

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Age Assessment Consultant

CONTRACT MODALITY Individual Consultancy

DUTY STATION New York, home-based

DURATION OF CONTRACT 8.5 months

Purpose of Assignment

UNICEF supports achievement of SDG 8.7, to take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibitions and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment of child soldiers. UNICEF is also working to enforce Article 39 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and the Paris Principles and Guidelines for children associated with armed forces and armed groups. UNICEF supports recovery and reintegration of children affected by armed conflict in an environment that fosters health, self-respect and dignity of the child. UNICEF further takes action to support governments in their obligations to fulfill the 12 UN Security Council resolutions related to protecting children affected by armed conflict, and repatriation and reintegration of foreign children stranded in conflict zones, and the recognition that children associated with armed forces or armed groups are survivors of human rights violations and should be treated primarily as victims. UNICEF also remains guided by its Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, its Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and its Child Protection Strategy 2021-2030 all of which prioritize protection of children in armed conflict.

Between 2005 and 2022 the UN verified more than 105,000 children as having been recruited and used by armed forces or armed groups.¹ Many children are also detained for their actual, alleged, or perceived association with armed groups or on national security charges. “Verified cases ... have been documented in 25 countries since 2005” and have gradually increased over time.² Determining that an individual is a child can prevent the person’s recruitment and use, facilitate their separation from armed actors, bring them under the jurisdiction and application of the special protections of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, and juvenile justice laws and procedures, and ensure that they are treated primarily as victims. Age assessment processes therefore constitute one of the most powerful tools to directly protect children in these situations.

In 2024, in the course of the update of the Technical note on Age Assessment, the need for additional operational guidance, tools and training became apparent to enable effective, coherent, and context-appropriate application of age assessment standards and practices across diverse settings.

In this context, UNICEF seeks the services of a consultant to develop implementation tools to enable the correct application of the updated guidance on child friendly age-assessment procedures to help both facilitate support of and advocacy for this highly vulnerable group of children, and to better protect and fulfil their rights.

Scope of Work

The consultant will develop the following companions to the Age Assessment technical note:

1. Age assessment interview Guidance and Template (including in armed conflict settings)
2. Implementation tool companion to the Age assessment technical
3. Additional tools for armed conflict settings
4. Child-friendly information materials
5. Training module on age assessment interview for child protection practitioners
6. Age assessment interview method accuracy testing

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline (in weeks/months) and input days to complete the deliverable
<p>1. Age assessment interview Guidance and Template (including in armed conflict settings)</p>	<p>Final Draft of the age assessment interview guidance finalized, including: 1 narrated slide deck 1 Age assessment interview Template</p>	<p>30 April 2026 2 weeks after start (11 days)</p>
<p>2. Implementation tool companion to the Age assessment technical</p>	<p>Implementation Tool companion finalized, including: 1 Narrated slide deck – Key definitions 1 Narrated slide deck – Challenges 1 Narrated slide deck – Methods and their main limitations 1 Narrated slide deck – Standards and safeguards 1 Narrated slide deck – Age assessment process 1 The Process Flowchart</p>	<p>10 June 2026 8 weeks after start (22 days)</p>
<p>3. Operational tools for armed conflict settings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key messages • TN Summary • Age Assessment Protocol in armed conflict settings • Child-friendly information materials 	<p>Operational tools for armed conflict settings finalized, including: 1 Final draft of key advocacy messages 1 Final draft of the TN Summary 1 Final Draft of the Protocol in conflict settings 1 Narrated slide deck – TN summary 1 Narrated slide deck – Key messages 1 Narrated slide deck – Protocol in conflict settings 1 Age Assessment Protocol template</p>	<p>2 September 2026 20 weeks after start (33 days)</p>

	1 Stakeholders mapping table 1 Booklet final draft	
4. Training module on age assessment interview for child protection practitioners	Training module and facilitators guide finalized	23 December 2026 36 weeks after start (31 days)
5. Age assessment interview method accuracy testing	Report on accuracy results of age assessment interview method	23 December 2026 52 weeks after the start (175 days)

Payment Schedule:

Payment will be made on submission and acceptance of deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment in case the deliverables submitted are not up to the required standard or in case of delays in submitting the deliverables on the part of the consultant.

Important Notes

- Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual 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 and Individual Contractors. Consultants and individual contractors 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 for ensuring that the health insurance (and visa if applicable) 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.

QUALIFICATIONS / SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCE/ COMPETENCIES (CORE/TECHNICAL/FUNCTIONAL) / LANGUAGE SKILLS REQUIRED FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

Minimum requirements:

- Education: Masters degree in Psychology, Human rights or International Public Policy
- Work Experience:
 - A minimum of 5 years’ experience in child protection, law, humanitarian programme management,

human rights;

- Demonstrated experience in working on issues related to age assessment and development of guidance for relevant stakeholders including member States, practitioners and children
- Skills:
 - Ability to be flexible and work well under pressure in a fast-paced environment, with complex projects and deadlines from different stakeholders
 - Demonstrable ability to work independently, take initiative, and identify new opportunities and approaches
- Language Requirements:
 - Strong English language skills
- Desirables
 - Experience working on issues related to CAAFAG and or child justice in operations in the field is an advantage
 - Strong writing and communication skills; development and delivery of technical guidance an advantage
 - Fluency in French an advantage