

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR INSTITUTIONAL CONTRACTORS**International Institutional Consultancy to train national trainers in Montenegro on family centred early childhood intervention****Background and Context**

According to the Situation Analysis of Early Childhood Intervention in Montenegro (2022), an estimated 10–15% of children aged 0–6 require Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services annually, yet fewer than half currently receive them. The analysis also found that ECI services in Montenegro are still largely rooted in the traditional medical model, although some services are gradually transitioning toward more contemporary approaches. In addition, the current ECI system remains fragmented and organized along sectoral lines, with limited coordination across health, education, and social protection systems.

Recognizing the need for systemic reform, the National Early Childhood Development Strategy 2023–2027, together with the draft Operational Plan for Scaling Up Family-Centred Early Intervention in Montenegro (2026–2030) establish a strategic framework for developing a unified, nationwide ECI system. These policy documents envisage the development of ECI guidelines and procedures, a dedicated ECI law, and the gradual scale-up of a contemporary, transdisciplinary, family-centred ECI model. The new Healthcare Law (adopted in 2025) also contains some key provisions facilitating ECI reform and strengthening the role of the health system.

In this context, UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography, and support of the EU, supported the piloting of contemporary, transdisciplinary, family-centred, routine-based early intervention during 2023 and 2024. Demonstration sites were established in the municipalities of Bijelo Polje and Kotor, while several institutions in Podgorica (particularly the Resource Centre “Podgorica”) participated in training and piloted elements of the approach. As part of this initiative, a training programme for early intervention professionals and a child development monitoring training programme were developed and accredited by national accreditation bodies. In addition, a draft guide for delivering family-centred early intervention services was prepared.

Building on the experience and lessons learned from the demonstration sites, the model has gradually expanded. In 2025, the approach was introduced in Berane following the training of the local intersectoral team. By the middle of February 2026, three additional local teams were trained in the municipalities of Bar, Cetinje, and Tivat, marking an important step toward national scale-up.

To further support the reform process and ensure sustainable capacity development, the UNICEF Country Office in Montenegro seeks to engage an international institute, agency, or organization bringing together international and national ECI experts. The purpose of this engagement is to develop and deliver a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme that will establish a pool of national trainers capable of training current and future professionals in the delivery of contemporary, transdisciplinary, family-centred early intervention services. This Training of Trainers represents a strategic investment in strengthening national capacity for sustainable ECI reform. It will also contribute to greater cost-efficiency and national ownership by gradually reducing reliance on international expertise while building strong domestic professional capacity.

The training programme should be updated and redesigned to reflect the lessons learned from the growing number of municipalities implementing family-centred ECI, as well as the evolving national early childhood development agenda.

2. Purpose, Objectives & Expected Results

The purpose of the assignment is to enable 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, Science and Innovation, Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography to scale up transdisciplinary, family-centered early intervention in the country by conducting a Training of Trainers in order to build national expertise (national trainers) for quality, sustainable and cost-efficient capacity building in the area of ECI.

Expected results are:

- The Institutional Consultancy will develop a modern ECI training programme that will be used for future ECI locations in Montenegro, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography.
- The Institutional Consultancy will support the creation of a pool of national experts equipped with knowledge, tools, and confidence to independently replicate and scale up trainings at national and local level.
- The Institutional Consultancy will support development of local teams in existing and new ECI locations supported to apply a family-centred, transdisciplinary approach in their daily practice.

