UNICEF Country Office in Turkmenistan

Terms of Reference

Individual International Consultancy for Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Education in

introducing the half-day pre-primary preparation programme and strengthening quality assurance and monitoring for early learning and pre-primary preparation in Turkmenistan.

**Duration:** 15/05/2021 – 30/11/2021 (47 days)

**Location:** Out-of-country with one (potential) visit to Turkmenistan

# Background

Turkmenistan is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the overall 2030 Agenda which places Early Childhood Development (ECD) as a priority for the future. Specifically, SDG Target 4.2 states that by 2030 countries should “ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.”

The newly endorsed Action Plan under the national ECD Strategy for 2020-2025 incorporates specific activities, timelines and monitoring indicators, all aligned with the country’s SDG 4.2 commitments, to further strengthen the national policy framework towards quality and universal pre-primary preparation for all 5 years old children in Turkmenistan. In the frameworks of the above, the Ministry of Education have initiated preparations for introducing one-year half-day pre-primary preparation programmes for all 5 years old children.

The on-going review and revision process for the existing pre-school curriculum aim to support the offering of half day programs across the existing network of regular schools nation-wide which incorporate both primary and secondary education. The curriculum revision must include a play and competency-based standard with focused outcomes that can be measured to ensure continuous children’s progress in learning and development.

Given the half day pre-primary program, planned to be initiated in Autumn 2021, will be housed in regular schools, it is important to align the curriculum to grade one of the primary education to further support safe transition of children from kindergarten to and their readiness for primary school. The revised curriculum program should consider schedules, play activities, competencies, outcomes, and flexible programming to address the needs of all children and families.

Introducing one-year quality pre-primary preparation programmes will also require developing a quality assurance and monitoring tool to demonstrate children’s learning accomplishments, gather data and provide positive support to teachers. Additionally, focus should also be made on strengthening the overall institutional capacity of the pre-school education sector in quality assurance and monitoring of early learning and pre-primary preparation provision.

To support these initiatives UNICEF is seeking an international expert to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Education in introducing the half-day pre-primary preparation programme for 5 years old children and strengthening the institutional capacity in quality assurance and monitoring of early learning and pre-primary preparation.

**Purpose of the assignment**

Provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Education in introducing the half-day pre-primary preparation programme for 5 years old children and strengthening the institutional capacity in quality assurance and monitoring of early learning and pre-primary preparation.

# Specific Tasks

* Conduct a desk review of the main documents that pertain to preschool including the preschool curriculum, schedules, and any monitoring and quality assurance tools in place.
* Review and revise the existing preschool curriculum to ensure it is play and competency based, and supportive of half day programs. This curriculum should be flexible and address the needs of rural and urban areas. It must also address inclusion and support of children with learning disabilities.
* Develop and align a quality assurance and monitoring tool for use by the relevant staff of the Ministry of Education, Institute of Education and regional methodological centers nation-wide when visiting preschool facilities.
* Finalize all the documents reviewed, revised and developed based on the comments from UNICEF and MoE
* Facilitate a series of online meetings and training, or, if possible, undertake a visit to Turkmenistan to observe and collect information on the initial implementation of the half-day pre-primary curriculum and provide guidance to the selected group of key professionals nation-wide led by the Ministry of Education on the use of the half-day pre-primary curriculum and quality assurance and monitoring tool.
* Provide a draft final report on the deliverables with a set of recommendations for the MoE towards implementation of 1-year quality pre-primary preparation for all 5 years old children in Turkmenistan. Finalize the report based on the comments from UNICEF and MoE.

# Workplan and deliverables

The consultancy duration is 47 working days, covering the period of 15 May 2021 – 30 Nov 2021. The distribution of days by tasks and corresponding deliverables is provided below. The consultant is expected to work home-based most of the time (39 days home-based) undertaking one country visit (8 working days in-country) during the consultancy period. In case, the above planned visit is not feasible due to the on-going COVID related limitations, the relevant tasks and deliverables under the visit will be ensured by the distance modality. The below timeline provides the estimated deadlines for completing the deliverables, considering the period that will be needed for translation, sharing of document and receipt of feedback. Depending on the progress and needs, more than 2 reviews of the documents reviewed/revised/developed may be required, which may affect the timelines.

