

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS**

Title		Type of engagement	Duty Station:
International consultant to support Early Childhood Development implementation in Burundi		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultant <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Contractor Part-Time* <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Contractor Full-Time *	Bujumbura,  Burundi

**1. Purpose of Activity/Assignment**

According to The Lancet, 2016, over 43 per cent of children under the age of 5 are at risk of not fulfilling their full developmental potential, due to risks of poverty, poor nutrition and a lack of access to basic services and early enriching opportunities. Children who do not receive adequate health, nutrition, early stimulation, learning opportunities, care and protection, all identified as elements of ‘nurturing care’, tend to have lowered cognitive, language and psychosocial outcomes as well as executive functioning, which translates to lowered academic achievement in primary school and, ultimately, dropping out of school. It is estimated that 11 to 17 per cent of children are at risk of or have disabilities.

The Early Child Development (ECD) is part of the transformative agenda for 2030, making it an international priority for the 21st century. Global targets in education (SDG 4.2); health (SDG 3.2); nutrition (SDG 2.2); and protection (SDG 16.2) address key outcomes to realize young children’s developmental potential. Addressing inequities early in life can convert a vicious cycle of inequality into a virtuous cycle. ECD also adds value to different strategic frameworks and partnerships, working towards the SDG goals, such as Every Woman Every Child (EWEC), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN), and The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (GPEVAC). This inclusion presents both opportunities and challenges in policy setting, planning, budgeting, programming and monitoring results for young children<sup>1</sup>.

Early childhood is defined as the period from conception to the age of 8 years and is an outcome from an integrated package of interventions in several sectors, including health, nutrition, social protection, education, water, hygiene and sanitation, child protection, etc. The first 1,000 days of life in particular is a window of opportunity for the child because it is at this period of life that most the child's brain is built where more than a million of neural connections are formed every second, a rate that has never been equaled since. Unfortunately, it is also a period of great vulnerability for children if all the conditions are not met to ensure the development of their full potential.

In Burundi, 56% of children under the age of 5 are stunted, 52.6% die before the age of 5 and 59% are not on the right track in terms of development. This hinders the development of the country's human capital. The country conducted in 2022 a cost-benefit analysis of an ECD package of health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene interventions showing that the package would yield US\$18 for every dollar invested by 2050. Hence providing ECD interventions is one of the most cost-effective ways to ensure that the most vulnerable children can reach their full potential.

Early childhood development is a national priority and is reflected in the National Development Plan. It requires strong financing strategies to support multisectoral interventions. Cost-benefit analyses of early childhood development have shown that investing in this "window of opportunity" not only saves lives and produces responsible adults, but also boosts the national economy and social capital. The implementation of ECD requires the commitment of all actors including Government and development partners. There is also need for strong coordination, capacity building as well as advocacy to strengthen investments in ECD., There is great value in the development and implementation of interventions to improve the life chances of these young children.

<sup>1</sup> UNICEF’s programme guidance for early childhood development, programme division 2017

ECD is a priority in the UNICEF Burundi CPD 2024-2027 and to support the work on ECD, UNICEF Burundi requires an **international consultant** with expertise to provide strategic and technical guidance to further strengthen ECD in Burundi at the national and decentralized levels.

- **Scope of Work:**

The main purpose of the assignment is to provide strategic and technical support on ECD to the Burundi CO. The consultant is expected to support key expected results on ECD for 2024.

This includes support to the Government in the operationalization of the national multisectoral strategy for early childhood development in Burundi, covering the period 2021-2027 developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS, in collaboration with its partners, including UNICEF, WHO, WFP, WB and others. Key strategic axes were identified, and the strategy proposes the role of key actors in its harmonious implementation. Work is underway to develop an operational plan for the strategy as well as to clarify the coordination mechanism.

