study. Both UNICEF and UIS typically provide technical and management support for the study. In most studies, statistical techniques are used to analyse household survey data – often from a national census, Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) or Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) – to produce detailed ‘profiles’ of children, using the five dimensions of exclusion (which include children at pre-primary, primary and lower secondary level who are out of school or at risk of dropping out). Profiles generally reflect a range of demographic characteristics such as gender, age, location, and family income, and may also include information on children with disabilities, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous children and child labour. UNICEF’s Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) framework is used to systematically identify the ‘barriers’ that either keep children out of school or push out those who have already enrolled. Barriers usually include the direct and opportunity costs of education, gender and ethnic biases in local communities or the school system, factors such as distance to school and future employment opportunities for children, and often the effects of violence and conflict around schools or other emergencies.

   b. **OOSCI outputs:** The key output for this initiative is the OOSCI study. It provides the evidence base for identifying key issues, and recommends changes in government policy or strategies that would reduce or eliminate the key barriers and enable more children to go school and complete a full course of education. Recommendations also often address the strengthening of implementation mechanisms, including monitoring progress towards reaching the most marginalised children.

   c. **Outcomes and dimensions of influence:** Findings from an OOSCI study are used to inform dialogue and planning in partner countries and at the regional and global levels. In partner countries the findings help governments to refine their education sector strategies and plans, usually in consultation with UNICEF and other partners as part of their ‘upstream’ work to advocate for more equitable, inclusive and effective policies and strategies. This outcome is associated with five dimensions of influence that the OOSCI can affect over time: changes in attitudes, discourse, procedures, policies and behaviours. Measureable attitudinal change includes greater awareness of the bottlenecks and solutions for out-of-school children among policy makers based upon the number of global, regional and country studies published by OOSCI or presentations that include OOSCI messaging. Discursive change includes statements by national governments or regional organisations on the needs of out-of-school children based on OOSCI products and references to OOSCI country studies in national Education Sector Plans, while procedural changes include shifts in government systems or donor agency’s priority countries or rules for funding based on OOSCI.

---

1 A theory of change diagram will be provided at the proposal writing stage.
products (among others). Measurable outputs associated with policy and behaviour change should manifest in changes in resource allocation, Ministry of Education procedures or government policies that are in line with recommendations from an OOSCI country study.

7. At the global and regional levels, the findings from OOSCI studies are used to inform broader debates on education, such as the new Sustainable Development Goals and their implementation at regional and national level, as well as to influence the policies and practices of development partners, such as Educate A Child, and the Global Partnership for Education. At the global level, OOSCI studies are used in broader advocacy work to highlight the issue of out-of-school children and to influence the rules and procedures of donors and decision makers. This work at national and global levels is intended to contribute to changes in national education systems that lead to a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children out of school. A formative evaluation of OOSCI is necessary in order to get an independent appraisal of the progress that has been made towards influencing governments to enact policies and implement action which will result in a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are currently out of school.

III. EVALUATION PURPOSE AND INDICATIVE SCOPE

8. The purpose of the evaluation will be to test the validity of the OOSCI theory of change and its assumptions, strengthen the programme logic, and to provide a formative assessment of progress toward achieving the overall goal of achieving a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children that are out of school. The evaluation is also expected to facilitate reflection and learning among OOSCI programme managers, government counterparts, and key stakeholders, leading to increased programme coherence and a possible revision of implementation strategies. This will enable the programme to meet the accountability requirements of UNICEF OOSCI donors, but also to help verify the important contribution that UNICEF and partners can make in opening up learning opportunities, formal, non-formal or informal, for all children. Table 1 below organise evaluation into objectives and indicate possible evaluation criteria,

Table 1: Evaluation objectives, and evaluation criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Themes</th>
<th>Key Components and Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Evaluation Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Universality: A shared goal?</td>
<td>Purpose of OOSCI; pathways to results and their coherence; relevance to country context (relevance, coherence)</td>
<td>To examine UNICEF’s strategies for realizing the goal of universal participation in basic education, whether pathways to reaching the intended goal are articulated clearly, and the extent to which there is a shared understanding of these among UNICEF staff and key partners^2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Use of evidence</td>
<td>Global evidence of what works; UNICEF contribution to building evidence for what works; UNICEF’s comparative advantage in implementing solutions (relevance)</td>
<td>To examine the extent to which UNICEF and the international community is invested in building evidence for achieving universal participation in basic education, and UNICEF’s contribution relative comparative advantage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^2 UNICEF’s key partners in the out-of-school initiative are national governments, UNESCO’s UIS, and the GPE. Depending on the regional and country context, other partnerships include regional organizations, donor nations, public institutions, private institutions/organizations.
9. **Indicative scope:** The evaluation will cover the entire period of OOSCI implementation (2010-2016). A case study approach will be used to sample seven (7) partner countries from all UNICEF regions. Draft evaluation questions and proposed evaluation methodology will be made available at the next stage to companies that are invited to submit proposals.

