

## Terms of Reference for Institutional Contracts

### Seeking technical support for develop an evidence-based road map for scale up ‘Community-based support for early learning and responsive care for children aged 0–6 years in China’

#### 1. Background of the project

Many young children in China are deprived of the best possible start in life, especially those who live in remote parts of rural China or are affected by migration. Disparities emerge early on, with around 6.7 million children aged 3 and 4 having poor cognitive and/or socio-emotional development.<sup>1</sup> Many of these children live in and belong to communities of ethnic minorities and are affected by poverty and/or migration, they are either left behind by migrating parents or are migrating with their parents. They face major educational, health and economic disparities. Caregivers, families and communities play the most important role in the early years of a child’s life, but they often lack the knowledge, skills and resources to best support their child’s development. Demand for early learning and care support services is high, but access is limited by availability and affordability, disproportionately affecting the most disadvantaged children.

To ensure that all children – particularly the most disadvantaged in China – are given equal opportunities during the early, formative years of life; the proposed project seeks to engender positive behaviour change among caregivers to better support child development. This includes Learning through Play (LtP), and the development of sustainable systems for scalable community-based family support (CBFS) services. In partnership with the All-China Women’s Federation (ACWF), and building on past project work and learning from the LEGO Foundation - supported projects, the project will entail working closely with the local government, university experts, childcare service providers, communities and families to improve CBFS services. It will employ a sustainable capacity development model, whereby cascade training and on-line support will be provided to practitioners, combined with the provision of play materials, online demonstration and mini classes to guide local practitioners.

Community-based implementation will focus on children and their caregivers in 200 disadvantaged rural communities and communities with a high proportion of children affected by migration across 10 provinces and autonomous regions: Gansu, Guizhou, Hebei, Hubei, Hunan, Inner Mongolia, Jiangxi, Shanxi, Sichuan and Yunnan. These project CBFS centres will operate as demonstration models and help to build an evidence base to support wider advocacy efforts for possible national scale-up. As a result of the project, an estimated 20,000 children aged 0–6 years and their 40,000 caregivers across the 200 communities will benefit directly from access to better-quality CBFS services, improved parenting practices and behaviours and use of age-appropriate play materials. An estimated 50,000 children aged 0–6 years and 95,000 caregivers will indirectly benefit through access to improved quality of CBFS services at non-project ACWF ECD centres in project provinces.

The outcome of this project is:

By 2025, national and selected provincial governments and other partners would have strengthened capacities to deliver community-based early learning and responsive care services at scale for more girls and boys aged 0-6, especially those left behind;

Expected outputs/deliverables of the project are:

- Resource development: Package of resources to support early learning and responsive care (ELRC) at the community level is to be developed and made available for replication and potential scale-up.
- Building sustainable national and provincial support systems for CBFS services: National and provincial expert teams are to improve the knowledge of and competencies in ELRC to promote LtP.
- Strengthened family-support services in communities: Service providers in selected communities are to be able to better provide quality ELRC support to children aged 0–6 and their caregivers, including by helping caregivers improve their play-centred parenting skills.
- Advocacy for replication and scaling-up: Documented evidence and lessons learned are to be disseminated to influence decisions for wider scale-up and contribute to the development of national family education legislation.

The project will demonstrate a model for effective community-based support to drive behaviour change among caregivers. The model and the evidence generated from it will subsequently be leveraged to advocate for enhanced awareness of scientific early childhood development (ECD) with LtP and provision of CBFS services at scale. In doing so, it will nurture advocates at community, county, provincial and national levels and generate evidence to support wider-scale government-led change to ensure ECD services are available to all children, particularly the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. This project proposal was designed based on UNICEF-ACWF’s previous experiences, a strong component of developing buy-in and ownership across multiple levels is by working with ACWF as an implementing partner and using its existing network and government influence to strengthen CBFS within China and influence government decision-making through its government advisory and policy implementation support role.

#### 2. Purposes/Objectives

The purpose of this consultancy is to develop an evidence-based road map for scale up the ‘Community-based support for early learning and responsive care for children aged 0–6 years in China’ to support families with children aged 0-6 in China, it is envisioned to use the roadmap for advocacy national and local government partners for future investments.

