

TERMS OF REFERENCE

SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

Pacific Technical Expert for Strategy and Coordination of ECD and Inclusion Education

BACKGROUND

Pacific Island leaders have made substantial strides in Early Childhood Development (ECD), showcasing strong political commitment and a collaborative, whole-of-society approach to nurturing the youngest members of their communities. Under the guidance of the Pasifika Call to Action on ECD, nations have coordinated efforts to enhance investments in ECD, implement national multi-sectoral policies, and improve services in areas such as early childhood education, health, nutrition, child protection, WASH, child-focused social protection, and parenting support.

Established in 2019, the Pacific Regional Council for ECD (PRC4ECD) brings together Ministers and Permanent Secretaries from the finance and social sectors across the region. This high-level geopolitical network has gained global recognition as a model for ECD advocacy and action. As the Secretariat of PRC4ECD, UNICEF is committed to strengthening and harmonizing support for ECD through capacity-building, technical assistance, south-south cooperation, funding (including climate financing), and regional initiatives that support country-level programs.

This commitment aligns with the expanded Pasifika Call to Action, the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy, the Pacific Culture Strategy, and regional sectoral priorities set by Pacific Ministers of Education, Health, and Women, among others. It is expected to draw insights from these frameworks while contributing to their implementation.

In 2025, Samoa will have the honor of hosting the Pacific ECD Forum for the first time outside of Fiji. This forum presents a unique opportunity to bring governments together to accelerate the implementation of the Pasifika Call to Action on ECD, celebrate significant achievements since the 2023 Forum, and chart a path forward to ensure that policy commitments translate into tangible actions and results for young children and their families.

Pacific Ministers of Education have also committed to the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF), including its implementation through the Pacific Regional Education Framework under the guidance of the Pacific Heads of Education System (PHES) and with inclusive education as a standing agenda item for PHES meetings. An informal inclusive education taskforce formed to guide the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Review, conducted by UNICEF, was then elevated by the Ministers to ministerial level, with UNICEF now serving as secretariat to the Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce. However, since the taskforce was elevated to Ministerial level, with only remote meetings possible, it has struggled to maintain momentum.

In the lead-up to the 2025 Conference of Pacific Education Ministers meeting, it is critical that the Regional IE Taskforce should be reignited and build momentum on IE.

OBJECTIVE / SCOPE OF WORK

The purpose of this consultancy is to support UNICEF Pacific with the secretariat role to the PRC4ECD and the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework.

This includes technical and operational guidance to the PRC4ECD, and support with the planning and execution of the upcoming 2025 ECD Forum. The consultant will be responsible for developing actionable and practical guidance and resources to advance ECD commitments effectively.

This also includes technical and operational guidance to the Pacific IE Taskforce, including the implementation of its workplan, monitoring of PRIEF implementation through PacREF, coordination of and guidance to inclusive education efforts under PacREF and other initiatives, and preparation of contributions to PHES and CPEM meetings. The Pacific Disability Forum will be a partner in the preparation, convening and follow-up of IE Taskforce meetings.

The consultant is expected to actively engage with Pacific Island governments, ensuring participation from relevant government bodies. Collaboration with key regional bodies such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Pacific Community (SPC), and the University of the South Pacific (USP), as well as other regional and international organizations, will be essential to this process.

ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES, PLUS PAYMENT SCHEDULE PER DELIVERABLE

