TERMS OF REFERENCE
INSTITUTIONAL CONTRACT

Summary

Title	Institutional Consultancy to Strengthen Zimbabwe's Inclusive Early Childhood Education (ECE) System: An Integrated Framework for Operational Evidence, System Accountability, and Strategic Financing.
Purpose	The purpose of this consultancy is to develop adequate documentation to support evidence-based decision-making, strengthen accountability, and position inclusive ECE as a pro-equity investment priority through: 1. Producing a Zimbabwe Country Case Study on Learner Support Services (LSS) 2. Developing a Country Accountability Tracker for Quality Inclusive ECE 3. Generating a Disability-Inclusive Investment Case and 2 Policy Briefs
Location	National
Duration	80 days over 4 months

1. Background

Zimbabwe has demonstrated strong legislative and policy commitment to advancing inclusive Early Childhood Education (ECE), aligned with national priorities and global frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and Sustainable Development Goal 4. The sector is anchored in a progressive policy environment, including Section 75 of the Constitution, the Education Amendment Act (2020), the National Disability Policy (2021), and the Early Learning Policy (2023). This foundation was further strengthened by the Persons with Disabilities Act (2025), which signals a shift from welfare based to a rightsbased approach, placing clear legal obligations on the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) to institutionalize Universal Design for Learning, remove barriers, and provide reasonable accommodation across early learning systems.

Despite this enabling framework, translating policy into equitable, quality service delivery remains a challenge. According to EMIS 2025, ECD enrolment declined from 679,582 in 2023 to 641,295 in 2025, with persistent rural concentration. While gender parity is generally observed, emerging disparities increasingly affect girls. Evidence from the 2026 Disability Inclusive Pre-Primary Sub-Sector Analysis (DIPSSA) highlights significant intersectional inequalities, particularly for children with disabilities, especially girls in rural and underserved areas who face barriers such as long distances to school, socio-cultural constraints, and inadequate disability-responsive infrastructure, including Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities. Although informal ECD centers demonstrate relatively better gender parity, participation in formal, regulated settings remains lower, raising concerns about both access and quality.

System-level bottlenecks further constrain progress. These include limited practical guidance on inclusive pedagogy, misalignment between teacher training and classroom realities, and insufficient capacity among educators to deliver inclusive learning. Learner Support Services (LSS) are fragmented, with weak coordination across education, health, and social protection sectors, and incomplete implementation of referral systems. Public financing remains constrained and heavily skewed toward salaries, leaving limited resources for assistive technologies, inclusive infrastructure, and other critical inputs. In addition, data systems lack

sufficient disability-disaggregated information, restricting evidence-based planning, while accountability mechanisms for tracking inclusive ECE quality are underdeveloped.
Efforts to address these gaps include the Model Inclusive Infant Education Facility (MIIEF) initiative (2017–2024), which demonstrated promising approaches to early identification, inclusive pedagogy, and multisectoral coordination. However, the model has yet to be scaled nationally due to the absence of a standardized, costed framework and robust monitoring systems. More broadly, there is a growing need to strengthen the evidence base on how inclusive ECE interventions particularly LSS function in practice, enhance system accountability, and articulate a stronger economic case for investing in disability-inclusive early learning.

Against this backdrop, UNICEF Zimbabwe, in partnership with MOPSE, is commissioning a consultancy to strengthen inclusive ECE systems through the development of key analytical and policy tools. These include a country case study on Learner Support Services, an accountability tracker for inclusive ECE, and a disability-inclusive investment case supported by targeted policy briefs. Together, these outputs aim to strengthen evidence use, enhance accountability, and support advocacy for increased investment, ultimately contributing to the effective, scalable, and sustainable delivery of inclusive early learning for all children in Zimbabwe.