In complement, different efforts are underway to support and strengthen ECD in Burundi, including a national dialogue as well as a Forum that will focus on ECD, operational interventions on the ground with Government institutions and CSO partners (UNICEF has developed a minimum package of interventions that it will start implementing in key areas of convergence), work on the development of key tools such a set of national Key Family Care practices, as well as evidence generation efforts (baseline study in order to conduct an impact evaluation on ECD).

The consultant is expected to bring in experiences from the region and beyond to strengthen ECD in Burundi and to support the preparation and organization of a national ECD dialogue planned in August as well as the high-level women leader's Forum to be held in early October which will focus on ECD with the following theme: Invest in ECD to build human capital across the life cycle.

The incumbent will contribute to the achievement of concrete and sustainable results on ECD as well as capacity building, advocacy and resource mobilization for ECD.

- **Key tasks to be undertaken by the international consultant.**

- i. Develop a **consultancy work plan including key milestones** developed and validated by stakeholders.
- ii. **Support coordination of ECD interventions by UNICEF Burundi, with a focus on the implementation of the ECD package at national and decentralized levels:** technical guidance to the development /refinement of the workplan for ECD, support the work on ECD baseline, implementation of key family practices, document the work on ECD and provide updates to be shared regularly with UNICEF management and stakeholders,
- iii. **Ensure strategic guidance, capacity building and technical assistance on ECD to lead sectoral ministries and other sectors engaged in the implementation of the national ECD strategy:** review/support for the finalization of the operational plan; support the development of integrated monitoring tools and training manuals for implementation of ECD multisectoral - assist in identifying effective coordination/governance structures based on other relevant country experiences; support advocacy and required documentation on costing to support increased investments for ECD;)
- iv. **Support the organization of key fora on ECD and participate/support others as relevant, with a focus on a national ECD dialogue and a High-level Forum:** support in the preparation and organization of the national dialogue including preparation of background notes, presentations, identification of speakers etc.) and the

high-level women leaders' Forum around ECD as well as contributions on ECD for other dialogues/meetings; support for the organization of an exchange visit on ECD with other countries

#### 4. Working location and duration of the Consultancy

The consultant will be based in Bujumbura and will work from UNICEF Burundi Office with many interactions with different sections, government counterparts and other partners, and will travel to the field if need be. The consultancy duration is for a period of 6 months.

- **Management oversight**

The international consultant will work under the direct supervision of the Chief Nutrition supported by the Deputy Representative Programme and will work closely with the chief of other different sections and ECD Focal points. The consultant will work closely with Minister of Health, Office of the First Lady in Burundi as well as other different sectoral ministries ( Ministry of the Interior, Community Development and Public Safety, Ministry of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Public Health and AIDS Control, Ministry of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender, Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research, Ministry of Hydraulics, Energy and Mines, Minister of Commerce, Transport, Industry and Tourism, Minister of Communication, Information Technologies and Media) and stakeholders involved in ECD including WB as well as other UN agencies such as WFP, FAO, WHO and UNWOMEN

- **Deliverables and expected results.**

The consultant's deliverables are as follows:

- **A consultancy work plan including key milestones developed** and validated by stakeholders and a summary of the review of the existing guidelines strategies, protocols, plans, and other materials in relation with ECD available. **Support the development /validation of national multisectoral ECD costed plan, coordination of its implementation at all levels**, recommendations for effective coordination/governance structures based on other relevant country experiences as well as regularly documentation of key achievements ensured.
- **Strategic guidance, capacity building including development of integrated monitoring tools**, training manuals etc... and technical assistance to lead sectoral ministries and other sectors engaged in the implementation of the national ECD multisectoral plan regularly provided and tools available.
- **Support provided for the development of technical notes, presentations as well as advocacy tools on ECD** (in collaboration with relevant sections, ie CAP, SPA etc. and **partners in Burundi and beyond**) and **support to the organization and participation in key fora on ECD** (High-level women leader's Forum, National dialogue with key recommendations to inform the HL forum, Exchange visit on ECD with an experienced country) as well as other relevant dialogues/meetings.