3. Description of the Assignment

Under the guidance and supervision of UNICEF Early Childhood Development Officer the Contractor will be responsible for completing the following activities:

1. Re-designing the existing ECI training programme based on a desk review of existing analysis, reports, training evaluations, training programmes on ECI in Montenegro (home-based) and consultations with UNICEF, Ministry of Health and other partners and stakeholders (online and face-to-face). The training should include ECI theory and evidence-based practice, practical skills for joint case management, collaborative cross-sector service delivery and family engagement. The design of the training programme should include participation by parent representative to ensure the parental perspective is always reflected, in line with the family-centred model. The training package which should center on the main document describing the updated ECI training programme, and which should contain all elements required for submission of the training programme to national training accreditation bodies. In addition, the package should include training agenda, slide decks and additional training materials to be used by future national trainers, division of roles and criteria for the selection and allocation of national trainers, and a detailed ToT schedule for future trainee trainers (face-to-face and online consultations, and report writing remotely).
2. The training of national trainers spread over a period of several weeks. The training should include: (a) theoretical content on both ECI (as per the training content defined in above Task 1) and principles of adult learning (additional learning materials to be supplied by the institutional consultancy), (b) interactive practical exercises and case studies during the training sessions, as well as (c) review of practical activities implemented by trainee trainers between the training sessions demonstrating progressive acquisition of competencies to deliver family-centered and transdisciplinary ECI in practice. Furthermore, the ToT should include shadowing/mentoring format for trainee trainers to support existing ECI locations (30-35 professionals engaged in ECI as well as paediatricians at PHC level in Bijelo Polje, Berane, Podgorica, Cetinje, Tivat and Bar) so that national trainee trainers can observe, assist, and

progressively take on facilitation roles (mix of online and face-to-face). National trainers who meet criteria should be certified by international experts to deliver future training in Montenegro.

3. ECI training of approximately 35 professionals from new family centered ECI locations spread over a period of several weeks by above national trainers under the guidance and supervision of international experts. The training should be based on the accredited training programme (as per above Task 1) and should include training report and participant evaluations (mix of online and face-to-face).
4. Final report including methodology, list of participants, key results, lessons learned, participant feedback, and recommendations for scaling up future trainings, reviewed and accepted by UNICEF. An online meeting can be organized with stakeholders to present the final report (remotely).

The Contractor will maintain open and effective communication with UNICEF to address any concerns, provide progress updates, and seek clarification on requirements.

4. Deliverables, timelines, and payment schedule

Deliverables	Tentative deadlines	Tentative payment schedule
1. Training package for transdisciplinary and family centered ECI training including a detailed ToT schedule for future trainer trainees, reviewed and accepted by UNICEF.	30 June 2026	50%
2. Training of national trainers delivered to selected trainees. Furthermore, the ToT should include shadowing/mentoring for trainees to support existing ECI locations so that national trainee trainers can observe, assist, and progressively take on facilitation roles.	22 December 2026	
3. ECI training of approximately 30-35 professionals from new family centered ECI locations by above national trainers under guidance and supervision of international experts.	10 May 2027	50%
4. Final report including methodology, list of participants, key results, lessons learned, participant feedback, and recommendations for scaling up future trainings, reviewed and accepted by UNICEF.	20 May 2027	

Written deliverables should be submitted in either English or Montenegrin language.

5. Travel

- Some tasks require presence in Montenegro while some meetings and training/mentoring sessions can be held online using experts' own online platform subscriptions.
- During the application process, the Technical and Financial proposals should outline required travel (duration and number of trips).

- 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).
- The international team should arrange their own travel and accommodation.

6. Management and Organisation

- Management: The consultancy will be supervised by Early Childhood Development Officer. The Consultancy Agency 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.
- 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.
- Schedule: This assignment will commence on 10 June 2025.

7. Qualification Requirements

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

- Team members should hold advanced university degrees in child development, paediatrics, psychology, pedagogy, special pedagogy, early intervention or a related technical field.
- Each team member should have at least five years of progressive professional experience in the field of family-centred ECI including training/mentoring other professionals to provide family-centred ECI in at least one more country other than one's own. Work experience in the Western Balkans will be considered as a distinct advantage.
- Previous work experience with UN is a strong asset.
- Excellent command of both spoken and written English, knowledge of local language by at least some team members will be considered as an asset.

8. Application procedure

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

- 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	12
2.2	• Samples of previous work, number of customers, size of projects	5
2.3	• Key personnel: relevant experience and qualifications of the proposed team for the assignment	20
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	15
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.