

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR INSTITUTIONAL CONTRACTORS

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL CONSULTANCY ON INTRODUCING CONTEMPORARY EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION
MODEL IN TWO MONTENEGRIN MUNICIPALITIES****Background and Context**

The early childhood years are foundational for the development of all human beings and shape the trajectory of life. This is a period particularly important for children who are at risk of or experience developmental difficulties. Evidence shows that adequate support during these years, when brain development is very intensive and neural plasticity is greater, can help children with developmental difficulties improve levels of functioning and achieve their innate potential. It can also help prevent or ameliorate the impact of environmental risk factors, including extreme poverty, neglect and violence, that are known to adversely affect child development and increase the likelihood for developmental difficulties. In the longer run, early support can significantly improve quality of life of the child and his/her family and promote inclusion.

During the past decades, globally, efforts have intensified to strengthen and expand support to children with developmental difficulties and their families/caregivers. Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) systems and services have emerged as an important policy area to promote the development of infants and young children who are at risk of or are experiencing developmental difficulties and support the realization of their rights in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. There has been a significant shift in the understanding on how child development during the first years of life can be enhanced, which also informed a change in the philosophy and principles of ECI practice. Consequently, contemporary ECI practice builds on the understanding that family interaction patterns are critical for child outcomes, making services more family-centered rather than child-centered, aiming to provide parents and other significant adults in the child's life (like early years teachers, other caregivers) with skills, knowledge and confidence necessary for meeting the needs of the child and for providing everyday opportunities that promote learning and development.

The Analysis of cross sector support to children with disabilities in Montenegro (2020) showed that Early Childhood Intervention services are outdated and medical model based and not well coordinated, leading to either duplication of services and inefficiencies or gaps whereby the most vulnerable children tend to fall through the cracks. Further, there are inequities, where a child's access to early detection, intervention and rehabilitation still depends on the child's place of living, type of disability and the resources of the family. The quality of services is not yet comparable with European principles and standards. An Early Childhood Intervention Situation Analysis, i.e. ECI SitAn has been conducted in Montenegro (summary is available on [UNICEF Montenegro website](#), full report is forthcoming). It provides additional empirical evidence for the above and maps available services and identifies gaps in service provision. The findings of the ECI SitAn were presented at the regional conference on Early Childhood Intervention in Podgorica on 9 and 10 November 2022. The Conference conclusions are available on [UNICEF Montenegro website](#).

In cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, UNICEF Country Office in Montenegro will engage an international institute/agency/organization gathering experts in the field of contemporary, transdisciplinary, family-centered, routine-based early intervention in order to model contemporary, transdisciplinary, family-centered, routine-based early intervention in two municipalities in Montenegro as demonstration sites, based on which future scaling up can be based.

2. Objectives, Purpose & Expected Results

The purpose of the assignment is to enable all families and children in Montenegro to benefit from timely and quality support for optimal early development by enhancing ECI practice in Montenegro in line with international standards and best practice.

The objective of the assignment is to assist the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and relevant institutions in selected municipalities (especially primary health care centres, preschools, relevant social and child protection institutions) to model contemporary, transdisciplinary, family-centered, routine-based early intervention based on contemporary child developmental monitoring, and thus provide a basis for future scale up at national level. The municipalities will be selected by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, one in the north of the country and one on the coast.

The assignment is part of the “EU and UNICEF for Early Childhood Development in Montenegro” Action.

3. Description of the Assignment

The following tasks are expected to be completed:

1. Desk review and preparation for the field mission (remotely), development of a detailed workplan with timelines of activities.
2. Facilitating a half-day meeting (this can be an online meeting) with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and relevant institutions in selected municipalities (especially primary health care centres, preschools, relevant social and child protection institutions) to present the methodology and agree on next steps. In advance of the meeting, the draft meeting agenda and slide deck for the meeting should be submitted to UNICEF for review.
3. Mapping of ECI service providers in two selected municipalities in preparation for the ECI pilot, and in collaboration with a local NGO to be selected by UNICEF (mapping can be done by the local NGO while the consultancy agency can prepare the methodology and oversee the process remotely).
4. Support the the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, relevant institutions and the selected NGO to develop a monitoring framework to assess the outcomes of the intervention and satisfaction of families participating in the intervention at the beginning of the implementation of the intervention so that data can be gathered throughout the modelling process (remotely).
5. Conduct training of relevant professionals (face to face) on contemporary child developmental monitoring in two selected municipalities. Participants in the training should be practitioners from the two municipalities as well as qualified professionals in the local NGO to be selected by UNICEF as well as national level institutions who need to be acquainted with new developments to be better prepared for future scaling up (e.g. Resource Centres and the Centre for Autism, Developmental Disabilities and Child Psychiatry). The local NGO to be selected by UNICEF will organize logistics for the training participants.
6. Conduct training, supervision and mentoring of relevant professionals on contemporary, transdisciplinary, family-centered, routine-based early intervention in two selected municipalities (combination of face to face and online). Participants in the training should be practitioners from the two municipalities as well as qualified professionals in the local NGO to be selected by UNICEF as well as national level institutions who need to be acquainted with new developments to be better prepared for future scaling up (e.g. Resource Centres and the Centre for Autism, Developmental Disabilities and Child Psychiatry). The local NGO to be selected by UNICEF will organize logistics for the training participants.
7. Support the local NGO to accredit the training with relevant national institutions (for instance Institute for Social and Child Protection, Bureau for Education, Medical Chamber etc.) by providing inputs to the required application documentation (remotely).

8. Providing feedback at the national level to UNICEF, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare at least twice during the pilot (remotely).
9. Present the outcomes of the pilot at a national level half-day meeting gathering policy makers and practitioners (face to face or online).
10. Prepare final consultancy report for UNICEF and the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare including recommendations for next steps in the process of introducing and scaling up contemporary early intervention models (remotely).