2. Justification

Despite ongoing government and partner efforts, there remains a critical need for specialized, independent expertise to conduct rigorous system-level analysis and produce high-quality evidence products**.** UNICEF staff are supporting MOPSE efforts and coordinating and providing oversight to the process. The consultancy demands sustained, full-time focus over several consecutive weeks for fieldwork, data collection, transcription, analysis, and drafting. Additionally, the assignment requires specialized skills in qualitative research design, evidence synthesis, and production of high-quality knowledge products. To maintain objectivity and credibility in the findings, particularly where program performance or system functionality is being assessed, it is also important that the work be carried out by an independent expert.

3. Objective

The overarching objective of this institutional consultancy is to leverage the 2026 DIPSSA diagnostic foundations to co-create an integrated suite of systems-strengthening and public finance advocacy products for MOPSE and UNICEF Zimbabwe.

The specific, interconnected objectives are:

- Objective 1 (Evidence-Generation):To conduct a mixed-methods evaluation of the operational realities, structural blockages, and intersectional barriers within the "identify–refer–support–enroll" pathway of Learner Support Services (LSS), Model Inclusive Infant Education Facilities(MIIEF), including the effectiveness, efficiency and scalability of digital learner profiling systems as a driver of inclusive service delivery.
- Objective 2 (Governance and System Tracking): To design, validate, and pilot a digitized national ECE Accountability Tracker framework—fully aligned with EMIS and the Washington Group CFM architecture—to monitor state compliance with the statutory mandates of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2025 and track performance against a standardized "Minimum Inclusive ECD Package".
- Objective 3 (Strategic Financing and Macro Advocacy): To formulate an evidencebased, costed Disability-Inclusive Investment Case accompanied by two policy briefs on macro-fiscal simulations (including a cost-of-inaction model and fiscal space options) to advocate for increased Treasury budget allocations and leverage global partnership windows (e.g. Global Partnership for Education - GPE).

4. Scope of the assignment

The institutional consultant will lead the design and implementation of an integrated body of analytical and policy-oriented work to strengthen inclusive Early Childhood Education (ECE) systems in Zimbabwe. The institutional consultant will engage relevant government and sector stakeholders throughout the process to validate findings, ensure policy relevance, and support national, regional, and global knowledge sharing.
The institutional consultant will operationalize the assignment through an integrated Theory of Change:

A. Workstream 1: Evidence-generation
Field Evaluation of LSS and MIIEF Pathways, including Digital Learner Profiling Systems

- Identifies operational blockages (Identification, Referrals, Teacher Capacity gaps) and data use constraints
- Assesses effectiveness and scalability of digital learner profiling within the LSS pathway
- Maps intersectional, gendered, and rural-specific exclusion parameters

B. Workstream 2: Governance and compliance
National Accountability Tracker

- Translate field realities into a standardized "Minimum Inclusive ECD Package"
- Indicators for compliance with the Persons with Disabilities Act 2025 and EMISChild Friendly Model

C. Workstream 3: Investing in equity
Costed National Investment Case and Public Finance for Children (PF4C) Advocacy

- Precise financial unit costs to the elements defined in the Tracker
- Model macroeconomic "Cost of Inaction" (lifetime human capital loss, dependency ratios, etc.)
- Identify domestic fiscal space formulas and leverages global aid architecture (e.g., GPE)

By linking these components, the ToRs provides the Government of Zimbabwe with a complete path for development:

- The Case Study diagnoses the issue,
- The Tracker builds permanent monitoring architecture, and
- The Investment Case provides a financial strategy to make the system sustainable.

5. Specific Tasks for Workstreams

The selected institution is required to ensure that data structures, cost parameters, and standards flow transparently across all three workstreams.

Workstream 1: Country case study on learner support services and model facilities
This workstream will establish the empirical baseline, with particular emphasis on analyzing how digital innovations in Learner Support Services (LSS) are transforming identification, referral, and support pathways in practice.

