

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR INSTITUTIONAL CONTRACTORS

International Institutional Consultancy for the provision of support to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography in operationalizing the Barnahus national standards

1. Background and Context

The Government of Montenegro has placed child rights at the forefront of its agenda. It has worked to align national policies and legislation with international standards, including the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Council of Europe's Lanzarote Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse in 2010. In 2011, the Lanzarote Committee was established to monitor implementation of the Convention. In 2015, the Committee recognized the Barnahus (Children's House) model as a best practice for providing a child-friendly, multidisciplinary response to child sexual abuse.

Protecting children from violence is a central priority in Montenegro's EU accession process and in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The recently adopted **Strategy on Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence (2025–2029)**, which includes introduction of the Barnahus model, is a key element of Montenegro's EU accession program for 2024–2027 under Chapter 23. Strengthening child protection systems will also help meet the closing benchmark for Chapter 23 on fundamental rights, ensuring Montenegro is prepared to fully implement the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and other relevant EU *acquis* upon accession.

The Government has already taken proactive steps to strengthen its child protection framework through legislative and policy reforms, as well as improvements in social protection and justice systems, to better support child victims and witnesses of crime. In line with commitments under the Lanzarote Convention and the EU accession process, Montenegro is advancing toward establishing the Barnahus model as an integrated response mechanism to combat violence against children. This unique approach brings together all relevant services under one roof, preventing re-victimization and ensuring every child receives a coordinated response with legal standing. Its core function is to coordinate parallel criminal and child welfare investigations while providing comprehensive support services in a safe, child-friendly environment.

With support from UNICEF and the Council of Europe, a feasibility study for the Barnahus service was conducted. The Government announced the Barnahus introduction at the regional conference "*Elevating Excellence: Uniting for Effective Child Protection with the Barnahus Model*" hosted in Podgorica with support from UNICEF, the Council of Europe, and the EU. In December 2024, the Government adopted the Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children against Violence 2025–2029 with Action plan 2025–2026, with establishing Barnahus as one of its key measures towards the country's strengthened response to violence against children. In February 2025, the Government of Montenegro adopted the Pledge on Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence, committing to establish the Barnahus service by 2027 as a comprehensive one stop shop for children who are victims of severe violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography (MSWFCD) serves as the lead institution, coordinating closely with the Ministries of Interior, Health, Justice, and other relevant institutions. Importantly, in 2025, national standards for the Barnahus model were developed by a cross-sectoral Technical Working Group led by the MSWFCD and composed of representatives from the above ministries, ensuring a unified and integrated approach to child protection.

The national Standards for the Barnahus model will be supported by several detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide its functioning across all relevant sectors. In cooperation with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography, the UNICEF Country Office in Montenegro will engage an international institute, agency, or organization with expertise in social and child protection, child development and psychology,

health, and justice to provide support in developing the necessary SOPs to operationalize the national Standards and strengthen Barnahus implementation.

The consultancy will take place within the initiative *Strengthening the system support on prevention of violence against women, girls and boys* implemented by UNICEF and UN Women in partnership with the Government of Montenegro. The initiative is funded by the Montenegro SDG Acceleration Fund (MAF), which is supported by the EU and the governments of Luxembourg, Switzerland, Montenegro, Austria and Ireland.

2. Objectives, Purpose & Expected Results

The purpose of this assignment is to support the Government of Montenegro, i.e. the the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography, as the lead, and other relevant ministries in developing SOPs to operationalize recently developed Barnahus National Standards and ensure effective, child-friendly, and gender-sensitive responses to cases of sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

The objective of the assignment is to:
develop the SOPs in the following areas:

- 1) referral and intake,
- 2) interagency case coordination,
- 3) risk assessment and safety planning,
- 4) child forensic interviewing,
- 5) forensic medical examination

and support the MSWFCD in developing a rulebook on provision of services to victims of sexual violence and exploitation through a multidisciplinary approach.

In addition, the assignment aims at ensuring that the implementation of the Barnahus National Standards and SOPs is aligned with the Barnahus Quality Standards, CRC, Lanzarote Convention, relevant EU directives, and best practices from other European countries, and strengthening the capacities of several relevant sectors through a participatory process of SOPs development.

