

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Bangkok, Thailand
Vacancy Announcement 2018/045

Issue Date: 6 July 2018

Closing Date: 19 July 2018

Consultancy: Review of UNICEF Field Presence in East Asia and the Pacific

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office is seeking individual consultants to undertake review and examine the value addition, strengths and weaknesses of UNICEF's field presence in five countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines and Vietnam) and one multi-country programme in East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), particularly in relation to planning and monitoring of the UNICEF country programme and the achievement of results, both in development and humanitarian settings.

Background

The East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) is a region of dynamic growth and critical change, especially given the shifting geopolitics of our time. It is home to some of the world's fastest growing economies, has a high concentration of 'innovative' economies, it already has 15 of the world's 22 megacities, and one quarter of the world's children. The demographic and societal profile of the Asia Pacific will transform in the next decade and a half, because of changing population trends, continuous urbanization, growing middle classes, and impact of climate change. By 2030, EAP will have the largest population in the world, reach urbanisation levels of over 70 percent, will account for up to 50 percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and will be home to two-thirds of the global middle class - of which 1 billion will live in China. At the same time, whilst rapid economic growth has listed millions out of extreme poverty, more than a quarter of the population remain economically vulnerable and income inequality is increasing. 80 percent of the extreme poor are spread across the three largest middle-income countries, Indonesia, China and the Philippines, and in several countries extreme poverty is concentrated amongst ethnic minorities. In addition, in some countries, such as Lao PDR, Timor Leste and Myanmar, a significant percentage of the population remains poor. With the changing landscape in EAP and the requisites of the SDG Agenda, there is a unique opportunity along with a clear expectation from partners for UNICEF to deliver on both chronic and evolving challenges.

Since its inception over 70 years ago, UNICEF prides itself as being an organization that has consistently ensured its leadership in relation to being near children and their duty bearers. With headquarters in New York, UNICEF has decentralized its activities all over the world and has put in place decentralized structures to support its country offices in EAP and other regions in order to provide better access and tailored support to most vulnerable children and women as well as to ensure rapid response and early recovery in emergency situations. This led to the establishment of a large network of zonal and antennae offices (also known as field offices), as of today, 21 in five countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam) and one multi-country office (Pacific) in the East Asia Pacific region based on a diversity of objectives, approaches and structures. Considering the wide diversity of geographical context, development status, national governance structure and the nature of UNICEF's programmes, UNICEF's field presence varies significantly across the six offices. UNICEF field presence consists in subnational offices in many countries but also presence at national level in the case of multi-country programme such as it is the case in the Pacific.

Table 1: Overview of UNICEF field presence in East Asia and the Pacific

Country	Cambodia	Indonesia	Myanmar	Pacific	Philippines	Viet Nam
# of ZO	2	5	7	5	1	1
Locations	Siem Reap Kratie	Jayapura & Manokwari Kupang Banda Aceh Surabaya Makassar & Ambon	Sittwe & Maungdaw (Rakhine) Myitkyina (Kachin) Mandalay (Dry zone) Taunggyi (Shan) Lashio (Northern Shan) Hpa-an (South East) Hakha (Chin)	Solomon Islands Kiribati Vanuatu Samoa & Micronesia	Mindanao	Ho Chi Minh

Programme delivery modalities have changed over the years in EAP, where in essence, service delivery has largely been phased out, and where country offices have invested more in evidence generation, upstream policy advocacy and influencing, including at the subnational level. With the gradual shift toward more ‘upstream’ programmes (focused on policy influence), the purpose and roles of zone offices have gradually evolved in some cases, maintaining the focus on delivering results. However, there are challenges ranging from communication, management, recognition, inclusion and/or participation in planning, reporting, monitoring, partnership building, among others. In addition, the nature and structure of UNICEF field presence varies significantly across offices, with clear set of structure, accountability, and roles adopted across the region.

In the past few years, several studies and evaluations have been conducted in different regions including a Latin America (*Evaluation of UNICEF Programming at Subnational Level in Latin America*, 2011), and in MENA (*Mapping and Analysis of UNICEF’s Field Presence Models*, 2016) on UNICEF’s subnational presence. These studies have identified the following potential benefits of field presence through zone office:

- Improved situational awareness as information gathering can benefit from a bottom-up awareness of conditions.
- Advocacy and capacity development opportunities with local counterparts and partners. This includes allowing the option of a bottom-up advocacy strategy to complement a national advocacy strategy.
- Good results in remote local areas have a greater capacity to influence replication at national level, and local offices assist in this process.
- A local presence cements local alliances and reduces programme risk, both through closer communication, better information gathering, and through the ability to undertake more effective programme monitoring.
- Local offices can better facilitate the identification of local problems and challenges as well as generation of location-specific ideas and solutions.
- A physical presence in certain cases can add credibility to UNICEF’s mandate, both with government and with civil society organizations.
- Emergency preparedness.
- A local presence helps to address and to advertise the needs of marginalized children in remote areas or in areas receiving little or no central government attention. Zone offices therefore provide an equity based imperative.
- A local office enables UNICEF staff members to develop an increased awareness and sensitivity to local cultural issues.
- Increased visibility for UNICEF, which is helpful in assisting with donor visits and reports, in addition to assisting in fundraising by added credibility at the fundraising stage with donors

However, the studies found that programme implementation through zone offices can be perceived as costly, resource intensive and challenging to manage.

In 2006 the EAP Regional Office (EAPRO) commissioned an *"Inquiry into UNICEF's Sub-National Structures and Functioning in the East Asia & Pacific Region"*, which examined the potential and given reasons for the establishment of zone offices in the region and concluded that there were ten commonly cited criteria (see annex 1), with the most important being the state of development of the country (as the weaker the government capacity the greater requirement for UNICEF intervention and a physical presence) and the degree of decentralization of fiscal and political government. The report concluded that "any decision on whether or not to establish, close or modify a sub-national presence must be based on an objective analysis which must be country specific". A 2014 *Formative Evaluation of UNICEF's Engagement in Decentralization Process in Indonesia* recommended that UNICEF should engage more closely with sub-national planning and budgeting processes, to help leverage the vast amounts of resources available at sub-national levels in support of child rights programmes.

In the context of stronger results-based management and the evolving role of UNICEF in the region, the Regional Management Team decided to undertake a mapping and a review of UNICEF's experience with zone offices in the region. The review will contribute to better understand the different approaches to subnational presence in the region and identify ways to improve its effectiveness and efficiency, particularly in relation to its contribution to the achievement of results for both development and humanitarian programming.

The purpose of the review is to:

1. Map the role, accountabilities, structure, and overall management of the zone offices (work planning, monitoring, advocacy, etc.) and analyze their respective strengths and weaknesses in supporting the achievement of programme results, particularly understanding the diversity of experience across the region (including geographical context, development status, national governance structure and the nature of UNICEF's programmes);
2. Assess the value-addition of zone offices as well as the strengths and weaknesses in the structure and of the management of the field presence in the region, particularly as it relates to the achievement of results, both in development and humanitarian settings;
3. Make recommendations on ways to strengthen the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNICEF subnational presence in the region.

The review will aim to answer the following overall key questions:

- To what extent the rationale, structure, profile and function of the zone offices consistent with the strategic intent of the Country Programme?
- To what extent and how has UNICEF's field presence contributed to the achievement of programme results? What are the key factors supporting the zone offices' contribution to results? Where the zone offices' contribution to results are weak, what are the barriers to success?
- To what extent are the zone office models the most appropriate model for field presence?
- To what extent the accountabilities of zone office are clear and then adequate management structure and processes are in place to best leverage their role?
- To what extent the management and oversight of zone offices is effective, efficient and ensure their contribution to results?
- To what extent are zone offices empowered with the necessary resources, authority and capacities to effectively and efficiently fulfil their accountabilities?
- To what extent do the management, structure, work processes and internal communication of the country office ensure effective and efficient coordination between the zone offices and the country office?
- What are the key risks and opportunities associated with UNICEF's field presence in EAP?
- How could the capacity of zone office could be strengthened?

Specific Review Questions

Advocacy:

- To what extent UNICEF's field presence has contributed to prioritization of children's issues in subnational policies, plans and budget?
- To what extent UNICEF's field presence contribute to national level policy advocacy efforts?
- To what extent do effective channels of communication and knowledge sharing exist between the zone and country offices to ensure effective inclusion and participation of zone offices in decision making?
- In the case of the Pacific, to what extent field presence has contributed to UNICEF advocacy and programme implementation at national level?

Partnerships and UN coherence:

- What do government (national and sub-national representatives/counterparts) and other key partners think about UNICEF field presence, comparative advantage and complementarities?
- What do key partners at national and sub-national level think about UNICEF ability to achieve results for children by using a mix of upstream policy work with downstream interventions?
- To what extent has UNICEF's field presence contributed to strengthen UNICEF credibility at national and subnational level and led to stronger partnerships with government counterparts, civil society actors and private sector partners?
- To what extent UNICEF field presence is coordinated with other UN agencies? Have these efforts been discussed as part of the UNDAF? Have these efforts contributed to joint programming and stronger UN coherence as well as strengthen UNICEF ability to achieve results?
- To what extent Joint Presence Office, as part of a long term strategy by the UN to strengthen aid coordination, joint programming contributes to bring a stronger focus to the achievement of the SDGs in the Pacific particularly for small island developing states (SIDS) setting?