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| Tasks | Days | Deliverables and target delivery dates  *specific delivery dates and details as to how the work must be delivered (e.g. electronic submission, hard copy), subdivided into “milestones” where appropriate* |
| 1. Conduct a desk review of the main documents that pertain to preschool including the curriculum, schedules, and any monitoring and quality assurance tools in place.  Hold skype call(s) with UNICEF and appropriate stakeholders as required. | 5 days (home based) | **25 May 2021**  Desk review report |
| 2. Prepare 1st version of the reviewed and revised existing preschool curriculum (half-day)  The half-day curriculum should ensure it is play and competency based, and supportive of half day programs. This curriculum should be flexible and address the needs of rural and urban areas. It must also address inclusion and support of children with disabilities  Prepare questions and participate in a skype call to discuss feedback and inputs from the Ministry of Education and the core group of pre-school professionals based the 1st version of the revised curriculum  Prepare 2nd version of the reviewed and revised half-day pre-primary curriculum  Hold skype call(s) with UNICEF and appropriate stakeholders as required | 22 days (home-based)  1 day (home-based)  2 day (home-based) | **20 June 2021**  1st version of the revised half-day pre-primary curriculum program for 5 years old children  **10 July 2021**  **15 July 2021**  2nd version of the revised half-day pre-primary curriculum program for 5 years old children |
| 3. Develop a draft and align a quality assurance and monitoring tool for use by the relevant staff of the Ministry of Education, Institute of Education and regional methodological centers nation-wide when visiting preschool facilities. | 5 day (home-based) | **25 July 2021**  Draft quality assurance and monitoring tool |
| 4. Finalize the half day curriculum and a quality assurance and monitoring tool based on the feedback and inputs from the core group of professionals lead by the MoE  Participate in a skype call | 1 day (home-based) | **15 August 2021**  Finalized quality assurance and monitoring tool |
| 5. In-country visit to:  - conduct meetings with UNICEF and the partners  - visit to selected pre-school facilities in Ashgabat city/Akhal velayat, observe and collect information on the initial implementation of the half-day pre-primary curriculum  - training to provide guidance to the selected group of key professionals nation-wide led by the Ministry of Education on the use of the half-day pre-primary curriculum and quality assurance and monitoring tool  - participate in a round table, led and coordinated by MoE, and make presentation (PPP) on on the revised half day pre-primary curriculum and quality assurance and monitoring for pre-primary provision  If the above planned visit is not feasible due to the on-going limitations, facilitate a series of online meetings and training to provide guidance to the selected group of key professionals nation-wide led by the Ministry of Education on the use of the half-day pre-primary curriculum and quality assurance and monitoring tool. | 8 days (in-country)  Travel dates: 17 – 28 October 2021  **OR**  8 days (home-based) in October 2021 | **17 – 28 October 2021**  Meetings, visits to pre-school facilities in Ashgabat/Akhal velayat, Training programme, materials and training delivered  Presentation and discussions at the round table  **11 – 22 October 2021**  Online meetings and training |
| 6. Provide a draft final report on the deliverables with a set of recommendations for the MoE towards implementation of 1-year quality pre-primary preparation for all 5 years old children in Turkmenistan.  Finalize the report based on the comments from UNICEF and MoE. | 3 days (home-based) | **1 November 2021**  Draft final report on the deliverables with a set of recommendations for the MoE towards implementation of 1-year quality pre-primary preparation for all 5 years old children in Turkmenistan.  **15 November 2021**  Finalized final report based on the comments from UNICEF and MoE |

# Reporting requirements

All the reports and documents will be developed in English and translated by UNICEF, as needed.

# Payment schedule

The payment will be made in instalments, according to the following schedule.

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| **Deliverable** |
| * First installment: 01/07/2021, upon satisfactory provision of *the desk review report and 1st version of the revised curriculum (tasks 1 and 2).* The installment will include 27 consultancy days. |
| * Final installment: 30/11/20201 upon satisfactory provision of *the finalized curriculum, quality assurance and monitoring tool, deliverables under the planned visit to the country or a series of online meetings and training on the use of curriculum and quality assurance and monitoring tool, and the final report with agreed recommendations (tasks 3, 4, 5 and 6)*. The installment will include 20 consultancy days + costs of the trip to Turkmenistan (if fulfilled) as per agreed budget |

# Work arrangements

Day to day supervision will be provided by the Early Childhood Development Specialist of the UNICEF Turkmenistan Country Office. Additional guidance and lead will be provided by the Deputy Representative.

UNICEF will regularly communicate with the selected consultant and provide formats for reports, feedback and guidance on performance and all other necessary support so as to achieve objectives of the exercise, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to expert’s performance and quality of work. UNICEF will provide logistical support for the in-country trip, such as provision of office space, vehicle for site visits and official meetings, organisation and coordination of meetings, interpretation and translation and support with obtaining visa and registration, once in-country.