3. Description of the Assignment

The institutional consultancy team will:

- conduct a desk review of international and national standards, laws, and practices relevant to Barnahus;
- hold consultations with key stakeholders relevant to Barnahus operation and developing SOPs (Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, State Prosecution, Police, Centres for Social Work, Institute for Social and Child Protection, and other relevant institutions) to obtain relevant information that could inform the SOPs and rulebook on provision of services to victims of sexual violence and exploitation through a multidisciplinary approach;
- draft SOPs for each of the five areas listed above (see heading 2) in cooperation with the relevant working group established (by the lead institution) for the development of each SOP,
- support the relevant MSWFCD's working group drafting of the rulebook on provision of services to victims of sexual violence and exploitation through a multidisciplinary approach.
- facilitate workshops with the working groups to develop, validate, refine and present SOPs,
- finalize the SOPs and rulebook and submit them to UNICEF.

The consultancy company will be responsible for developing all deliverables in agreement with UNICEF and Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography.

The consultancy company will be responsible for producing the final versions of all deliverables in both Montenegrin and English languages .

The sequence and dynamics of the SOPs development will be agreed with UNICEF and the relevant institutions particularly the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography which will initiate and convene the multidisciplinary working groups for each of the SOPs with UNICEF technical support.

4. Key deliverables, timelines, and payment schedule

Deliverables	Timeline	Schedule of Payment
Desk review of relevant international standards including but not limited to: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child , the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse - Lanzarote Convention , the EU Directives on Combating child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and child pornography (2011/92/EU) and on Minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime (2012/29/EU) , the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2022-2027 , UNICEF Child Protection Strategy 2021-2030 and EU Strategy on the Rights of the child 2021-2024 , Barnahus Quality Standards: Guidance for Multidisciplinary and Interagency Response to Child Victims and Witnesses of Violence , the Feasibility Study for establishing Barnahus in Montenegro , draft national Standards for Barnahus in Montenegro, and all national laws, bylaws, procedures, protocols, policy documents and other documents of relevance (reports, analyses, data) for the establishment and operating the Barnahus, and preparation for the field mission with developed workplan with timeline of activities.	By 15 th May 2026	
Consultations with key stakeholders relevant to Barnahus operation and developing SOPs i.e. the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, State Prosecution, Police, Centres for Social Work, Institute for Social and Child Protection, and other relevant institutions.	By 22 nd May 2026	
SOP for referral and intake of cases in Barnahus (including referral authorities, e-referral system, state prosecutor approval, emergency referrals, 24/7 duty system). The consultancy will work with and support a relevant working group led by the MSWFCD to develop the SOP. The consultancy will draft and finalize the SOP resulting from this process. Upon finalization and agreement with the lead	By end July 2026	

Ministry and UNICEF, the consultancy will present the SOP to professional public.		
SOP for interagency case coordination (including MDT meeting procedures; decision making; documentation; case closure/transition) The consultancy will work with and support a relevant working group established by the MSWFCD to develop the SOP. The consultancy will draft and finalize the SOP resulting from this process. Upon finalization and agreement with the lead Ministry and UNICEF, the consultancy will present the SOP to professional public.	By end July 2026	50% of the contract value
SOP for risk assessment and safety planning (including standardized, child-centred method for identifying immediate and ongoing risks to the child's safety and well-being; development of individualized safety plans integrated into each child's Individual Case Plan) The consultancy will work with and support a relevant working group established by the MSWFCD to develop the SOP. The consultancy will draft and finalize the SOP resulting from this process. Upon finalization and agreement with the lead Ministry and UNICEF, the consultancy will present the SOP to professional public.	By end October 2026	
SOP for child forensic interviewing (including national forensic interviewing protocol and its application; MDT planning; recording; observer(s) participation; repeated interview safeguards) The consultancy will work with and support a relevant justice institution led working group to develop the SOP. The consultancy will draft and finalize the SOP resulting from this process. Upon finalization and agreement with the lead Ministry and UNICEF, the consultancy will present the SOP to professional public.	By end October 2026	
A rulebook on provision of services to victims of sexual violence and exploitation through a multidisciplinary approach. The consultancy will work with and support a relevant working group established by the MSWFCD to develop the rulebook based on the developed national standards for the provision of service.	By mid-November 2026	

SOP for forensic medical examination (including consent procedures; photo-documentation; child-specific sub-protocol for prepubertal children; chain of custody; privacy and dignity safeguards). The consultancy will work with and support a relevant health institution led working group established to develop the SOP. The consultancy will draft and finalize the SOP resulting from this process. Upon finalization and agreement with the lead Ministry and UNICEF, the consultancy will present the SOP to professional public.	By mid-December 2026	50% of the contract value
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5. Travel

Travel to Montenegro is expected and breakdown of travel costs should be separately included in the financial offer. Travel is to be confirmed by UNICEF.