Task 1.1: Multi-Sectoral Policy Triangulation
Map institutional workflows under the 2025 National Disability Identification, Assessment, Determination, and Referral Framework against the statutory mandates of the Persons with

Disabilities Act 2025, the Early Learning Policy (2023), and the Education Amendment Act (2020), with attention to how digital learner profiling systems are positioned within these frameworks and assess how MIIEF is positioned as an operational model within these frameworks, including its alignment with learner support services and inclusive education mandates

Task 1.2: Intersectional Field Sampling Design
In collaboration with MOPSE and UNICEF, select three target provinces (for example, Manicaland to capture high numbers of children not on track, a province with a dense concentration of satellite/rural schools, and an urban/informal center). The sample must encompass formal registered schools, satellite facilities, unregistered community learning centers, and active MIIEF sites, ensuring representation of contexts with varying levels of access to digital tools and connectivity.

Task 1.3: Mixed-Methods Primary Field Diagnostics
Conduct infrastructure accessibility audits of selected infant classrooms including MIIEF facilities as benchmarks for inclusive infrastructure, services and WASH blocks utilizing universal design checklists to quantify physical barriers.
Execute Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with School Heads, Remedial Tutors, Infant School Teachers, School Inspectors, caregivers, and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs).
Trace the "Identify–Refer–Support–enroll" pathway, including:

- Practical application of the Washington Group CFM at school level;
- Use of digital learner profiling tools by teachers;
- Flow of children through health, rehabilitation, and social protection services (e.g., BEAM);
- Identification of systemic attrition points, including data flow and referral bottlenecks.

Task 1.4: Analytical Reporting (LSS Digital Systems Case Study)
Draft a high-quality, publishable Country Case Study examining the transformation of Zimbabwe's Learner Support Services (LSS), with a specific focus on the transition from paperbased to digital, offline-enabled learner profiling systems and the role of Model Inclusive Early Education Facilities (MIIEF) as demonstration platforms for integrated, inclusive service delivery.

The case study will:

Analyze how mobile, teacher-administered tools (Kobo Toolbox) have improved the efficiency, scale, and usability of learner profiling, particularly for early identification of children with special educational needs including their application and effectiveness within MIIEF sites as early adopters and implementation hubs;

Assess:

- Effectiveness of teacher-led digital screening in real school conditions with comparative analysis between MIIEF and non-MIIEF settings;
- Use and integration of profiling data within EMIS/TDIS for decision-making, referrals, and resource allocation;
- Implementation experiences across diverse contexts (rural, low-connectivity, resourceconstrained), including infrastructure, device access, and ICT capacity;
- Contribution of design features (offline functionality, simplified tools, cascading training models) to adoption at scale;

Document key operational successes, bottlenecks, and mitigation strategies, with particular attention to gender and rural inclusion, especially for girls with disabilities and how MIIEF contributes to addressing intersectional exclusion;

Generate actionable lessons and recommendations to inform the scaling, sustainability, and replication of digital learner profiling systems within Zimbabwe and comparable low-resource settings including the strategic role of MIIEF as a scalable model for integrating digital LSS tools with inclusive service delivery systems.

Workstream 2: National ECE accountability tracker for quality inclusive education

This workstream converts the operational findings from Workstream 1 into a national governance tool to monitor inclusive ECE system performance and strengthen accountability embedding MIIEF standards into national monitoring systems.

Task 2.1: Matrix Conceptualization via Rights-Based Systems Lens:
Formulate a monitoring matrix structured around the four dimensions of a rights-based system: Access, Workforce Capacity, Infrastructure, and Financing Architecture.

Task 2.2: Indicator Formulation (SMART Compliance Indicators): Co-develop indicators with MOPSE that measure state performance and legal compliance with the Persons with
Disabilities Act 2025. Indicators must explicitly incorporate:

- Financing: Tracking specific budget lines and tags for non-wage inclusion inputs (AT procurement, inclusive teaching and learning materials - TLMs).
- Data Systems: Degree of EMIS integration with the Washington Group CFM fields.
- Workforce: Percentage of teachers completing cluster-based continuous professional development (CPD) in inclusive pedagogy and UDL.
- Infrastructure: Proportions of facilities meeting statutory accessibility and disabilityresponsive WASH standards.

