

ANNEX B

LRPS-2020-9156590

TERMS OF REFERENCE (FOR RESEARCHES & STUDIES)

Title: For establishing a Long-Term Agreement (LTA) with national research companies, to conduct Communication for Development (C4D) related small-scale researches, studies, and inquiries for UNICEF in Uzbekistan

Background

UNICEF in Uzbekistan is currently working with national and international partners to implement the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) for the period 2016-2020, signed between UNICEF and the Government of Uzbekistan. UNICEF is also in the process of finalizing its Country Programme Document for 2021, to be submitted to the Executive Board.

Overall aim of the Country Programme is to accelerate progress towards the realization of the rights of all children. The Country Programme is aligned with key national policies and strategies; and supports the Government and Civil Society Organizations in the implementation of the concluding observations of the Committees on the Rights of the Child and the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

The Programme focuses on selected goals of UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 related to health, education and child protection, while mainstreaming crosscutting components and change strategies as child rights monitoring, gender, and data for children.

UNICEF's work in Uzbekistan and the Strategic Plan of UNICEF highlight the importance of evidence-based Communication for Development (C4D) strategies in achieving the programmatic results. C4D is an evidence-based process that utilizes a mix of communication tools, channels and approaches to facilitate participation and engagement with children, families, communities, networks for positive social and behaviour change.

In this regard, C4D utilizes services related to the design, implementation and dissemination of results of small-scale studies or population-based surveys for evidence generation; to inform, pre-test, monitor and evaluate strategy design and interventions using a range of quantitative, qualitative, participatory and/or triangulated methodologies and data collection techniques.

The scope of the C4D researches in Uzbekistan includes identifying behavioural and socio-cultural determinants; and qualitative research methods to assess bottlenecks and barriers for desired behaviour and social change. Various studies also include pre-testing, validations and scoping studies.

Validation exercises are participatory processes that include multi-stakeholders' meetings/discussions in a workshop format, to check relevance and accuracy of information. These could be completed in one day, but may require preparation, methodology and analyses to be reported.

Scoping studies are conducted with multiple participants to develop an analytical document to inform researches related to behaviours. These can map out different areas of enquiry, available opinions, potential respondents, etc. Even though there is no fixed methodology, UNICEF may ask for participatory workshops to consult stakeholders.

In view of C4D strategies being integrated into UNICEF's programme components, and considering the importance given to evidence-based C4D strategies in achieving the programme results, it is planned to engage local research companies with the Long-Term Agreements to support the Communication Section in conducting C4D related small-scale researches, studies and inquiries from 2020 to 2022 with possible extension for two more years.

Objectives

The main objective of engaging research agencies through LTAs is to ensure relevance and effectiveness of various C4D interventions, especially those focused on positive social and behaviour change, through generating evidence by conducting small-scale researches, studies and inquiries. Evidence obtained through such studies will inform corresponding interventions, as well as suggest corrective actions for their implementation at different stages, as necessary.

Moreover, availability of an LTA with research agencies for small-scale researches, studies and inquiries will contribute to the efficiency of UNICEF's response to the evidence-generation needs of C4D results embedded in programmes.

Scope and focus:

Scope of work:

- Secondary data review and analysis; as required from background documents and literature review, and analyses;
- Systematic gathering and analysis of primary data or information as required, and their analysis;
- Operational research to assess effectiveness of C4D interventions;
- Small scale formative research to identify, understand and analyse the barriers, bottlenecks and potential motivators and enabling factors for behaviour and social change including attitudes, values and norms, characteristics, interests, behaviours and needs of target populations that influence their decisions and actions. This may include psychosocial, and cultural and gendered analysis of the target populations;
- Design and conduct baseline researches using a range of methodologies against which performance indicators are set;
- Partner and community mapping studies;
- Pre-testing of creative concepts/scripts, messages and materials like posters, videos/audios, brochures, designs, including motivational triggers research;
- Audience, media and communication channel analysis, in terms of media and channel reach, access, utilization, effectiveness to understand trends for communication planning and forecasting outputs;
- Monitoring: periodic tracking and assessment of the key elements (effectiveness and efficiency) of programme/project performance, usually inputs, outputs and outcomes, through record-keeping, regular reporting and surveillance systems using Communication and C4D indicators agreed with the UNICEF Office;
- Evaluation: Systemic assessment of results, including performance of the programme/project.