ACTIVITY	DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE	PAYMENT (%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect, review, classify and update relevant documents for the PRC4ECD. Draft an inception report outlining the scope of the work, activities, key stakeholders, methodology to be implemented and tentative timeline. 	Product 1 – Inception report		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft and review the PRC4ECD workplan, identifying concrete actions, indicators to assess the implementation over time and practical guidance for both PRC4ECD and individual Pacific Island Governments. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft and review with government bodies, particularly PIFS, a calendar of high-level regional events and fora where ECD can be tabled 	Product 3 – Calendar of possible ECD advocacy events		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and endorsed with the PRC4ECD the updated TORs for the Steering committee, task force and co-chairing committee 	Product 4 – 3 TORs revised and endorsed		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical support to the PRC4ECD on the concept note and agenda for the 2025 Pacific ECD Forum 	Product 5 – 1 concept note and 1 agenda for the 2025 ECD Forum		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical and operational support to the planning and implementation of the 2025 Pacific ECD Forum, including the review and development of forum materials, coordinating speakers and PIC participation, and documenting forum outcomes 	Product 6 – development of forum materials		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate meetings between the PRC4ECD steering committee, task force and co-chairing committee 	Product 7 – Concept notes, agenda and minutes of the meetings		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support with the planning and execution of the 2025 ECD Forum 	Product 8 – Detailed report of the planning and execution of the 2025 ECD Forum		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document the 2025 ECD Forum outcomes 	Product 9 – Forum Outcomes document		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure programme implementation of PRC4ECD initiatives 	Product 10 - Report and documentation of programme implementation of PRC4ECD initiatives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for and document Pacific Regional IE Taskforce meetings, including consultations with countries/members, preparation of agenda and briefing notes, and subsequent updating of Taskforce workplan to maximise strategic opportunities to advance inclusive education 	Product 11 – Regional IE Taskforce meeting documentation with updated workplan		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance to key IE workplan activities, including monitoring of PRIEF implementation through PacREF, cross-country learning and sharing 	Product 12 – IE Taskforce report reflecting		

activities (e.g. workshops/webinars), and development of papers/inputs to PHES and CPEM.	documentation of all activities completed with relevant workplan updates		
		XXX working days	TOTAL 100%

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES

Bachelors Masters PhD Other

- A master's degree in social policy, Development Studies, Early Childhood Development, Education, Family Health, or a relevant field.
- A minimum of 15 years of professional experience in social development planning and management including education, early childhood development, inclusion and/or other related areas at the international level.
- Experience designing and implementing participatory processes engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, including high-level senior government officials.
- Work experience in the Pacific Islands region, including knowledge of the Pacific regional architecture, is required.
- Experience working with UNICEF or a UN system agency is an asset.
- Proven ability to work independently, liaising with and engaging diverse and very busy stakeholders, and effective collaboration.
- Excellent written and spoken communication skills

CONDITIONS OF WORK AND CLARIFICATION ON SUPERVISION

The consultant will work remotely ensuring availability to work at times suitable to the Pacific Islands region when required. All costs related to the work will be included in the financial proposal and subsequent contract. Daily monitoring and supervision will be provided by the ECD Specialist in collaboration with the Chief of Education and the Deputy Representative.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- Individuals engaged under a consultancy contract will not be considered "staff members" under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF's policies and procedures and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants. Consultants are responsible for determining their tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.
- The selected candidate is solely responsible to ensure that the visa (applicable) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected candidates are subject to confirmation of fully vaccinated status against SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) with a World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed vaccine, which must be met prior to taking up the assignment. It does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, programme delivery locations or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts. UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants with disabilities. This may include, for example, accessible software, travel assistance for missions or personal attendants. We encourage you to disclose your disability during your application in case you need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and afterwards in your assignment.
- No contract may commence unless the contract is signed by both UNICEF and the consultant.
- A consultant will be required to complete mandatory online courses (e.g. Ethics, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Security) upon receipt of the offer and before the signature of contract.

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

- Please submit a CV and brief technical proposal as well as a **separate financial offer** along with your application. The financial proposal should be a **lump sum amount for all the deliverables** and should show a break down for the following:
 - Monthly / Daily fees– based on the deliverables in the Terms of Reference above.
 - Travel (economy air ticket where applicable to take up assignment and field mission travel).
 - Living allowance where travel is required.

- Miscellaneous- to cover visa, health insurance (including medical evacuation for international consultants), travel insurance, communications, and other costs.