Task 2.3: Dashboard Prototyping and Technology Alignment:
Build a user-friendly, automated tracking dashboard (Excel or software-based platform) designed to integrate with MOPSE's existing EMIS data collection schedule.

Task 2.4: Sub-National Piloting and Validation: Conduct field testing of the prototype tracker tool with district-level officials, including School Inspectors, Educational Psychologists, and Remedial Tutors, to evaluate usability, verify data sources, and ensure localized institutional ownership.

Task 2.5: Guideline Formulation:
Produce a step-by-step Institutionalization Guidance Note to govern the annual deployment, data verification, and policy use of the tracker.

Workstream 3: Disability-inclusive investment case and policy briefs

This workstream uses the benchmarks from Workstream 2 and the Model Inclusive Early Education Facilities (MIIEF) as operational reference sites to perform macroeconomic costing and financial simulations for scaling inclusive ECE in Zimbabwe

Task 3.1: Financial Definition and Costing of the "Minimum Inclusive ECD Package": Using the quality benchmarks established in Workstream 2 and validated through MIIEF demonstration sites,, define the financial inputs required per school/per learner (e.g., cost of UDL-compliant TLMs, unit costs for cluster coaching modules, capital requirements for WASH retrofitting, and standardized assistive technology packages, drawing on MIIEF implementation experience). Utilize activity-based costing methodologies to establish costed scenarios for national scaling (e.g., low, medium, and full scaling options over 5 years).

Conduct comparative costing between MIIEF and non-MIIEF setting(drawing on Workstream 1 findings to identify cost drivers, efficiency gains, and scalability considerations.

Task 3.2: Macroeconomic "Cost of Inaction" Modeling: Develop an economic simulation model demonstrating the long-term national costs of continuing with exclusionary preprimary patterns using MIIEF as a proxy model for inclusive system impact.
The simulation must project the multi-generational macroeconomic impacts of early exclusion, including:

- Loss of lifetime human capital accumulation and individual earnings potential.
- The intergenerational transmission of poverty within households.
- Escalating financial dependency ratios and long-term strains on state social protection budgets (e.g., future disability grants and health assistance).
- The macroeconomic productivity loss resulting from caregivers (disproportionately women) being excluded from the labor force to provide non-formal support.
- Etc.

Task 3.3: Public Finance for Children (PF4C) Fiscal Space Analysis: Analyze Zimbabwe's current Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) to identify viable financing options to expand funding. Map concrete strategies, including equity-weighted school financing formulas, resource pooling with international vertical funds (e.g., GPE, Education Cannot Wait), foundations, and public-private partnerships tailored to assistive technology supply chains.

Task 3.4: Formulation of Core Technical Reports and Strategic Advocacy Briefs:

This task focuses on consolidating the analytical outputs from the previous workstreams into high-quality technical reports and targeted advocacy products that translate evidence and financial analysis into actionable policy guidance for government and stakeholders.

- Produce a comprehensive Disability-Inclusive ECE Investment Case Report containing all costing sheets and econometric models.
- Develop Policy Brief 1 (Targeting MOFEDIP): Frame inclusive ECE as a high-return macroeconomic investment that reduces long-term social assistance dependency and enhances national labor productivity.
- Develop Policy Brief 2 (Targeting government, International Cooperating Partners and Private Sector): Focus on resource mobilization, aid effectiveness, compliance with the 2025 Act, and opportunities for co-financing systemic inputs (e.g., GPE matchfunding) and foundations.

6. Methodology

Using an inclusive and participatory approach, the institution will implement the assignment through phased and integrated workstreams as follows: **1. Inception Phase (Cross-cutting)** The institution will:

- Conduct a desk review of policies, frameworks, and analytical work related to LSS, inclusive ECE, digital learner profiling systems, MIIEF, and public finance.
- Develop a detailed methodology and workplan, including analytical approaches for case study development, accountability tracking, costing, and macroeconomic modelling.
- Undertake stakeholder mapping (MOPSE, MOFEDIP, UNICEF, OPDs, development partners, private sector).
- Identify key assumptions, risks, and mitigation measures, including fiscal, institutional, and digital access constraints.
- Establish an integrated analytical framework/Theory of Change linking evidence generation, governance systems, and financing strategies.