The selected consultant will make own arrangements for the travel. Travel costs for the trip in this consultancy should be estimated and included into the proposal (lump sum and break down by budget lines) along with the requested daily fee.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Travel costs not actually incurred due to travel mission cancellation, delays, contract termination or modification are subject to deduction from final contract amount.

Before you leave for Turkmenistan, you need to obtain a valid visa and/or the Letter of Invitation (LoI) - official visa support letter (VSL) approved by the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan to enter the country. Before visiting Turkmenistan, ensure that your national passport is valid for at least six (6) months at the time of applying for a LoI.

The request for the LoI should be sent at least three (3) weeks before planned arrival. It should contain a copy of valid passport with the following details: full name, passport No., citizenship, date of birth (DOB), date of passport issue, date of expiration (DOE), purpose of visit, occupation, and the period of the stay.

The conditions for the registration depend on the type of passport.

# General Terms and Conditions

UNICEF’s general terms and conditions will apply to the contract awarded to the vendor. Please note that, in the evaluation of the technical merits of each proposal, UNICEF will take into consideration any proposed amendments to the UNICEF General Terms and Conditions. Proposed amendments to the UNICEF general terms and conditions may negatively affect the evaluation of the technical merits of the proposal.

UNICEF retains the right to patent and intellectual rights, as well as copyright and other similar intellectual property rights for any discoveries, inventions, products or works arising specifically from the implementation of the project in cooperation with UNICEF. The right to reproduce or use materials shall be transferred with a written approval of UNICEF based on the consideration of each separate case. Consultant should always refer to UNICEF Turkmenistan support in developing the materials when publishing the results of the research conducted while in Turkmenistan in academic journals, books and websites.

In the event of unsatisfactory performance, UNICEF reserves the right to terminate the Agreement. In case of partially satisfactory performance, such as serious delays causing the negative impact on meeting the programme objectives, low quality or insufficient depth and/or scope of the assignment completion, UNICEF is entitled to decrease the payment by the range from 30% to 50% of the contract value as decided jointly by the Contract Supervisor and Operations Manager.

# Qualifications and Skills Required

* Advanced university degree in the area of education, curriculum development, teacher training and supervision, capacity building and / or international development with focus and specialization in education and early childhood;
* Demonstrated extensive professional work experience in the area of national curriculum development, curricula reviews/revisions/assessments, monitoring and quality assurance in early learning, pre-primary and primary education;
* Knowledge of the regional (Central Asia) and national pre-school and pre-primary education sector and previous experience of working in Turkmenistan would be an advantage;
* Knowledge of and excellent writing skills in English, knowledge of Russian would be an asset;

# Technical Proposal

The technical proposal should include

* A cover letter, including
  + Assessment of suitability vis-à-vis the requirements of this ToR;
  + A summary of experience in similar assignments;
  + Links to/attachments of examples of similar work;
* Comments and suggestions on the ToR and proposed workplan and deliverables
* CV of the candidate (including qualifications and experience)
* References

# Financial Proposal

Candidates are expected to submit a lump sum financial proposal to complete the entire assignment based on the terms of reference. The lump sum should be broken down to show the detail for the following:

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| **Items** | **Quantity** | **Unit cost** | **Total in USD** |
| Number of working days | 47 |  |  |
| Return ticket cost to and from Ashgabat | 1 |  |  |
| Living costs  (per diem for approx. 12 calendar days in Turkmenistan) |  |  |  |
| Other: *Specify* |  |  |  |
| Total in USD |  |  |  |

Please note that i) travel costs shall be calculated based on economy class fare regardless of the length of travel and ii) costs for accommodation, meals and incidentals shall not exceed the applicable daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, as propagated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). Details can be found at <http://icsc.un.org>

# Evaluation criteria

Each proposal will be assessed first on its technical merits and subsequently on its price. In making the final decision, UNICEF considers both technical and financial aspects to ensure best value for money. The Evaluation Team first reviews the technical aspects of the offer, followed by review of the financial offers of the technically compliant candidates. The proposal obtaining the highest overall score after adding the scores for the technical and financial proposals together, that offers the best value for money will be recommended for award of the contract.

A cumulative analysis will be used to evaluate and award proposals. The evaluation criteria associated with this TOR is split between technical and financial as follows:

75 % Technical

25 % Financial

100 % Total

1. *UNICEF is not covering any travel-related insurance (whether for health, third-party liability, accident or otherwise) nor does it provide any insurance coverage for this consultancy. The consultant is solely and fully responsibly for (and UNICEF will not be liable for) (a) any insurance coverage which may be necessary or desirable for the purposes of travel and (b) any and all liability, costs, expenses and claims arising out of or related to consultancy travel. Consultant must travel on UNICEF-approved airlines.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)