Note: Once the LTAs have been established with research companies, UNICEF will assign any one or more of the services mentioned above to the selected agency/agencies.

Typical activities to be implemented:

- Background and context analysis, as per the Terms of Reference received from UNICEF for each assignment;
- Developing and designing a detailed research plan and study design including methodology, indicators, tools and techniques, sample size, sampling approaches and assumptions, data collection mechanisms, means of verification, ethical considerations etc.;
- Implementation of the research plan including partnerships with local implementing partners, and obtaining permissions and informed consent for conducting studies at local level as per required procedures;

- Analysis of results of the studies;
- Review and preparation of reports of the findings (as requested by UNICEF);
- Incorporate UNICEF's comments at each stage of researches, studies and inquiries, as necessary.

Geographic coverage of the study, specific group of people/children to be covered, including characteristics (age, sex, ethnicity, social status, income group, occupation etc.) will be defined separately for each assignment.

As the assignments under current ToR are expected to be small-scale researches, studies and inquiries, the research company should be mindful of the implications of smaller sampling sizes for such studies. Hence, in their proposed full-fledged research methodologies for specific studies, they should propose measures to minimize the risks of this limitation.

Methodology

Different assignments will require different methodologies. These may include a combination of methods and tools, including meta-data analyses, participatory and positive inquiry methodologies, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observations, opinion polling, most significant change, mapping studies as well as text and visual analysis, longitudinal studies, trends analysis, and systematic literature reviews.

The research design, including the tools, content and sample size will be developed by the selected institution, which has been assigned a specific study, in close consultation with UNICEF and its partners, based on the case by case principle.

Ethical Considerations

Research, study and inquiries conducted within current ToR should adhere to following principles as defined in the "UNICEF procedure for ethical standards in research, evaluation, data collection and analysis"¹:

1. **Respect:** All evidence generating activities should ensure respect for all persons. Respect demands that individuals be treated as autonomous agents. An autonomous agent is an individual capable of deliberation about personal goals and of acting under the direction of such deliberation. To respect autonomy is to give weight to autonomous persons' values, preferences, and beliefs and to recognise their capability for self-legislation, their ability to make judgments, to state their opinions and to make choices.

In respecting an individual's autonomy, recognition is required that personal agency may be limited due to age, circumstance or personal capacities. In this context, respect for autonomy requires recognition of capabilities, power differentials and the degree of agency that an individual may have. In the context of children and other vulnerable groups respectful evidence generation needs to be situated in their lived experience with recognizing the reality of unequal relationships of power that frequently exist, creating environments that support these individual's personal agency and dignity.

2. **Beneficence and Non-maleficence**

Beneficence - The principle of beneficence refers to the requirement that actions within evidence generating activities promote the well-being of individuals, communities or society as a whole. The principle of beneficence requires the identification of clear benefits likely to arise from evidence and to reconsider proceeding if these cannot be articulated. Beneficence includes the concept of reciprocity, whereby the evidence generated is conveyed back to the participants so that they may triangulate findings, contextualize their participation and potentially gain from the knowledge disseminated.

¹ https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT_IV-UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.PDF

Non-maleficence - The principle of non-maleficence, doing no harm, requires avoiding harm or injury to participants, both through acts of commission or omission. While the primary purpose of research, evaluation and data collection and analysis is to generate new evidence, this goal should never take precedence over the rights of individual participants. Non-maleficence requires an examination of the profile, competencies and skills of researchers and enumerators to ensure no harm comes to participants by virtue of inappropriate, unskilled or incompetent researchers or enumerators. It also requires explicit consideration of means to ensure the privacy of participants, their safety and any possible negative impacts arising from participation.