Deliverables should be prepared in either English or Montenegrin language. UNICEF Office in Montenegro will secure translation when needed.

4. Deliverables, timelines, and payment schedule

Deliverables	Tentative deadlines	Tentative payment schedule
1. Detailed workplan with timelines of activities	22 March 2023	
2. Facilitating half day meeting with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and relevant institutions in selected municipalities	29 March 2023	
3. a) Outline of the methodology for the mapping of ECI service providers in two selected municipalities b) inputs the final mapping report on ECI service providers in two selected municipalities conducted by local NGO	29 March 2023 12 April 2023	
4. Monitoring framework to assess progress, outcomes of the intervention and satisfaction of families participating in the intervention	12 April 2023	
5. Facilitating training of relevant professionals on contemporary child developmental monitoring	12 May 2023	
		50%
6. Facilitating training, supervision and mentoring of relevant professionals on contemporary ECI	Between 12 April and 14 July 2023	
7. Inputs to local NGO for the required application documentation for accreditation of the training with relevant national institutions	14 July 2023	
8. Written feedback (at least two) at the national level to UNICEF, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	31 May and 14 July 2023	
9. Facilitating presentation of the outcomes of the pilot at a national level half-day meeting gathering policy makers and practitioners	21 July 2023	
10. Final consultancy report for UNICEF and the three ministries with recommendations	24 July 2023	
		50%

5. Travel

- The international team is required for the training and presentation of the outcomes of the pilot at the end of the assignment. During the application process, the Technical and Financial proposals should outline required travel (duration and number of trips).
- Some meetings will be held online.
- The international team should arrange their own travel and accommodation. One pilot municipality will be in the north of the country, and the second one will be in the south, i.e. on the coast.

6. Management and Organisation

- **Management:** The consultancy will be supervised by Early Childhood Development Officer. The Consultancy Agency (i.e. the designated team lead) should communicate with the Early Childhood Development Officer on a regular basis and share all deliverables as they become available for review and potential feedback. The deliverables should be provided in advance of meetings involving national counterparts to allow sufficient time for translation into Montenegrin when needed.
- **Organization:** International Institutional Consultancy is required, meeting the criteria described below.
- **Schedule:** This assignment will commence on 20 March 2023.

7. Qualification Requirements

The Consultancy Agency team should consist of ECD/ECI professionals with the following requirements:

- All team members should hold advanced university degrees in child development, paediatrics, psychology, pedagogy, special pedagogy, early intervention or a related technical field.
- Each of the team members should have at least five years of progressive professional experience in the field of contemporary ECI including training other professionals to provide contemporary ECI.
- At least one team member should have professional experience in providing training on child developmental monitoring.
- At least one team member should have work experience in the Western Balkans.
- At least one team member should have previous work experience with UNICEF.
- Excellent command of both spoken and written English or Montenegrin.

8. Application procedure

The potential contractors are expected to submit a proposal based on these Terms of Reference. The proposal should consist of:

- i. **Technical Proposal including:**
 - a) Portfolio of the organisation/institution/agency with examples of previous work on similar projects and clients in the last 5 years at least.
 - b) Title/designation of each team member including their CVs, clearly outlining how each of the team members fulfils the above requirements and role of each team member for the fulfilment of above tasks. One team member should be assigned as a team lead to facilitate communication with UNICEF;

- c) Description of the methodology and technical approach with a tentative work plan with the number of working days and timeframe in line with the ToRs;
- d) Supplier Profile Form.
- e) LRPS Form signed.

ii. **Price Proposal (Budget) including:**

- a. Daily fee rate for each team member based on the number of working days included in the Technical Proposal.
- b. Estimated travel costs both international and in country travel. Daily subsistence allowance (DSA) will, where applicable, be paid up to a maximum of the official UN rate. (Reimbursement of travel costs / accommodation expenses will be based on actual expenses).
- c. Other costs if applicable.

The price, i.e. financial proposal shall indicate budget estimated in EUR.

8. Evaluation

1) Technical components (70 points)

ITEM	TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA	MAX OBTAINABLE POINTS
1	Overall Response - the understanding of the assignment by the proposer and the alignment of the proposal submitted with the ToR	
1.1	• Completeness of response	3
1.2	• Overall concord between TOR/needs and proposal	3
2	Company and Key Personnel	
2.1	• Range and depth of organizational experience with similar assignment	5
2.2	• Samples of previous work, number of customers, size of projects	4
2.3	• Key personnel: relevant experience and qualifications of the proposed team for the assignment	18
3	Company policies	
3.1.	• Company policy on Child labor, Safeguarding and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (articulate policies for the protection & safeguarding of children and prevention of PSEA)	3
3.2.	• Gender component: At least 1 female in the management structure or ownership of the company	2
3.3.	• Workplace policies on disabilities	2
4.	Proposed Methodology and Approach	
4.1	• Methodology and technical approach outline	25
4.2	• Tentative work plan	5
TOTAL TECHNICAL SCORE		70

Minimum technical score: 70% of 70 points = 49 points

2) Financial component (total of 30 points)

- Technical proposal evaluation. Proposals passing the minimum technical pass score (49 points-70% of the maximum points obtainable for technical proposal) will continue into the Financial proposal evaluation.
- Financial proposal evaluation. The lowest price proposal will be awarded the full score assigned to the commercial proposal.
- Recommendation. The recommendation for award of contract will be based on best combination of technical and financial score.
- Final award and contracts. Based on verified nominations and final scores, contract negotiations could be initiated with one or more successful Proposers.
- The UNICEF evaluation team will select the Proposal which is of high quality, clear and meets the stated requirements and offers the best combination of technical and financial score.