- Important:**
 Travel costs will be calculated based on economy class travel, regardless of the length of travel. Costs for accommodation, meals and incidentals shall not exceed applicable daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, as promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).

Recourse:

- UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/outputs is incomplete, not delivered or for failure to meet deadlines.

6. Management and Organisation

Management: The consultancy company will be supervised by UNICEF Montenegro Child Protection Officer. The Consultancy Company (i.e. the designated team lead) should communicate with the Child Protection Officer on a regular basis and share all training materials/deliverables as they become available for review and potential feedback. The materials for the deliverables should be provided in advance of trainings and meetings involving national counterparts to allow sufficient time for review of training agenda and materials. All deliverables need to be validated by UNICEF and relevant institution i.e. depending on which sector the training was organized for.

Organization: International Institutional Consultancy is required to produce the expected results, meeting the criteria described below. **UNICEF shall approve all members of the team** (national and international).

Schedule: The assignment will commence on **28 April** to **15 December** 2026, for a total of **85 working days**.

7. Qualification Requirements

The Consultancy Company team should consist of child protection/social work expert(s), justice/legal expert(s), health/forensic medical expert(s), child psychology/forensic interviewing expert(s), with the requirements as listed below.

- Requirements for an International Consultants to develop the SOP for the referral and intake of cases in Barnahus and the SOP for the interagency case coordination in Barnahus and the rulebook on provision of services to victims of sexual violence and exploitation through a multidisciplinary approach;**

a. The International Consultant must possess:

- Bachelor's degree in law, social sciences, social policy, or a related field; advanced degree will be considered an advantage;
- Minimum of seven years of professional experience in child protection area, with proven expertise in child-friendly justice, addressing violence against children and exploitation, and strong knowledge of relevant standards;
- Knowledge of standards and experience with MDIA response to violence against children that coordinate justice, health, and child welfare service;
- Solid understanding of international and regional instruments, including but not limited to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention), standards in child friendly justice and to social and child protection;
- Good knowledge of social and child protection systems and justice reform processes in Montenegro, considered a distinct advantage
- Excellent analytical and writing skills, evidenced by a of clear, concise publications and reports; as part of the technical evaluation, a recent relevant work sample must be provided. Experience collaborating with practitioners and multiple government stakeholders in multisectoral approaches is an advantage
- Excellent command of English (spoken and written); proficiency in a local language is an advantage
- Excellent communication skills, participatory processes facilitation skills;
- Previous work experience with UNICEF is considered an advantage.

b. The International Consultant must possess:

- Bachelor's degree in social work, social policy, social sciences, psychology or a related field; advanced degree will be considered an advantage;
- At least 10 years of experience and expertise in social and child protection, particularly related to protection of children victims of sexual violence and exploitation including trafficking;
- Knowledge of standards and experience with MDIA response to violence against children that coordinate justice, health, and child welfare service;;
- Good knowledge of the child protection system in Montenegro particularly case management in the social and child protection system is a distinct advantage;
- Solid understanding of international and regional instruments, including but not limited to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CEDAW, CRPD, Lanzarote Convention, European Social Charter, Revised European Social Charter, and the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, standards in child friendly justice and to social and child protection;
- Excellent writing skills demonstrated by proven record of concise and clear relevant pieces of work e.g. SOPs, guidelines, manuals, training programs, standards, related to child protection. A recent relevant work sample must be provided as part of the technical evaluation. Experience collaborating with practitioners and multiple government stakeholders in multisectoral approaches is a distinct advantage;
- Excellent command of English; local language is an advantage;
- Strong communication and facilitation skills, particularly participatory processes facilitation;
- Previous work experience with UNICEF is considered an advantage.