2. **Workstream 1: Draft Case Study** The institution will:

- Conduct desk review and secondary data analysis on Learner Support Services (LSS), digital learner profiling, and MIIEF integration.
- Analyze system functionality, institutional arrangements, and policy alignment.
- Produce a draft Country Case Study covering:
- Digital transformation of learner profiling systems
- Identification–referral–support pathways
- Role of MIIEF as inclusive service delivery models
- Key system bottlenecks and scalability opportunities

3. **Workstream 1, 2 and 3: Fieldwork (Cross-cutting and Parallel)** The institution will:

- Conduct field visits, KIIs, FGDs, and observations with stakeholders (teachers, school heads, inspectors, caregivers, OPDs, district officials).
- Include diverse contexts (rural, urban,MIIEF, satellite, community learning centres).
- Undertake infrastructure accessibility audits using inclusive standards.
- Generate primary evidence to inform:
  - LSS Case Study (WS1) ○ ECE Accountability Tracker (WS2)
  - Costing and investment assumptions (WS3)
- Identify operational, financial, and service delivery gaps, including gender and disability inclusion barriers.

4. **Workstream 2: Draft ECE Accountability Tracker (Parallel)** The institution will:

- Develop a monitoring framework based on a rights-based system (Access, Workforce, Infrastructure, Financing).
- Formulate SMART indicators aligned with national legislation (Persons with Disabilities Act, inclusive policies).
- Design a draft accountability tracker/dashboard aligned to EMIS.
- Prepare a draft guidance note for implementation and institutionalization.

5. **Workstream 1: Finalization** The institution will:

- Revise and finalize the Country Case Study based on stakeholder consultations
- Ensure integration of field findings, policy implications, and practical recommendations.

6. **Workstream 2: Finalization (Parallel)**

The institution will:

- Conduct pilot testing of the ECE Accountability Tracker at sub-national level.
- Validate indicators, data sources, and usability with stakeholders.
- Refine and finalize the tracker and guidance note for national adoption.

7. **Workstream 3: Investment Case** The institution will:

- Develop a costed “Minimum Inclusive ECD Package” using activity-based costing methods.

- Build costing models and financial scenarios (low, medium, full scale).
- Conduct macroeconomic analysis of the "Cost of Inaction" (human capital loss, dependency, productivity loss).
- Undertaking Public Finance for Children (PF4C) fiscal space analysis, identifying:
- Budget reallocation opportunities
- Equity-based financing approaches
- External financing (e.g., GPE, partnerships, private sector)

8. **Workstream 3: Policy Briefs** The institution will:
    - Prepare advocacy-oriented policy briefs, including:
    - A government-focused brief (MOFEDIP) on economic returns of inclusive ECE investment
    - A partner-focused brief on resource mobilization, co-financing, and system strengthening
    - Translate technical findings into clear, actionable policy messages

9. **Final Completion and Handover (Cross-cutting)** The institution will:
    - Conduct final consolidation and quality assurance of all deliverables
    - Ensure alignment across all workstreams (data, governance, and financing)
    - Facilitate final validation workshops with stakeholders
    - Support handover and knowledge transfer to MOPSE and partners

Cross-Cutting Approach

Across all phases, the institution will:

- Facilitate continuous stakeholder engagement and dialogue
- Ensure capacity transfer and learning-by-doing
- Apply gender, disability, and equity lenses throughout
- Maintain integration across evidence, accountability, and financing systems

7. Expected Outputs

The expected outputs are presented as follows and the timeline and payment terms for each are indicated in section 10:

1. **Inception Phase Outputs**
    - Inception Report including:
        - Methodology and detailed workplan
        - Stakeholder mapping
        - Risk and assumption analysis
        - Integrated analytical framework