<sup>1</sup> McCoy, D.C., et al., ‘Early Childhood Developmental Status in Low- and Middle-income Countries: National, regional, and global prevalence estimates using predictive modelling’, PLOS Medicine, vol. 14, no. 1, 2016.

**Objective:**

Roadmap for scaling up and investing in community-based services to promote early learning and responsive care for families with children aged 0-6 in China, to inform national and local government with clear and precise information to assist in decision-making in scaling up Community-based support for early learning and responsive care for children aged 0–6 years in China.

**3. Scope of Work and Expected Deliverables**

The institution is expected to provide the following technical services to developing the road map report:

1. Literature review on community-based family support services and policies for families with children aged 0-6 in China
2. Drive and organize technical dialogues, discussions and meetings with government, technical institutions, and other organizations working on community based ECD project.
3. Conduct interviews with key takeholders all concerned partners, professions, community leaders and caregivers.
4. Facilitate discussion session with all project provinces leaders
5. Conduct data analysis, reporting-writing, and data/tools validation in collaboration with ACWF and under the guidance of UNICEF China.

Tasks by Phase	Expected Products/Deliverables	Timeframe (Deadlines)
Phase I: design of the framework of the road map and information collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and data collection tools in collaboration with UNICEF, ACWF and CNCC</li> <li>• Review project proposal, report, survey report and other publications related to community parenting support services, and policy paper.</li> <li>• Drafting initial framework of the road map</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road map framework developed</li> <li>• Questionnaire and tools developed for interviews</li> </ul>	2 weeks
Phase II: consultation meetings and drafting the road map report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical dialogues, discussions and meetings with government, institutions, and other organizations working on community based ECD project.</li> <li>• Conducting interviews and field visits</li> <li>• first draft of the road map document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting minutes</li> <li>• Interview notes</li> <li>• Draft road map report</li> </ul>	3 weeks
Phase III: finalization of the road map report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating technical discussion session at project launch meeting with all project provinces leader and reach consensus</li> <li>• Revise, refine and finalizing the road map report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chinese and English version final report of the road map</li> </ul>	3 weeks

**The above estimated cost included travel and management cost**

The payment of consultation fee is dependent on the satisfactory completion of deliverables by phase, as indicated in the Section of Description of Assignment.

(\*National consultants/contractors are to be paid in local currency. UNICEF will not bear bank charges for transferring hard currency abroad for int'l consultants/contractors, the institution management cost will be negotiated by UNICEF.)

**4. Funding Source: LEGO**

**5. Content of technical proposal**

**Structure of the Technical Proposal**

The Technical Proposal for the roadmap report development should include but not limited to the following:

- 1) Background review, description of the initial design of the framework of the road map report based on the understanding of the 'Community-based support for early learning and responsive care for children aged 0–6 years in China' project proposal and the requirement of this TOR, which should have clear and precise information to assist in decision-making(2 pages).
- 2) Detailed methodology/approach to demonstrating how you will meet or exceed UNICEF requirements for this assignment, including
  - a) description of how you are plan to step by step carry out this assignment, a table should be provided to include tasks by phase, deliverable in each phase and timeline for each phase;
  - b) quality assurance processes;
  - c) description of the limitations or risks, may occur and its mitigation measures. (4 pages, maximum)
- 3) Detailed description of the bidding institution's own ethical review procedures in compliance with UNICEF's ethics standards, or willingness to specifically include such procedures for the assignment<sup>2</sup>. (1 page)

<sup>2</sup> Specifically, proposals should:

- a. Identify any potential ethical issues and explain how these will be addressed, including:
  - Measures to ensure that the selection of participants and sampling will promote equity
  - Potential harms and risks to the safety and well-being of participants or their communities, and how these will be prevented or mitigated
  - The nature of informed consent by participants, and the measures that will be taken to obtain it

- 4) Corporate profile highlighting the bidder’s qualifications and experience in implementing the assignment, please include details of specific experience with similar assignments in the past five years. Bidders are requested to back up their submissions by providing:
- o Evidence in the form of job completion certificate, contracts and/or references.
  - o Details of the proposed team for the assignment including the following information:
    - Title/designation of each team member on the project
    - Educational qualifications and professional experiences
    - Experience in working on similar project and assignment – List all similar projects they worked on and their roles on those projects.

The format shown below should be used in preparing the price schedule. The format includes specific expenditures, which may or may not be required or applicable but are indicated to serve as examples.