- Justice:** The principle of justice requires that consideration is given to who benefits and who bears the burden of the evidence generation. This requires that due reflection is given to determining the appropriateness of proposed methods of selecting participants. Selection should not result in unjust distributions of the burdens and benefits of evidence generation. Such considerations are required to avoid the injustice that arises from social, racial, sexual, and cultural biases institutionalized in society.

Note: Assignments that will engage children or are on sensitive topics will go through external ethical review, as per UNICEF’s norms and practices.

Timeline & Deliverables

Under current LTA, C4D related small-scale research, studies and inquiries will be assigned between May 2020 and May 2022. Depending on the need, duration of the LTA maybe extended to additional two years.

The timeline and deliverables for each research exercise will be defined by UNICEF and its partners on a case by case basis and will be provided to the selected agency for designing the research methodology and tools.

Management

C4D Officer under the overall guidance of UNICEF Chief of Communications will supervise each research exercise and will coordinate the process with relevant national partners.

While UNICEF Communication Section will be responsible for monitoring and coordinating researches within UNICEF, quality control of each study will be conducted based on the guidance of UNICEF Monitoring and Evaluation Section. C4D Officer under direct supervision of the Communications Chief will be responsible for facilitating inputs from other relevant sections as appropriate.

Resource requirements

UNICEF operates based on the “best value for money” principle. Estimated cost for Communication and C4D researches, studies and inquiries is up to USD 200,000.00 for the duration of the LTA, even though the LTA is time bound and not value bound.

Required qualifications and areas of expertise:

Qualification/Expertise/Criteria	Means of Verification/Assessment
Team Leader	
Master’s degree in social, public health or relevant field;	Examination of a copy of the university degree
At least 5 years of experience in leading research and surveys coordination;	Examination of applicant’s resume and if necessary, reference check
Excellent proven analytical and report writing skills;	Example of analytical report written by the candidate;

Fluency in Uzbek and Russian. English skills be an added advantage;	Examination of a previous authentic written work in Uzbek and Russian;
Previous experience and ability to coordinate research in Uzbekistan;	Examination of applicant's resume and if necessary, reference check
Team Members	
University degree in social, public health or relevant field;	Examination of a copy of the university degree
At least 2 years of experience in conducting research and surveys coordination;	Examination of applicant's resume and if necessary, reference check
Proven analytical and report writing skills;	Example of analytical report written by the candidate;
Fluency in Uzbek and Russian. English skills be an added advantage;	Examination of a previous authentic written work in Uzbek and Russian;
Previous experience research work in the field, with communities and local authorities;	Examination of applicant's resume and if necessary, reference check
Research Agency	
At least 5 years of experience and ability to coordinate research in Uzbekistan	List of researches coordinated in Uzbekistan for the last 5 years with reference contact details.
Proven technical and structural capacity (network of interviewers and supervisors) and quality control mechanisms in place.	Organigram of the organization with clear description of roles and responsibilities of each staff member.

Assessment criteria:

Technical proposals will be assessed as per the content given below. In addition, interested vendors will be given two scenarios of potential studies. They will be asked to prepare brief presentations of their vision of conducting: (1) formative research and (2) scoping study. Panel of experts will probe details related to the plan presented, such as methodologies, approaches data collection, as well as anticipated challenges and how they plan to address them. Technical strengths related to methodology, data collection and innovative approaches would be part of assessment criteria.

Note: Team leaders and members with experience in:

- C4D/communication research, as well as research in the areas of health, education and child protection
- Previous experience of engaging in research exercises with participation of children and other vulnerable groups will be an asset.

Submission of proposals:

Interested companies are requested to submit both technical and financial proposals in two separate sealed envelopes. The technical and financial proposals will be assessed separately. 70% of the score will be assigned to the technical proposal and 30% to the financial proposal.

Technical proposal should include the following:

1. A short (up to 2-page summary) of the research activities the agency has undertaken to date, with the links to the reports of the completed studies etc. This should also include different types of communication-related researches that are the strengths of the agency.
2. CVs of all key staff who will be engaged in coordination, design, data collection and analysis processes (each CV to be up to 2 pages);
3. Letters of recommendation from the previous customers (at least three);
4. Copy of the licence.