2. **Workstream 1 Outputs**
    - Draft Country Case Study on LSS and digital systems
    - Final validated Case Study report

3. **Fieldwork Outputs (WS1, 2 and 3)**
    - Fieldwork report (KIIs, FGDs, audits, site visits)
    - Primary datasets and synthesized findings
    - Evidence base informing all three workstreams

4. **Workstream 2 Outputs**
   - Draft ECE Accountability Tracker (indicator matrix and dashboard prototype)
   - Draft Guidance Note
   - Final validated Tracker and Guidance Note

5. **Workstream 3 Outputs**
   - Costed Investment Case Report, including:
     - Minimum Inclusive ECD Package
     - Costing models and scaling scenarios
     - Macroeconomic "Cost of Inaction" analysis
     - PF4C fiscal space assessment

6. **Policy Brief Outputs**
   - Policy Brief 1 (Government / MOFEDIP-focused)
   - Policy Brief 2 (Partners, donors, private sector-focused)

7. **Final Outputs**
   - Consolidated and quality-assured final deliverables package
   - Validation workshop reports
   - Training/orientation sessions conducted
   - Final submission to UNICEF and Government stakeholders

8. **Expected background and Experience.**

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES

Expected Background and Experience

This is an institutional consultancy. The consulting firm will be evaluated based on demonstrated technical capacity, relevance of experience, and ability to deliver high-quality analytical outputs aligned to the assignment.

1. Institutional Experience

The consulting firm must demonstrate:

- Minimum 7–10 years of relevant experience in education sector research, analysis, or system strengthening
- Demonstrated experience in inclusive education, particularly disability inclusion and Early Childhood Education (ECE)
- Proven track record in education systems analysis, including Learner Support Services (LSS), multisectoral pathways, and service delivery models
- Demonstrated experience with EMIS, data systems, or digital education solutions
- Strong experience in costing, financial modelling, and/or investment case development
- Experience in public finance analysis (PF4C or similar) and education financing
- Proven ability to produce high-quality analytical outputs, including case studies, policy briefs, and technical reports
- Demonstrated experience engaging with government institutions and multi-stakeholder platforms
- Experience working with UN agencies, development partners, or similar organizations (desirable)
- Experience working in Sub-Saharan Africa, preferably Zimbabwe or similar contexts (desirable)

2. Technical Expertise and Skills

The proposed team must collectively demonstrate:

Core Technical Areas

- Inclusive education (disability, gender, intersectionality)
- Education systems strengthening and policy analysis
- Learner Support Services (LSS) and referral systems
- EMIS and education data systems
- Costing methodologies and financial modelling
- Macroeconomic and investment case analysis
- Monitoring and evaluation framework design **Analytical Capacity**

- Strong quantitative and qualitative data analysis skills
- Ability to triangulate data from multiple sources
- Proven experience in developing evidence-based recommendations

Policy and Communication

- Ability to translate technical findings into clear policy and advocacy outputs
- Strong report writing and presentation skills
- Experience facilitating consultations, validation workshops, and stakeholder engagement processes

Cross-cutting Competencies

- Knowledge of gender equality and social inclusion frameworks
- Familiarity with safeguarding, research ethics, and data protection standards
- Fluency in English (required); local language skills (advantage)

Key Personnel

1. Team Leader

- Advanced degree (Master's or higher) in Education, Economics, Public Policy, Social Sciences, or related field