2. Requirements for the International Consultant to develop the SOP for risk assessment and safety planning in Barnahus:

a. The International Consultant must possess:

- Bachelor's degree in law, social work, social policy, social sciences, psychology or a related field; an advanced degree is an advantage;
- Minimum of seven years of professional experience in child protection area, with proven expertise in child-friendly justice, addressing violence against children and exploitation, and strong knowledge of relevant standards;
- At least five years of experience working with children in contact with the law, based on child-friendly justice principles; demonstrated knowledge of standards and experience with MDIA response to violence against children
- Familiarity with the local context in Montenegro, particularly regarding social and child protection and justice system reform;
- Knowledge of standards and experience with MDIA response to violence against children that coordinate justice, health, and child welfare service;
- Solid understanding of international and regional instruments, including but not limited to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CEDAW, CRPD, Lanzarote Convention, European Social Charter, Revised European Social Charter, and the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as well as standards in child-friendly justice and social and child protection;
- Excellent writing skills, evidenced by a record of clear, concise work such as SOPs, guidelines, manuals, training programs, and standards related to child protection. A recent relevant work sample must be provided as part of the technical evaluation. Experience collaborating with practitioners and multiple government stakeholders in multisectoral approaches is an advantage;
- Excellent command of English; local language is an advantage;
- Strong communication and facilitation skills, particularly participatory processes facilitation;
- Previous work experience with UNICEF is considered an advantage

3. Requirements for the International Consultant to develop the SOP for the child forensic interviewing in Barnahus;

a. The International Consultant must possess:

- Bachelor's degree in law, social work, social sciences, psychology or a related field; an advanced degree is an advantage;
- Minimum of seven years of professional experience in child protection area, with proven expertise in child-friendly justice, addressing violence against children and exploitation, and strong knowledge of relevant standards including trauma-informed practices to minimize re-traumatization.
- Knowledge of and/or direct experience in forensic interviewing using evidence-based protocols (e.g. NICHHD protocol);
- Knowledge of standards and experience with MDIA response to violence against children that coordinate justice, health, and child welfare service;
- Solid understanding of international and regional instruments, including but not limited to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CEDAW, CRPD, Lanzarote Convention, European Social Charter, Revised European Social Charter, and the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as well as standards in child-friendly justice and social and child protection;
- Familiarity of national legislation governing child protection, criminal investigations, and evidence admissibility.
- Knowledge of EU best-practice recommendations for investigative interviews with children, ensuring validity and reliability of testimony;

- Excellent writing skills, evidenced by a record of clear, concise work such as SOPs, guidelines, manuals, training programs, and standards related to child protection. A recent relevant work sample must be provided as part of the technical evaluation. Experience collaborating with practitioners and multiple government stakeholders in multisectoral approaches is an advantage
- Excellent command of English; local language is an advantage;
- Strong communication and facilitation skills, particularly participatory processes facilitation;
- Previous work experience with UNICEF is considered an advantage

4. Requirements for the consultants to develop the SOP for the forensic medical examination in Barnahus;

a. The International Consultant must possess:

- A medical degree with specialization in pediatrics or gynecology; or a bachelor's degree in psychology. An advanced degree (e.g., master's or doctorate) in the relevant field will be considered an advantage.
- At least 10 years of experience working with children, including those exposed to violence and exploitation.
- Knowledge of relevant standards, including trauma-informed practices to minimize re-traumatization.
- Experience collaborating with practitioners and government stakeholders in multisectoral approaches.
- Excellent knowledge of the local context in Montenegro, particularly with respect to the child protection system, is a distinct advantage.
- Solid understanding of international and regional instruments, including but not limited to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CEDAW, CRPD, Lanzarote Convention, European Social Charter, Revised European Social Charter, and the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as well as standards in child-friendly justice and child protection.
- Excellent writing skills, evidenced by clear, concise work such as SOPs, guidelines, manuals, training programs, and standards. A recent relevant work sample must be provided as part of the technical evaluation.
- Strong communication and facilitation skills, particularly in participatory processes.
- Excellent command of English; knowledge of the local language is an advantage.
- Previous work experience with UNICEF and/or the UN system is considered an advantage.

a. The National Consultant must possess:

- A bachelor's degree in law, psychology, or medicine. An advanced degree (e.g., master's or doctorate) in the relevant field will be considered an advantage.
- At least 7 years of professional experience in health care, with demonstrated expertise in child protection and safeguarding children from violence.
- Excellent analytical and writing skills, evidenced by a proven record of clear, concise reports in the relevant area. A recent work sample must be provided as part of the technical evaluation.
- Experience collaborating with practitioners and government stakeholders in multisectoral approaches.
- Excellent knowledge of the local context in Montenegro, particularly with respect to the health care and child protection systems, is a distinct advantage.
- Excellent command of English and the local language (both spoken and written).