PRICE SCHEDULE				
	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY/ITEM	NUMBER OF STAFF	UNIT RATE	ESTIMATED AMOUNT
1	Services/consultation			
2	Travel (including per diem allowance)			
3	Reproduction and reports			
4	Other items			

**Duty station:** The workplace of the research team.

**Duration:** 8 weeks in total.

Expected start date: 15th May 2021

Expected completion date: 5th July 2021

**Travel Required:** Field trips to visit project site and conducting interviews.

**Support Provided by UNICEF:** UNICEF will supervise the assignment and facilitate discussion with the government counterparts and experts.

**Supervisor:** Education officer, UNICEF China

**Type of Supervision Required:** Regular review of progress and technical advice.

**6. Documents/Information Available to Candidates:**

- 1) Proposals for ‘Community-based support for early learning and responsive care for children aged 0–6 years in China’
- 2) Mid-term review of the 0-3 community based ECD project
- 3) Project annual report
- 4) Project strategic planning meeting report
- 5) UNICEF Ethical Guidelines
- 6) Tools and materials developed by this project
- 7) List of project sites

**7. Qualification or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required for the Assignment:**

- 1) CSO, NGO or research institute with proven knowledge, reserach background and relevant experience in project planning, management, and strategic planning.
- 2) Leading person and the working team members with degrees or working experiences in early childhood development/education
- 3) Leading person and team members with appropriate ICT skills, including competence in using statistical software (e.g. SPSS), MS Office especially EXCEL
- 4) Leading person and team members familiar with the child rights based and gender sensitive approach to applied to this assignment.
- 5) Previous experience working with UNICEF (UN) and/or with local governments an asset
- 6) Fluency in Chinese and working knowledge of English required, proficiency in English an asset

**8. Evaluation criteria**

The evaluation procedure will focus on both technical and financial suitability. The weights of 70% and 30% shall be applied for technical and financial compliance respectively. Only organizations scoring at least 70% of the maximum score during technical evaluation will be considered for financial evaluation.

Technical Evaluation Criteria

1. Overall response - 10 points

- The measures to ensure privacy and confidentiality in data collection, analysis and storage
  - Explanation and justification of payment or other compensation to participants.
- b. Identify any actual or potential conflicts of interest, and if these exist, indicate how they would be managed.
  - c. Describe the process for ethical review and oversight of data collection and analysis.
  - d. Indicate that data collectors and others involved in the study will have completed basic ethics training before the commencement of activities. (UNICEF China can provide information and suggestions for basic ethics training.)

- 1.1 Completeness of response - 5 points
- 1.2. Overall concord between RFP requirements and proposal - 5 points
  
- 2. Proposed methodology and approach - 30 points
  - 2.1 Relevance and quality of proposed methodology - 20 points
  - 2.2 Project timelines and workplan - 10 points
  
- 3. Experience and qualifications of organization and key personnel - 30 points
  - 3.1. Organization profile (establishment, facilities, personnel, financial capacity) - 5 points
  - 3.2 Experience in similar projects - 15 points
  - 3.3. Relevance of qualifications & expertise of proposed team of consultants - 10 points

Total technical: 70 points

**9. Award Criteria**

The following methodology will be used for evaluation of price proposals and contract award. Only price proposals of the technically responsive Offerors will be opened and evaluated.

The price should be broken down for each component of the proposed work. The total amount of points allocated for the price component is 30. The maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest price proposal that is opened and compared among those invited organizations/institutions which obtain the threshold points in the evaluation of the technical component. All other price proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price; e.g.:

$$\text{Score for price proposal X} = \frac{30 * \text{Price of lowest priced proposal}}{\text{Price of proposal X}}$$

All prices/rates quoted must be exclusive of all taxes as UNICEF is a tax-exempt organization.

The proposal obtaining the overall highest score after adding the scores for the technical and financial proposals is the proposal that offers best value for money.

UNICEF will award the contract to the vendor whose response is of high quality, clear and meets the project goals. The price/cost of each of the technically compliant proposals shall be considered only upon evaluation of the above technical criteria.

SECTION TO OBTAIN APPROVAL FROM REPRESENTATIVE/OIC PRIOR TO INITIATING THE PROJECT.

ADD PAGES IF REQUIRED.