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES
• Minimum 10–12 years of relevant experience in education planning, policy analysis, or system strengthening • Demonstrated experience in: ○ Leading complex multi-component assignments ○ Costing, modelling, or analytical studies • At least 5 years' experience managing multidisciplinary teams • Proven track record of producing high-quality analytical and policy reports • Strong experience working with government and development partners • Excellent communication, coordination, and facilitation skills **2. Other Key Personnel** Financing and Costing Expert • Expertise in education financing, public finance, and financial modelling • Experience in investment case development and fiscal space analysis Inclusive Education Specialist • Strong expertise in disability inclusion, inclusive pedagogy, and ECE systems • Experience in programme design, quality improvement, and service delivery models Gender and Inclusion Specialist • Expertise in gender analysis and social inclusion • Experience integrating inclusion into policy, systems, and monitoring frameworks Data Analyst/Statistician • Strong skills in statistical analysis, modelling, and EMIS/data systems • Experience supporting indicator development and evidence synthesis Local Expert(s) • Strong knowledge of Zimbabwe education sector and policy environment • Experience in stakeholder engagement, field coordination, and contextual analysis • Ability to support consultations, facilitation, and logistics

9. Process and Criteria

A technical proposal must include a detailed description of the methodology to be used for the work described above, clearly demonstrating how the three workstreams (Case Study, Accountability Tracker, and Investment Case) will be implemented in an integrated manner. The proposal must also include: a proposed timeline, description of key stages, and an activity chart (GANTT chart), a financial proposal covering all activities, submitted together with the technical proposal as one package

OVERALL RESPONSE CRITERIA	Mark
Understanding of UNICEF's needs and responsiveness to the requirements	10
Clarity of understanding of scope, objectives, and completeness of response (including integration of workstreams)	15
Sub Total	**25**
Institutional profile	

Institutions must provide: • Company profile and relevant qualifications • Examples of similar work (case studies, analytical reports, costing models, policy briefs) • Description of previous experience in comparable assignments	10

OVERALL RESPONSE CRITERIA	**Mark**
For institutions not based in Zimbabwe: • Must demonstrate a partnership with a local consultant or firm • The local partner must be a reputable professional or organization based in Zimbabwe The consulting firm should meet the following minimum criteria: • At least 7–10 years' experience in education research, policy analysis, or system strengthening, preferably in developing country contexts • Proven experience in inclusive education, disability inclusion, and Early Childhood Education (ECE) • Strong track record in education systems analysis, including Learner Support Services (LSS) and multisectoral pathways • Demonstrated experience in costing, financial modelling, and/or investment case development • Proven experience in quantitative and qualitative data analysis • Proven ability to deliver high-quality analytical reports and policy outputs • Experience in working with governments, development partners, or UN agencies	
Sub Total	**10**
Key personnel and technical competency	
The proposed team should demonstrate strong multidisciplinary expertise aligned to all workstreams. Team Leader • Advanced degree in education, economics, social sciences, or related field • At least 10 years' experience in education planning, policy analysis, or system strengthening • Proven experience leading complex analytical assignments, including costing/modelling work • Demonstrated ability to engage with government, stakeholders, and development partners • Strong communication and report writing skills Other Technical Competencies (Team) • Proven expertise in inclusive education, disability, and gender analysis • Strong experience with EMIS, data systems, and digital tools in education • Demonstrated capacity in costing, financial modelling, and macroeconomic/investment analysis • Proven skills in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies • Experience in developing monitoring frameworks, indicators, and governance tools	10
Significant experience with Zimbabwe education system	4

Proven data analysis skills (quantitative and qualitative) and methodology design	4
Proven ability to provide analysis of finances/resources from both national budget and external aid	4
Experience with similar analytical work (case studies, ESA, or system diagnostics	7
Experience in inclusive education, gender, and disability inclusion	6
OVERALL RESPONSE CRITERIA	**Mark**
Sub Total	**35**
Grand Total	**70**

The Technical Proposal will be scored out of 70% while the Financial Proposal will be scored out of 30% to get a total of 100%

Proposals should be submitted electronically to Jane Shamido, jshamido@unicef.org; and Clara Mlamba, cmlamba@unicef.org and with copy to amagudhu@unicef.org and amachekano@unicef.org.

10. Payment Terms

Partial payment will be done upon accomplishing the tasks and milestones and deliverables set in the table below.