Situation and programme monitoring:

- To what extent the zone offices effectively and efficiently contribute to the monitoring of the situation at national and subnational levels? How effective and efficient are the mechanisms for information sharing across the zone offices and the programme sections? To what extent programme sections call on to the zone office to provide information on the situation at subnational level?
- To what extent UNICEF field presence has contributed to better identify the most vulnerable groups, understand their needs and address the key barriers and bottlenecks hampering their access to essential services?
- To what extent zone offices are involved in monitoring both programme implementation and results?
- To what extent effective and efficient mechanisms are in place within the office to manage zone office inputs into programme monitoring (collecting data/information, analysis and feedback)?
- To what extent zone offices are identifying local innovations and ideas, which are piloted and then brought to scale?
- How efficiently and effectively do zone offices collect, manage, analyze and share data and information? How efficiently and effectively does the country office compile, analyze and use the data and information provided by zone offices?
- To what extent do the zone office participate and contribute to programme review?

Work planning, review and accountabilities:

- To what extent UNICEF efforts at national/subnational level have been clearly articulated as part of the programme development (CPD and Programme Strategy Notes)?
- At what level of programme design is the contribution to results of zone office as well as their task/activities are articulated (result structure, work plan activity, sub-activity, etc.)?

- To what extent review and reporting of zone office activities is articulated in UNICEF overall results reporting at national level?
- Are the key role, functions and accountabilities of zone offices agreed, understood and supported across the country office?
- Are the current activities, processes, and functions cost-efficient?
- Is the current structure sustainable considering current & projected developments in context, needs & financial support?
- To what extent are field offices involved in the identification and documentation of best practices, and in advocacy for further replication or scale-up across the country?

Humanitarian response:

To what extent field presence has ensured a more effective and efficient emergency response?

Work Assignment, Work Schedule and Deliverables:

Task	Deliverable	Tentative Dates
1. Mapping and document analysis	Inception report, including overall mapping and analysis of UNICEF subnational presence in EAP	31 st July 2018
2. Interviews and field visits	Draft findings of the strengths and weaknesses of UNICEF subnational presence and presentation to the Chief of Field Office Network Meeting	5 th October 2018
3. Draft report	Draft report including draft recommendations	9 th November 2018
4. Final report	Final draft reports including feedback/comments received	20 th November 2018
5. Presentation of findings	Present the findings of the review at the Regional meeting of Chief of Field Offices	30 th November 2018

1. Mapping and document analysis

The focus of this phase will be to map the various field presence business models in the region, including: staffing structure, reporting lines, roles, functions and responsibilities, capacity, management and information systems and processes (planning, monitoring, reporting, etc.), level of result definition at subnational level, etc. This will be mainly done through document review provided by the relevant country offices. The consultant will also meet with various key stakeholders at regional level to better frame the scope and approach to this Review.

2. Interviews and field visits

The second phase of the exercise will consist in meeting with key stakeholders in relevant country offices as well as visit zone offices. It will also include interviews and focus group discussion with office staff, key partners, counterparts and other stakeholders. The consultants will be expected to visit at least three of the country offices and in each case at least one zone office. The objective of this phase will be to better understand the key strengths and weaknesses of UNICEF's field presence as it supports the implementation of key programme strategies. Field visits will be closely coordinated with the six UNICEF offices involved in the review.

3. Drafting of reporting and consultation on recommendations

In the third phase, the consultant will finalize the analysis and start identifying key recommendations for strengthening the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of UNICEF subnational presence in the region. This will be discussed at the regional PME and Chief of Field Offices network meeting at the end of October 2018.

Estimated Duration of Contract: July – November 2018

Official Travel: 4 to 6 country offices in the East Asia and the Pacific region

Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required:

- Master's degree or higher in international development or social science.
- At least 10 years' professional experience in international development, with experience of working in or supporting zonal offices required and experience in fragile contexts an asset.
- At least 10 years' experience in conducting evaluations and reviews.
- Familiarity with UNICEF structure, mandate, priorities and programming is an asset.
- Track record in producing similar analysis, evaluation and reviews.
- Good knowledge of socio-economic context in the EAPR countries.
- Proven strong quantitative and qualitative analytical skills.
- Excellent communication and writing skills.
- Proficient use of Excel and Access or other database tools to compile data.
- Fluency in English.

Interested candidates are requested to submit CV or P-11, full contact information of minimum 2 references, availability, and proposed professional fee for all deliverables in USD by **19 July 2018**.

Only short listed candidates will be notified.