Financial proposal should include the following:

1. The agency should submit fees for the following:
 - a. Cost per FGD
 - b. Cost per interview of respondent
 - c. Cost per day of participatory modality like validation or scoping study (refer to description of validation and scoping studies mentioned above on page 2 of ‘Background’)
 - d. Cost per day for studies that need desk review or secondary data analyses. Number of days may vary depending on complexity of assignment.
 - e. Management cost (agencies fee including office expenses, as a percentage of assignment cost). For professional fees, agencies should submit quotes according to different levels like team leader, researcher, analyst, report writer, etc on a per-day basis.

Cost towards logistics for organizing trainings and events for participatory studies will be requested separately, according to the assignment. Cost of travel, board and lodge will be requested according to the assignment.

Budget estimates for designing the study (including methodology, sample size, protocols, etc); conducting data collection (including training); data entry and analysis (including reports and presentations), should be included in cost for FGDs, interviews, participatory modalities for different studies. UNICEF will cover the cost for external ethical review and quality assurance. However, agencies would be expected to undertake all tasks recommended by the review and assurance activities.

Note: All estimates should be provided in Uzbek Soums, payable through local bank transfer.

Technical proposal evaluation criteria

Proposals passing the minimum technical pass score (49 points – at least 70% of the maximum points obtainable for technical proposal) will continue into the Financial proposal evaluation.

Technical Proposal Evaluation Form		Max. Points Obtainable
1	Agency Profile and Evaluation Record	12
1.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 5 years of experience and ability to coordinate research in Uzbekistan (6 points). • Proven technical and structural capacity (network of interviewers and supervisors) (6 points). 	12
2	Methodology and Approach	34
2.1	Interested vendors will be given two scenarios of potential studies. They will be asked to prepare brief presentations of their vision of conducting: (1) formative research and (2) scoping study. Details of the task will be shared with potential vendors during a pre-bid meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability of proposed methodology; (8 points: 4 points for each case) • Approaches to data generation and analysis are clearly justified and explained; (8 points: 4 points for each case) • Approaches to structuring of reports; (6 points: 3 points for each case) 	22
2.2	Possible challenges of conducting such studies clearly listed and approaches/ measures to overcome them indicated.	5
2.3	The proposed approach to quality assurance is clearly justified and explained	7
3	Profile of Evaluation Team	24
3.1.	Proposed Team Leader has relevant experiences and qualifications for the assignment as per the TOR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master’s degree in social, public health or relevant field (2 points); 	12

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 5 years of experience in leading research and surveys coordination (2 points); • Proven analytical and report writing skills (4 points); • Fluency in Uzbek and Russian (2 points). English skills be an added advantage; • Previous experience and ability to coordinate research in Uzbekistan (2 points); 	
3.2.	<p>Proposed international team member(s) have relevant experiences and qualifications for the assignment and as per the TOR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University degree in social, public health or relevant field (2 points); • At least 2 years of experience in conducting research and surveys coordination (2 points); • Proven analytical and report writing skills (4 points); • Fluency in Uzbek and Russian (2 points). English skills be an added advantage; • Previous experience research work in the field, with communities and local authorities (2 points); 	12
Total		70 points

Financial proposal counts towards the remaining 30 points.

Procedures and Working Conditions

Geographic coverage of the study will be defined separately for each assignment. If travel to regions is required, quotation will be requested separately.

UNICEF undertakes no liability for taxes, duty or other contribution payable by the institutions and/or individuals on payments made under the contract.

Reservations

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if deliverable(s) incomplete, not finalized or for failure to meet deadlines. UNICEF will reserve copyright of all developed materials and own primary data collected through this assignment. The materials cannot be published or disseminated without prior written permission of UNICEF. UNICEF will be free to adapt and modify them in the future. The contractor must respect the confidentiality of the information handled during the assignment. Documents and information provided must be used only for the tasks related to these terms of reference.

UNICEF undertakes no liability for taxes, duty or other contribution payable by the consultant on payments made under this contract.