### 3.0 TEAM COMPOSITION AND PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

10. In their expression of interest to be considered to conduct this evaluation, institutions and/or companies are required to indicate their capacity to provide a team of evaluation specialists with expertise in the education sector and work experience that covers the following areas or comparable professional area/content: education policy development and implementation; policy advocacy; issues pertaining to educational access and inclusion; partnerships in education development; education systems strengthening; public sector budgeting approaches; and aid effectiveness. We require institutions to demonstrate familiarity with UNICEF work for children and rights, and to be able to offer a team that is able to communicate in English, French and Spanish. The ability to communicate in the national/local languages in partner countries and/or additional UN languages will be an added advantage. Companies should also demonstrate experience/familiarity with countries of different typologies and programming contexts, including countries undertaking humanitarian programming. A demonstrated capacity to assemble a team with adequate gender and geographic balance will be an added advantage.

11. The evaluation requires professionals with significant expertise at senior levels, as well as solid organizational back-office support functions. The Evaluation Office encourages companies to proffer an **indicative team of evaluators**, with the understanding that more work of finding the relevant team members and ascertaining their availability will be carried out at the proposal-writing stage. **However, companies will be assessed favorably for proposing a highly qualified team leader, and giving assurance of his/her availability.**

12. **Period of assignment:** The estimated timeline for the evaluation is 5-6 months, beginning in December 2016 through June 2017. The evaluation will include field visits to 4-5 case study countries, to be determined during the evaluation inception phase. While the level of effort for the team leader will span the entire 5-6 month period, companies will have the opportunity to make a justification for the level of effort for the other members of the team at the proposal stage.
4.0 SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EoI)

13. Interested and eligible institutions (consulting firms, research institutes universities, or vendors with similar capacities) are required to complete and submit the EOI form in Appendix A, and provide a response (not more than 4 pages, excluding attachments) to the six open-ended questions on the second page of the EoI form.

14. EoI submissions should be sent via email to: evalofficeapplications@unicef.org and kletshabo@unicef.org no later than 15 September 2016, at 10:00 am New York Time (Eastern Standard), under the subject heading Expression of Interest: Evaluation of the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI).

15. Please note the following:
   a. This EOI does not constitute a solicitation. We seek only an expression of interest in being invited to tender for the evaluation, and not proposals or price quotes.
   b. A response to this request for EOI does not ensure automatic selection to participate in the tendering process.
   c. UNICEF reserves the right to change or cancel this EoI at any time, or to require compliance with additional conditions in subsequent stages of the solicitation process.
   d. Responses received without a duly completed form or an incomplete form will not be considered.

16. Following this EOI invitation, institutions will be short-listed and invited to tender. More detailed Terms of Reference (TORs) will be sent to short-listed institutions in the form of a Request for Proposal of Services (RfPS) during the first week of October 2016, or shortly thereafter. The RfPS will remain open for 4-5 weeks from the day of issue.
### APPENDIX A: UNICEF Evaluation Office – Expression of Interest Form

**Evaluation of the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI)**

Please fill-in page 1 of the form in its entirety and submit it to us electronically or via fax.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Company Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Salutation</td>
<td>[ ] Mr. [ ] Ms. [ ] Mrs. [ ] Dr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>(please include country &amp; city code)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td>(please include country &amp; city code)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official e-mail address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Code</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate contact person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please respond to the six mandatory questions below in a narrative not exceeding 4 pages, excluding attachments.

1. **Provide information which will enable us to determine whether your company/organization has the capacity to carry out a multi-country evaluation. Information should include:**
   a) the year in which the company or consultancy firm started operating, and the number of years that it has been providing evaluation services;
   b) organizational structure and infrastructure in place to support the evaluation, including an overview of company financial profile; and,
   c) Staff capacity, both technical and support staff (where possible attach CVs of prospective team members, pending confirmation of their availability).

2. **Provide information which will enable us to determine whether your company/organization has relevant evaluation experience. Information should include:**
   a) a description of the technical competencies of indicative/proposed team members, and the number of years of evaluation experience;
   b) a description of the type of evaluations the organization has carried out, evaluation experience of each of the indicative/proposed team members, and indicate if they have worked for your company before in the capacity that is being proposed; and,
   c) evaluations conducted by your company/organizations for UN agencies and other comparable organizations.

3. **Provide information which will enable us to determine whether your team or organization has relevant specialized knowledge on issues to be covered by the current evaluation. Information should include:**
   a) a description of **programming experience** in the education sector, programming in another sector, addressing issues relevant to out-of-school children; and,
   b) a description of **education evaluation experience**, or experience in education policy development/advocacy; issues pertaining to educational access, partnerships in education development; education systems strengthening; public sector budgeting approaches; aid effectiveness; or comparable professional content.

4. **Provide any additional experience that may be critical to the success of the proposed evaluation. This should include**
   a) ability to communicate in UN languages and any other non-UN languages (list language capabilities only for confirmed team members and support staff);
   b) experience of prospective team members having worked in programme countries, either as a consultants, or having resided in those countries; and,
   c) any other pertinent information that may be relevant to the evaluation.

5. **What Quality Assurance Certifications (technical or financial) does your company have? If the organization/company has any certifications, please provide a short description of internal mechanisms for assuring the quality of products.**

6. **Confirm that the company or any team member:**
   a) has no on-going litigation with the UN;
   b) is not currently removed/invalidated or suspended by the United Nations or UN system organizations