

UNICEF Moldova

Terms of Reference

Individual Consultancy on Public Finance for the Development of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the Cross-sectoral Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies, 2016-2022

Duration and timeline: 27 working days (within a six-month period July 2017 – December 2017)

1. Background

Positive and supportive parenting is essential for the physical and mental development and well-being of children from early years, throughout childhood and adolescence and into adulthood. Children who grow in a secure, loving and nurturing home environment are better able to withstand life's challenges and achieve their full potential. Consistent positive parenting helps to develop strong self-control, reduces risks and builds the resilience to cope with setbacks and has long-term benefits for children, communities and the country as a whole. In contrast, research proves that poor parenting practices are associated with adolescent emotional and behavioural problems.

Research findings¹ indicate that there is a need to improve parenting skills in Moldova. A 2009 ECCD KAP study² highlights little progress in the number of families applying positive care practices. While the indicator on parents playing with their children reached level over 90%, two others indicators on parents knowing danger signs (83% in 2003 versus 81% in 2009) and regularly reading to children (30% in 2009 versus 37% in 2003) have shown reversed trends. Only 5% of families consider that children with disabilities should attend the kindergarten and no more than 46% of families would allow their children to play with a child who has a disability. More than 20% of families are not accepting the disabilities of their own children and prefer to keep them in boarding schools. Physical punishment is widespread, with children under 1 year being beaten in 16% of cases and 6-7 year old children in 57% of cases.

Parents face additional problems in their communication with the teenagers. Adolescence is a critical time of human development, when young people develop the skills they need to make a living, raise a family, maintain a circle of supportive friends and meet other challenges of

¹ National Survey on Early Childhood Care and Development: Family Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices, Government of the Republic of Moldova/UNICEF, Chisinau 2010

² National Survey on Early Childhood Care and Development: Family Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices, Government of the Republic of Moldova/UNICEF, Chisinau 2010

life. Adolescence is also the time when many behavioural and psychological problems arise — toxic substance use, delinquency, depression, risky sexual behaviour, academic failure, and school dropout. Parents have very limited skills on how to deal with the changes in teenagers; how to deal with high-risk situations, such as drug and alcohol use and how to discuss sexuality related issues with teenagers. The data of the Study on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Adolescents³ (2012), shows that every third adolescent has learned about pregnancy related issues, contraception and STIs from the Internet, and even more of them from their peers. At the same time, adolescents are eager to receive more information on these topics from parents and professionals (health workers and teachers).

Parenting skills need to be improved among young parents as well, particularly those in rural areas or coming from disadvantaged families, as parents who lack parenting knowledge and skills, are unable to provide their children with the full necessary conditions for their adequate development. As a result, school preparedness of these children is quite low and has a direct impact on their learning outcomes, school attendance and heightens the risk of future drop-out.

More literate, educated and economically better-off parents and caregivers adopt more positive care practices compared to poorer families⁴, indicative of the need to sharpen the focus on the most vulnerable families including the Roma.

UNICEF supports the Government of the Republic of Moldova in the on-going reforms of the education, health and child protection sectors through provision of technical assistance in the elaboration and revision of developmental policies.

In order to improve care-givers' knowledge and skills on positive parenting, UNICEF supported the Government of Moldova to develop a cross-sectoral Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies, 2016-2022, which was officially approved in July 2016. Following to this, UNICEF has taken the commitment to support the development of an inter-sectoral mid-term Action Plan on Parenting.

In this context, UNICEF is seeking an experienced financial expert to provide support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) in developing and budgeting, in close coordination with other line ministries (Ministry of Finance (MF), Ministry of Labour, Social Policy and Family (MLSPF) and Ministry of Health (MoH) an inter-sectoral mid-term Action Plan on Parenting supporting the implementation of the National Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies (2016-2022) (The Parenting Strategy). The Action plan will be aligned to the provision of the Parenting Strategy, to international practices and to the Council of Europe recommendations on positive parenting^{5,6,7,8}.

³ Study on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Adolescents, UNICEF, 2012

⁴ National Survey on Early Childhood Care and Development: Family Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices, Government of the Republic of Moldova/UNICEF, Chisinau 2010

⁵ The Council of Europe defines positive parenting as "parenting behaviour based on the best interests of the child that is nurturing, empowering, non-violent and provides recognition and guidance which involves setting of boundaries to enable the full development of the child.

⁶ Council of Europe (2006). Recommendation 19 on policy to support positive parenting

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

2. Purpose of the assignment

The purpose of this individual consultancy is to provide quality technical advice and support to Ministry of Education in budgeting the activities of the cross-sectoral mid-term Action Plan (AP) to the National Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies, 2016-2022.

The Financial Expert will work in a team with the Team Leader – an expert in education and with experts in health and child protection who will be hired by UNICEF separately.