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Number of days/Delivery deadline
<p><b>Inception phase</b></p> <p>1. Desk review of relevant published documents and gray literature (Strategy, Guidelines, Protocols, Plans, and other materials in relation with ECD.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Develop a consultancy work plan including all necessary requirements developed and validated by stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>An inception report containing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A consultancy work plan including all necessary requirements with timeline, clear steps or means of carrying out the tasks and outputs developed and validated by stakeholders.</li> <li>• A summary of the review of the existing guidelines strategies, protocols, plans, and other materials in relation with ECD available</li> </ul>	<p>(1-15 June) 15 jours</p>
<p><b>Development, strategic and technical guidance for implementation</b></p> <p>2. Support the development /validation of national multisectoral ECD costed plan, coordination of its implementation at all levels, recommendations for effective coordination/governance structures based on other relevant country experiences as well as regularly documentation of key achievements ensured</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A validated and costed national multisectoral ECD operational plan available,</li> <li>• ECD package is well implemented and well-coordinated according to the plan,</li> <li>• Recommendations for effective coordination/governance structures based on other relevant country experiences provided.</li> <li>• ECD work and key achievements documented regularly</li> </ul>	<p>16 June – 15 July</p> <p>Continue...</p> <p>16 August-15 September</p> <p>Continue</p>
<p>3. Strategic guidance, capacity building including development of integrated monitoring tools, training manuals etc... and technical assistance to lead sectoral ministries and other sectors engaged in the implementation of the national ECD multisectoral plan regularly provided and other tools available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated and multisectoral monitoring tools and training manuals for implementation of ECD developed and validated.</li> <li>• Technical assistance to lead sectoral ministries and other sectors engaged in ECD regularly provided and other relevant tools developed.</li> </ul>	<p>16 July-15 August</p> <p>Continue...</p>

<p>4. Support provided for the development advocacy tools on ECD costing for increased investment in collaboration with the CAP and SPA) and to the organization and participation in key fora on ECD (High-level women leader’s Forum, National dialogue with key recommendations to inform the HL forum, Exchange visit on ECD with an experienced country) as well as other relevant dialogues/meetings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy tools on ECD costing for increased investment developed.</li> <li>• A national dialogue on ECD conducted with key recommendations to inform the HL forum.</li> <li>• High-level women leader’s Forum around ECD supported, implemented and clear recommendation on commitment for financial support to ECD done.</li> <li>• Exchange visit on ECD with an experienced country organized and conducted</li> <li>• ECD contributions for other dialogues/meetings; supported.</li> </ul>	<p>16 August- 15 September</p> <p>16 September -15 October</p> <p>16 October-15 November</p>
<p>5. Submission of final report of the consultancy</p>	<p>Final consultancy report with all key recommendations for strengthening ECD in Burundi</p>	<p>15 November-30 November</p>

<p><b>Minimum Qualifications required*:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>	<p><b>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required*:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Master’s degree in social sciences and /or professional background in Early Childhood development or any other related technical field (public health, nutrition etc).</li> </ul> <p><b>Experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minimum five years of relevant professional experience in the field of Early Childhood Development</li> <li>▪ Previous experience in developing strategies, plans and costing of the plan.</li> <li>▪ Involvement in policy development, research and analysis related to ECD, programme design and implementation.</li> <li>▪ Experience in conducting similar assignments, with samples of own work to be submitted upon request.</li> <li>▪ Familiarity with Burundi or similar contexts an asset.</li> <li>▪ Strong interpersonal skills and, experienced facilitating multi-stakeholder workshop including high level national dialogues</li> <li>▪ Previous experience with multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder program planning, development, review, and evaluation.</li> <li>▪ Sound research and analytical skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Core competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication</li> <li>▪ Working with people</li> <li>▪ Drive for results</li> </ul> <p><b>Language</b>  <b>Fluency in written and spoken French and English is required.</b></p>
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IT equipment: the consultant should carry his/her own laptop