

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR INSTITUTIONAL CONTRACTORS

International institutional consultancy to support rolling out Caring Families programme for parents of children with disabilities

Background and Context

In response to the high prevalence rates of violence against children, there has been a surge of global interest in evidence-based violence prevention and the promotion of nurturing relationships between parents/caregivers and their children. A growing body of scientific literature has shown that social-learning-theory-based parenting programmes can effectively diminish rates of violence against children and improve a range of related outcomes, such as positive parenting skills, developmentally responsive care and affection, and parental mental health.

One such programme is Parenting for Lifelong Health for Young Children (PLH for Young Children), predominantly a group-based parenting programme that aims to establish and sustain nurturing relationships between parents and caregivers and their children ages 2-9 years, and thereby prevent and reduce the risk of violence against children and maltreatment at home and in the community. Grounded in social learning theory and behavioral change techniques, it aims to strengthen parenting skills and behaviors that help parents and caregivers provide adequate support and care to their children. By building positive relations and promoting alternatives to violent discipline, the programme also contributes to the prevention and treatment of disruptive child behaviors, and the reduction of parental stress and depression. PLH for Young Children is part of a suite of open access, non-commercialized parenting programmes to prevent violence in low-resource settings. These programmes have been developed and rigorously tested through a collaboration between WHO, Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town in South Africa, the universities of Oxford, Bangor and Reading in the United Kingdom, and UNICEF.

Since late 2017, the Government of Montenegro (the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare) with the support of UNICEF and the EU has made considerable progress in implementing PLH for Young Children in Montenegro, under the local brand Caring Families. A total of 133 facilitators, eleven supervisors and two national trainers have been trained, mostly psychologists, pedagogues, nurses, preschool teachers and social workers working at primary healthcare centres, kindergartens, NGOs and other relevant institutions. The training program has been accredited by the Institute for Social and Child Protection and the Bureau for Education. There have been fifteen cycles of programme implementation, with more than 2000 parents recruited across seventeen municipalities thus far.

In 2021, a [feasibility study for scaling up PLH for Young Children in Montenegro](#) was published, which among other things recommended tailoring the programme to particular subgroups including Roma and Egyptian families and the parents/ caregivers of children with disabilities so that the programme is accessible to all parents and caregivers in Montenegro.

In line with these recommendations, a pilot version of the Caring Families programme specifically adapted for parents of children aged 3-9 with delays and disabilities in the domains of speech and language development and social interaction was implemented during the first half of 2025. Following the pilot, a formative research study was conducted, involving both parents and facilitators, to assess the relevance, feasibility, and impact of the adapted content. Based on the findings and feedback collected through this research, the next step involves further adapting and enhancing the programme in order to align it with the specific needs and recommendations provided by families and professionals in the formative stages of the programme development. This process is expected to enhance the overall quality and effectiveness of the programme and ensure its readiness for broader implementation and scale-up.

2. Objectives, Purpose & Expected Results

The overall objective of this consultancy is to contribute to the further development and improvement of the Caring Families programme for parents of children with disabilities in Montenegro. The purpose is to align the programme with the specific needs and recommendations identified during the pilot implementation carried out in the first half of 2025, which included consultations and feedback from both parents and facilitators. Furthermore, the objective is to ensure sustainability and quality scaling up of the programme in the future.

The objectives of the assignment are:

- To update and revise the content of the Caring Families programme in line with the feedback collected during formative research.
- To provide supervision to facilitators who will be delivering the adapted Caring Families programme to parents of children with disabilities, continuing through the end of 2025, in order to ensure quality implementation and gather feedback on the revised programme.
- To promote the content and outcomes of the adapted Caring Families programme to stakeholders at a national conference.
- To certify two national trainers as certifiers of future facilitators, to support meeting the requirements of the renewed accreditation of the training programme by the Institute for Social and Child Protection.
- To, based on the second implementation cycle of the adapted programme, provide further recommendations for improving and scaling the programme.

UNICEF Country Office in Montenegro will provide translation and interpretation services. UNICEF Country Office in Montenegro and its partners will provide logistics for events. For meetings held online the agency should use their own online platform subscription.

3. Description of the Assignment

The following tasks are expected to be completed:

- Further revision/adaptation of the Caring Families programme for parents of children with disabilities, based on the findings of the formative research / feasibility analysis conducted after the pilot implementation cycle in spring 2025. The revision should be based on suggestions from parents and facilitators, with the aim of enhancing the programme for future delivery and scaling up. This refers to the facilitator manual, parent manual, training protocol and supervision format. Home-based.
- To provide online supervision to the facilitators from kindergartens, resource centres and primary health care centres who will be delivering the Caring Families programme in autumn 2025 to parents of children with disabilities. Group supervision sessions should support facilitators with programme delivery and serve as an opportunity to gather feedback on the implementation of the revised programme. Home-based.
- Online presentation of the adapted Caring Families programme and its pilot implementation in Montenegro at the parenting conference to be organized by UNICEF with national partners in late October/early November. The presentation should focus on programme objectives, target groups, content, pilot delivery, and preliminary outcomes and should take about 30 minutes. Home-based.
- Review of videos and certification of two national trainers as certifiers of future facilitators, to support meeting the requirements of the renewed accreditation of the training programme by the Institute for Social and Child Protection.

- Preparation of a brief final consultancy report (maximum 5 pages), which will include recommendations for improving and scaling the adapted programme, including expanding the Caring Families cadre in Montenegro in order to strengthen self-sufficiency and sustainability. Home-based.

4. Deliverables, timelines, and payment schedule

Deliverables	Tentative deadlines	Tentative payment schedule
1. Revision of the Caring Families programme adapted for parents of children with disabilities	15 October 2025	100%
2. Supervision sessions provided to Caring Families facilitators who will be delivering the revised programme to parents of children with disabilities until the end of 2025.	By 30 November 2025	
3. Online presentation of the adapted Caring Families programme at the parenting conference.	By 30 November 2025	
4. Review of videos and certification of two national trainers as certifiers of future facilitators	By 10 December 2025	
5. Final consultancy report for UNICEF	By 10 December 2025	

5. Travel

- While no travel is envisaged for this consultancy, during the application process, the Technical and Financial proposals may outline required travel if justified (duration and number of trips).
- Some meetings can be held online using the agency's own online platform subscription.
- The international team should arrange their own travel and accommodation if travel is to be found necessary.

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.
- Organization: International Institutional Consultancy is required, meeting the criteria described below.
- Schedule: This assignment will commence on 10 October 2025.

7. Qualification Requirements

Contracted agency's expert(s) should be trainers of PLH for young children. At least one should be Master Trainer of PLH for young children.

In addition, the Contracted agency's expert(s) are expected to have following qualifications to complete the task:

- Advanced university degree in clinical psychology, child psychology, early childhood development or a similar technical field;
- At least 5 years of working with children and parents of children with disabilities;
- Familiarity with the regions of Central, Eastern or South-East Europe;

- Excellent command of English (both spoken and written);
- Excellent facilitation and communication skills;
- Previous work experience with UNICEF or UN is a strong asset.

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) 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.