The consultancy is expected to be carried out within a six months period, starting from July 2017 and ending in December 2017, with possibility of extension as required.

3. Objectives of the consultancy

The objectives of this individual consultancy will be:

- Participate in the initial consultations with relevant stakeholders (including but not limited to Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour Social Protection and Family, and Ministry of Health) to agree on key steps for developing the Action Plan (AP) to the National Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies, 2016-2022 ;
- Analyse the cost-effectiveness and affordability of planned parenting initiatives in the Action Plan taking into consideration relevant line Ministries budget analysis and the overall analysis of the fiscal space for the three concerned Sectors – Education, Health and Social Protection;
- Develop cost simulation models for the Action Plan;
- Through consultative process, involving key technical experts from Ministry of Finance and other line ministries, develop the itemized budget of the Action Plan.

4. Details of how the work should be delivered

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the selected consultant, in close consultation with the Team Leader, expert in education and experts in health and child protection, with the Ministry of Finance, and under the guidance of UNICEF will:

- Familiarize with the cross-sectoral Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies, 2016-2022 and Draft Action Plan;
- Familiarize itself with Law no. 181 from 25.07.2014 on Public Finances and Fiscal Responsibilities of the Republic of Moldova, including key budgeting principles applied in the Republic of Moldova, the structure of the national public budget and intergovernmental relations and the budget process⁹;
- Conduct budget analysis and public expenditure reviews of the budgets of Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, including revenue and expenditures review of the State Social Insurance Fund and the compulsory Health Insurance Fund. Timeframe of budget analysis will be defined in consultation with Ministry of Finance and line ministries. Only budget lines relevant to interventions outlined in the Action Plan of the National Strategy on Parenting will be analysed. As required (to be decided in consultation with stakeholders), selected local level budgets will be analysed as well;

⁹ Ministry of Finance, <http://www.mf.gov.md/node/10455> ,
<http://demo.weblex.md/item/view/iddbtype/1/id/LPLP20140725181/specialview/1#A5>

- In view of the budgetary analysis, analyse the cost-effectiveness and affordability of the planned parenting initiatives of the Action Plan on Parenting, taking into consideration the fiscal space available;
- Develop Simulation Models for the Action Plan;
- Through a consultative process, involving key technical experts from Ministry of Finance and other line ministries, cost all activities of the Action Plan;
- Participate in consultations and participatory meetings with national and local stakeholders, including Office of the Prime Minister, State Chancellery, Parliament, and National Committee for Protection of Children Rights, academia, Civil Society Organizations, parents/caregivers, children/adolescents, private sector and United Nations Organizations;
- Participate in the validation workshop and based on received inputs from UNICEF and other stakeholders, finalize the budgeting of the Action Plan and Simulation Models to it.

The work of the consultant will start once the first draft of the Action Plan on Parenting is developed. The Consultant will report to UNICEF and Team Leader.

Monthly meeting with UNICEF will ensure quality control and will provide relevant technical and programmatic recommendations to the process and the Action Plan.

5. Deliverables and delivery dates

Nr.	Activity	Deliverables	Timeline*
1.	Familiarize with the cross-sectoral Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies, 2016-2022 and Draft Action Plan and with Law no. 181 from 25.07.2014 on Public Finances and Fiscal Responsibilities. Consultation with stakeholders	Proposed approach to budgeting and costing of the Action plan submitted to UNICEF and team leader (inception report)	5 working days
2.	Conduct budget analysis of the budgets of Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, State Social Insurance Fund, the compulsory Health Insurance Fund and fiscal space	Budget Analyses report submitted to UNICEF and team leader	6 working days

3.	Analyse the cost-effectiveness and affordability of the planned parenting initiatives of the Action Plan on Parenting Develop Simulation Models for the Action Plan	Cost effectiveness report (narrative paper) submitted to UNICEF and team leader Simulation Models	4 working days
4.	Through a consultative process budget the first draft of the Action Plan	First Draft budget of the Action Plan submitted to UNICEF and team leader	5 working days
5.	Revise the budget based on the recommendations received from UNICEF, MF, MoE, MLSPF, MoH and cross-sectorial working group on parenting chaired by the National Council for Protection of Children's Rights	Second draft budget of the Action Plan submitted to UNICEF and team leader	3 working days
6.	Participate in the validation workshop at national level	Consolidated brief paper from validation workshop submitted to UNICEF and team leader	2 working day
7.	Incorporate final amendments based on validation workshop recommendations as required	Final draft budget of the Action Plan and Simulation Models submitted in Word and Excel format submitted to UNICEF and team leader.	2 working day
	TOTAL:		27 working days

** Exact deadlines will be mutually agreed upon contract signature.*

6. Reporting requirements

The consultant will report to the ECD Officer and Team Leader, who will regularly communicate with the consultant and provide feedback and guidance on his/her performance and all other necessary support so to achieve objectives of the consultancy, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to consultant's performance and quality of work.

