

TERMS OF REFERENCE

National consultancy for conducting the desk review of breastfeeding administrative and survey national data

Type of contract: *National individual consultancy*

Duration: *15 May 2021 – 15 July 2021*

1. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION:

UNICEF in Belarus is strongly committed to investing in data and evidence generation to be able to provide policy advice based on accurate and timely evidence on child rights realization. The statistical system in Belarus is relatively well developed but disaggregation and comparability of data remains an important challenge. Administrative data collected is not always timely available. On the demand side, accountability mechanisms including human rights institutions are relatively weak. So far as part of the Child Rights Monitoring (CRM) programme, consistent high-level advocacy supported by timely and quality evidence and situation monitoring has been the key to the achievement of programme results and sustaining the CO's role as a knowledge broker in the country. As reflected in the Child Rights Action Plan for 2017-2021, the national child rights monitoring and evaluation system should be further strengthened to consistently monitor and report progress on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF partners with the Government to enhance administrative and statistical data and strengthen system capacity to align national data with international quality assurance frameworks.

To support enhancement of ECD and ECE services and provide evidence-based support to families in building their nurturing skills there is a need to build monitoring system using reliable ECD indicators. One specific area identified by the MICS Steering Committee for harmonisation of data collection methodologies and procedures is breastfeeding data.

The Breastfeeding has been shown to be beneficial for the health of both the mother and infant, not only in the postnatal period, but also later in life. However, breastfeeding rates are still below the recommended target. The MICS6 data shows that only 22 percent of infants aged 0-5 months were exclusively breastfed, while the global average of exclusive breastfeeding in children up to 6 months is 41%; while WHO/UNICEF recommend 70%. Early initiation has dropped dramatically since 2012 from 53.0% to 23.6% in 2019. At the same time Introduction of solid, semi-solid or soft foods has increased from 64.3% in 2012 to 95.7% in 2019. At the same time, number of children who get minimum meal frequency is 93.2%, which is significantly higher than 74.2% in 2012. All the above might state that the feeding pattern has changed. At the same time, national data showed 71% (2018), creating a case for validating of the exclusive breastfeeding administrative data based on 2019 MICS findings.

2. PURPOSE:

The UNICEF is commissioning a desk review to inform the National Breastfeeding Data validation exercise in 2021-2022. The desk review is seen as the first stage of the data validation process and results of it will support with baseline and background information the following work.

The objective of the desk review is to describe existing services and monitoring system that is in place at the national and regional levels to support, promote and measure progress in breastfeeding rates.

3. KEY TASKS:

3.1. To describe existing country system against main WHO/UNICEF guidelines on breastfeeding and other existing international standards under following domains:

- National counselling services for women on breastfeeding before birth and during first two years of child's life;
- Legislative and other norms existing in the country on inappropriate promotion of foods for infants and young children, including breastmilk substitutes;
- Social and cultural norms existing in the country on protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding practises within education, workplace, public spaces and facilities providing maternity and newborn services;
- HIV and infant feeding: the duration of breastfeeding, and support from health services to improve feeding practices among mothers living with HIV.

3.2. To describe existing system of data collection and legislation that regulates data collection on breastfeeding in the following areas:

- Use of WHO/UNICEF Tracking Tool on possible set of national targets until 2025, with focus on Breastfeeding target. <https://www.who.int/tools/global-targets-tracking-tool>;
- Governmental statistical forms for data collection comparing methodologies and procedures of MoH data collection and MICS.

3.3. Provide recommendations to scope of the National Breastfeeding Data validation exercise in 2021-2022, including additional qualitative and quantitative studies to support it.

4. DELIVERABLES TIMELINE:

Nº	Deliverables	Timeframe for deliverable (deadline)	Consultancy Days
1	The workplan is prepared, the desk review questions are revised and approved.	20 May, 2021	3
	Support provided to a sociological company in developing instruments for focus group discussions with women and in-depth interviews with experts, healthcare staff and social sector professionals.	30 May, 2021	5
2	The desk review report is drafted (10 pages plus annexes in Russian)	30 June, 2021	20
3	The finalized report incorporating UNICEF feedback is submitted.	15 July, 2021	7

5. SUPERVISION, WORK RELATIONS & OVERSIGHT

The consultant will be supervised and report directly to the UNICEF M&E Specialist with active guidance and involvement of the UNICEF ECD Specialist. Debriefings will be arranged upon a need to support the progress of the consultancy.

UNICEF staff members, consultants, consultants and partners will follow the GUIDANCE ON EXTERNAL ACADEMIC PUBLISHING (January 2017) when engaging in external academic publishing, whether in print or digital form, of the final Research Study Report.

The Consultant must respect the complete confidentiality of the data as well as any specific documents that will be produced. The Consultant can use the documents and the datasets only for the tasks related to these Terms of Reference.

6. TRAVEL

If UNICEF determines that the Consultant needs to travel in order to perform his or her assignment, that travel shall be specified in the contract and the Consultant's travel costs shall be set out in the contract: In cases where travel costs have not been set out in the contract, the consultant is expected to submit, within ten days of completion of a specific travel, a voucher for reimbursement of travel expenses to the Operations section. Reimbursements shall only be processed if travel was duly authorized in the individual contract or by an authorized manager of the contracting section, in writing and prior to the travel. Consultants and individual consultants are responsible for assuming costs for obtaining visas and travel insurance.

7. PAYMENT CONDITIONS:

Payments to the consultant will be conducted based on the submitted invoices with the number of consultancy days in line with actually reported deliverables.

8. UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE:

Payment of fees to the Consultant under this contract, including each installment or periodic payment (if any), is subject to the Consultant's full and complete performance of his or her obligations under this contract with regard to such payment to UNICEF's satisfaction, and UNICEF's certification to that effect.

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. All materials developed will remain the copyright of UNICEF and that UNICEF will be free to adapt and modify them in the future. This ToR is an integral part of the contract (SSA) signed with the consultant.

9. QUALIFICATIONS OR SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE/ EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

The expert is required to have:

- Master or Doctoral degree in Pediatrics
- Experience in the sector/area;
- Proven ability to write research papers and articles;
- High analytical and conceptual skills;
- Ability to work in a team and have the initiative to work independently to meet deadlines;
- Fluency in Russian;
- Fluency in English (written and spoken) is an asset;
- Record of work with UN is an asset.

All consultants are required to know the principles and requirements of the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluations and Data Collection and Analysis (UPES), confirmed by submission of a completion certificate for an online course called "Introduction to Ethics in Evidence Generation" (<https://agora.unicef.org/course/info.php?id=2173>). All consultants are required to be familiar with and use the *UNICEF Style Book* while producing publications, reports, briefing documents, fact sheets, media materials and web content.

10. PROCESS FOR APPLICATION

Proposal from candidates should include:

- 1) A short methodological proposal on how the assignment you will be undertaken;
- 2) CV;
- 3) Financial proposal for the services to be provided.

Criteria for the selection of proposals:

- 1) Selection of the consultancy will be on competitive basis;
- 2) Relevance of proposal to achieving expected results;
- 3) Adequacy and clarity of proposed consultancy cost;
- 4) Expertise and experience in the sector/area.