The International and National Consultants needed for the tasks 1 to 3 above will need to cooperate and align work with while working on development of the SOPs. Overall, the Consultancy Company will be responsible for aligning the work on and key elements of SOPs so that they do not contain conflicting steps or provisions.

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:**
- ii.
 - a) Portfolio of the organisation/institution/agency with examples of previous work on similar projects and clients in the last 5 years, including recent piece of work similar to the one per the ToR;
 - b) Title/designation of each team member including their CVs;
 - c) For each team member an example of a recent piece of work in the same/similar activity i.e training on the same topic and same group of professionals e.g. training program excerpts with agendas etc.
 - d) Detailed description of the methodology and technical approach;
 - e) Tentative work plan with the number of days and timeframe in line with the above deadlines for deliverables;
 - f) LRPS Form signed.
 - g) 3 Reference contacts from other clients.
- i. **Financial Proposal (Budget) including** daily fee rate for each team member per deliverable as well as the total cost per professionals based on the number of working days included in the Technical Proposal as well as any other cost as applicable.

The financial proposal shall indicate budget estimated in EUR.

8. Evaluation

Technical components (total of 70 points)

ITEM	TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA	MAX OBTAINABLE POINTS
1	Overall Response	10
	1.1 Completeness of response	5
	1.2 Overall concord between TOR requirements and proposal	5
2	Company and Key Personnel	40
	2.1 <i>Demonstrated</i> expertise in child protection area, with proven expertise in child-friendly justice, addressing violence against children and exploitation, and strong knowledge of relevant standards; knowledge of standards and experience with MDIA response to violence against children that coordinate justice, health, and child welfare service;	14
	2.2 Samples of previous work for each team member	5
		14

	2.3 Key personnel: relevant experience and qualifications of the proposed team for the assignment 2.4 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) 2.5 Gender component: At least 1 female in the management structure or ownership of the company 2.6 Workplace policies on disabilities	2 2 3
3	Proposed Methodology and Approach 3.1 Work plan 3.2 Methodology used - compatibility with UNICEF 3.3 Project management, monitoring and quality assurance process	20 10 6 4
TOTAL TECHNICAL SCORE		70

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

2) Financial component (total of 30points)¹

- 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.

Remarks:

- UNICEF Montenegro Office holds copyrights for all reports. The documents (including raw materials, etc.) may not be reproduced, distributed or published without the written permission from UNICEF.
- All personal data should be accessible to team members, but no one else. The consultants need to set up secure systems (a) to ensure that other staff within their institutions cannot access their data via the shared staff drives, and (b) to ensure secure data transfer between institutions. Cloud based storage with limited sharing rights could be considered in this instance. Different personal data files need to be linkable, they need to be held separately so that they can only be linked purposely, by researchers who are

¹ Financial offer will be reviewed only if Technical proposal meets minimum required quality standards.

authorised to do so. There is also a need to ensure that data cannot be removed from secure systems in ways that might compromise data security.

- UNICEF Montenegro Office will share with the selected consultants all the relevant materials it has and provide required expertise.
- UNICEF Montenegro Office will review and provide feedback on deliverables prepared by consultants.
- All information from produced reports cannot be shared with the media without the written approval of UNICEF Montenegro Office.

- **Payment schedule**

The payments will be made upon successful completion of the deliverables and submission of invoices, as follows:

- Desk review with developed workplan with timeline and consultations conducted, developed SOP for referral and intake of cases in Barnahus, SOP for interagency case coordination and SOP risk assessment and safety planning- 50%;
- developed rulebook on provision of services to victims of sexual violence and exploitation SOP for the child forensic interviewing in Barnahus and SOP for the forensic medical examination in Barnahus – 50%.