All activities and deliverables undertaken by the consultant shall be discussed and planned in consultation with UNICEF. The consultant is expected to deliver each component of the work plan electronically (in Word and Excel formats), in English. At each stage, the deliverable shall be sent to the ECD Officer by E-mail, with the Deputy Representative in copy.

7. Performance indicators for evaluation of results:

The performance of work will be evaluated based on the following indicators:

- Completion of tasks specified in the ToR;
- Compliance with the established deadlines for submission of deliverables;
- Quality of work;
- Demonstration of high standards in cooperation and communication with UNICEF and counterparts.

8. Qualifications and experience

- Advanced University Degree in Finance, Economics or related field. Accountancy or another professional financial qualification would also be desirable;
- Minimum of 7 years of relevant professional experience in budgeting governmental social sectors policies or programs. Budgeting of parenting governmental programs is an asset;
- Work experience in developing countries and/or CEE/CIS will be an asset;
- Experience of influencing and negotiating with senior government officials and staff of international aid agencies will be an asset;
- Experience in working with the Government of Moldova and/or UNICEF or other UN Agencies will be an asset;
- Excellent command of Romanian or Russian, both oral and written;
- Working knowledge of English is a minimum, good command of English is a strong asset, both oral and written.

9. Content of technical proposal

- Relevant experience with similar type of assignments (max 300 words)
- Proposed approach and methodology (max 1500 words), including:
 - Timeline and milestones
 - Risk and mitigation measures
 - Ethical considerations and how the consultant will address them
- Annex: Short sample or links to related work previously conducted by the consultant

In addition, please provide your *Curriculum Vitae*.

10. Content of financial proposal

The applicant should fill in the Financial Offer Template and specify the consultancy fee, per day of work, requested for the tasks described in the Terms of Reference in USD, as well as breakdown of international travel and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) costs if applicable (as specified in paragraph 14 of this ToR).

Other expenses directly related to the ToR assignments and deliverables such as: (translation/interpretation costs, local transportation etc.) may be included in the financial offer unless specified that UNICEF will cover them separately (see paragraph 14 and 15 below).

If not provided by ToR, UNICEF will not reimburse costs not directly related to the assignment. This contract does not allow payment of off-hours, medical insurance, taxes, and sick leave.

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/output is incomplete, not delivered or for failure to meet deadlines.

In case when a Moldovan resident is selected for contracting, MDL will serve as contract currency, converted at the UN exchange rate applicable at contract signature date.

Evaluation criteria for selection

The candidate is expected to reflect in the submission the qualifications, knowledge and experience related to the requirements listed above. Technical evaluation will be performed through a desk review of applications, evaluation of technical proposals, and if necessary, may be supplemented by an interview.

11. Payment schedule

The payment will be done in tranches, according to the following schedule. All deliverables must be delivered on time and to the satisfaction of UNICEF Moldova.

Deliverable (delivered according to the timeline agreed upon with UNICEF)	Proportion of payment
Inception report	20%
Budget analysis, cost effectiveness reports and simulation models	20%
Draft 1 of the budgeted Action Plan	20%
Final version of the budgeted Action Plan and Simulation Models.	40%

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/outputs are incomplete, not delivered for failure to meet deadlines.

12. Definition of supervisory arrangements

The specialist will work under the oversight of ECD Officer of UNICEF Moldova. Payments will be rendered upon successful completion of each task, as per the schedule outlined above.

13. Work location and official travel involved

The work will require local travels in order to participate in three regional consultative workshops in mutually agreed locations and in Chisinau. The consultant is expected to cover costs, arrange and schedule such visits, including transportation. The UNICEF office will facilitate introductions to key informants.

Consultant will make and pay for own international travel arrangements for arriving to Moldova including visa costs, insurance, any taxes etc.

The travel shall be based on economy class travel, regardless of the length of travel, subject to exceptional approval of business class travel by the Head of Office, for example for medical reasons when certified by UN Medical Services in New York.

The daily subsistence allowance (DSA) should not exceed fees as promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for Moldova Country Office.

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

14. Support provided by UNICEF

UNICEF will regularly communicate with the specialist and provide feedback and guidance and necessary support so to achieve objectives of the work, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to the performance and quality of work. UNICEF will provide an initial package of relevant documents and available research, and an initial list of relevant experts and counterparts to work with. UNICEF will also request relevant data – as agreed upon with the consultant – from relevant government counterparts.

15. Ethical considerations

The Contractor will ensure that the process is in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines¹⁰. The Contractor should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty while interacting with stakeholders and beneficiaries. Furthermore, the Contractor should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual information. All participants should be informed about the context and purpose of the Assessment, as well as about the confidentiality of the information shared. The Contractor is allowed to use documents and information provided only for the tasks related to these terms of reference.

¹⁰ UNEG Guidelines <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/102>