The contractor is required to submit the following deliverables:

#	Task /Milestone	Deliverable Outputs	Timeline	Payment (% USD)
1	**Inception phase** Development of methodology, detailed workplan, stakeholder mapping, and identification of key assumptions and risks, including analytical approach to digital LSS systems and MIIEF integration	Inception Report	1 July – 14 July 2026 (10 days)	10% (USD 6,500)
2	**Workstream 1 Draft case study** Desk review, analysis, and drafting of LSS systems, including digital learner profiling and MIIEF integration	Draft LSS Country Case Study	15 July – 25 August 2026 (30 days)	20% (USD 13,000)
3	**Workstream 1 and 2: Fieldwork (Crosscutting and Parallel)** Conduct KIIs, FGDs, site visits (including MIIEF), and infrastructure audits; generates primary data feeding both the LSS case study and ECE tracker development	Fieldwork dataset and validated inputs	15 July – 25 August 2026 (30 days parallel with WS1 and WS2)	

4	**Workstream 2: Draft ECE Accountability Tracker (Parallel)** Development of indicator matrix, monitoring framework, and draft guidance note based on emerging findings from WS1	Draft ECE Accountability Tracker	15 July – 25 August 2026 (30 days; parallel with WS1 and fieldwork)	15% (USD 9,750)
5	**Workstream 1: Finalization** Revision and refinement of the case study based on stakeholder feedback	Final LSS Country Case Study	26 August – 15 September 2026 (15 days)	15% (USD 9,750)
6	**Workstream 2: Finalization (Parallel) Pilot** testing, validation, and refinement of the ECE Accountability Tracker and guidance note	Validated ECE Accountability Tracker	26 August – 15 September 2026 (15 days; parallel with WS1 finalization)	15% (USD 9,750)
7	**Workstream 3: Investment Case** Development of costing models, macroeconomic analysis, and PF4C fiscal space assessment	Disability Inclusive ECE Investment Case Report	16 September – 29 September 2026 (10 days)	15% (USD 9,750)
8	**Workstream 3: Policy Briefs and final consolidation of all delverables** Preparation of advocacy-oriented outputs targeting Government and development partners/private sector Final consolidation, quality assurance, and submission of all deliverables	Two Policy Briefs Consolidated deliverables package	30 September – 21 October 2026 (15 days)	10% (USD 6,500)

Note: During the period 15 July – 25 August 2026 (30 working days), activities under Workstreams 1 and 2 will be implemented in parallel, allowing real-time integration of data collection, analysis, and tool development. Fieldwork is embedded within this same period and directly supports both the LSS Country Case Study (Workstream 1) and The ECE Accountability Tracker (Workstream 2)

11. General Conditions: Procedures and Logistics

Policy both parties should be aware of:

1.PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA)
The Contractor shall uphold the highest standards of conduct and shall take all appropriate measures to prevent Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA).

The Contractor agrees to:

- ·Comply with the UNICEF policy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).
- ·Ensure that all personnel, subcontractors, and affiliates are trained or are aware of the

PSEA principles.

- Establish confidential and accessible mechanisms for reporting SEA incidents.
- Cooperate fully with UNICEF in the investigation and resolution of any SEA allegations.
- Take immediate disciplinary action against any personnel found to have engaged in the SEA.

2.CHILD SAFEGUARDING

The Contractor shall ensure that its operations do not expose children to harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The Contractor agrees to:

- Implement child safeguarding policies and procedures aligned with UNICEF's standards.
- Vet, train or awareness to all personnel who may contact children.
- Report any safeguarding concerns or incidents to UNICEF within 24 hours.
- Cooperate with UNICEF in any safeguarding investigations.
- Take corrective actions to prevent recurrence of any safeguarding breaches.

- No contract may commence unless the contract is signed by both UNICEF and the Contractor.
- No member of the contracting company may travel prior to contract signature. Zimbabwe Country Office requesting Sections is responsible for all costs related to travel and related to the required assignment.
- Members of the contracting company will not have supervisory responsibilities or authority on UNICEF budget.