



TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANTS AND INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTORS
Syria Country Office

TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT:

☒ Consultant

ASSIGNMENT SOURCE:

☐ National

☒ International

TITLE OF THE CONSULTANT/CONTRACTOR: Consultancy to conduct a synthesis of available data and evidence to inform the prevention of stunting strategy in Syria.

SECTION IN CHARGE: Nutrition

BACKGROUND (RATIONALE AND CONTEXT):

By 2018, Syria was on track to achieve the sustainable development goal (SDG) of reducing by half the number of children affected by stunting by 2030. However, data from World Health Organization (WHO, 2023) Global Health Observatory (GHO) shows that the 13 years of the conflict have had a devastating impact on the nutrition situation of children leading to the reversal of the gains of the previous investment on stunting reduction. Findings from the 2023 SMART survey corroborate the WHO trend, revealing a dramatic increase in the proportion of stunted children from 12% in 2019 to 16% in 2023. If efforts to reduce stunting are not accelerated, Syria is likely to miss the SDG target on stunting and a devastating blow to the physical and cognitive development of children and their ability to learn and contribute to the economic recovery of the country. Since 2021, Syria has experienced a relative calm in hostilities. On this basis, the humanitarian community in Syria is contemplating a transition from humanitarian programming to early recovery and restoration. With regards to the nutrition program, the transition entails developing a strategy to prevent of all forms of malnutrition and in particular stunting among children aged under five years. The strategy should take into consideration the fact that the prolonged conflict has directly and indirectly contributed to soaring poverty leaving 90% of Syrians living under USD \$3.65 per capita per day. This situation has reduced the ability of caregivers to uphold positive care practices and their ability to afford nutritious diet for young children. Further, the 2023 SMART survey showed that nearly 7 out of 10 children live in food poverty meaning that they are fed four or fewer food groups compared to the recommended minimum of 5 out of 8 food groups. In 2023, it is estimated that nearly 50% of the primary health care infrastructure is partially closed or not functioning due to damages caused by the conflict thereby limiting access to essential health services by the most vulnerable.

Against this backdrop, UNICEF Syria Country Office (SCO) is embarking on developing an evidence-based strategic vision of nutrition programming during the transition phase and beyond with a focus on stunting prevention. While over the last 13 years there has been no large-scale population-based survey conducted in Syria, some partners have carried out small-scale subnational surveys and studies which are not consolidated in a national database. In this regard, UNICEF is seeking the services of a consultant to collate all the available knowledge and data, conduct a detailed analysis and synthesize the outcome to inform the long-term stunting prevention agenda in Syria. Where applicable, knowledge and data from neighboring countries with similar context can be leverage as a proxy.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONTRACT (PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT):

The purpose of the assignment is to support UNICEF Syria Country office to achieve the following objectives.

1. To undertake secondary data analysis of recently published publicly available data relevant to nutrition programming for women and children in the context of Syria.
2. To conduct literature review of recent peer review publications on the nutrition of women and children relevant to the Syrian context
3. To summarize the outcome of the above objectives using compelling state of the art visual methods and narrative reports to inform the stunting prevention agenda of the country office.

Reasons why assignment cannot be done by staff:

The nutrition section does not have a dedicated IM staff. The type of assignment is beyond the capacity of the available staff in the section. The deliverables are required within a short timeframe to inform the roll out of the stunting prevention agenda of the office by August 2024.

Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan: ☒ Yes ☐ No , please justify:

Output 1.1 Activity 1.1.3 of the 2024 AWP of the H&N section is dedicated to evidence generation. Stunting reduction is a priority in the regional acceleration strategy while evidence generation to inform stunting reduction is a SCO Management priority as per the February CMT. A dedicated budget in the Global Thematic Fund for Nutrition Grant is earmarked for this activity.

LOCATION (GEOGRAPHIC AREA/ DUTY STATION): (Remote Assignment / Damascus Syria)

On-site working days: None – remote assignment

Off-site working days: 65 days

Field Missions/Travel: None

DURATION:

Estimated Start Date: 1st May 2024

Estimated End Date: 31st August 2024

The selected consultant will work for the period of 65 workdays within 4 months. All workdays will be out of country. The exact schedule of the activities will be agreed with the consultant based on the consultancy implementation progress. The deadline for submission of final deliverables to UNICEF is at the end of the contract.

SUPERVISOR: The consultant will be supervised and report to the UNICEF Syria **Nutrition Manager**. The consultant will work on daily basis with the **Nutrition Section**.

CONSULTANT/CONTRACTOR SELECTION METHOD: (Please specify)

☐ Competitive Selection (Roster) ☒ Competitive Selection (Advertisement/Desk review/Interview ☐ Others (Single sourcing)

CHILD SAFEGUARDING:

Is this project/assignment considered as “[Elevated Risk Role](#)” from a child safeguarding perspective?

☐ Yes ☒ No If Yes, check all that apply:

Direct contact role: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:

Child data role: ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information of children (name, national ID, location data, photos):

The consultant will conduct secondary analysis of publicly available data which has no personal identification information

More information is available in the [Child Safeguarding SharePoint](#) and [Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates](#)

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENT (TASKS, SMART DELIVERABLES, DEADLINES):

Tasks/Milestone	End Products/ Deliverables	Duration/ Deadline	Estimate Budget
Undertake an exhaustive literature search for peer review publication on the nutrition of women and children in Syria.	One detailed PowerPoint presentation with a visual summary of the outcome of the literature search	15 working days. End Product to be delivered 4 weeks from the signing of the contract.	daily rate x 15 days
Conduct secondary nutrition data analysis of publicly available data on the nutrition of women and children for Syria.	One detailed PowerPoint presentation with a visual summary of the outcome of the secondary data analysis	35 working days. End Product to be delivered 8 weeks after the submission of the first deliverable	daily rate x 35 days
Synthesize the evidence using innovative state of the art visual methods and narrative reports.	One narrative report detailing the methods and outcome of the analysis and its relevance to the stunting reduction agenda	15 working days. End Product to be delivered 4 weeks after the submission of the second deliverable	daily rate x 15 days

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS (IF APPLICABLE):**ICT CONSIDERATIONS (PLEASE CHECK IF APPLICABLE):**

☐ Access to electronic Information Resources ☐ UNICEF email ID ☐ ICT Hardware

(please specify the business need): _____

TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS (PLEASE CHECK IF APPLICABLE):

☒ None ☐ Commencement travel ☐ Mission travel (schedule/itinerary required):

Should “mission travel” be required, UNICEF will manage and pay for travel via Travel Authorization. However, this will be subject to the following prerequisites: Medical Clearance, Security Clearance through the Travel Request Information Process (TRIP) system, the Basic and Advanced Security in the Field Trainings, Travel Visa, and liability waiver.

Travel cost shall be calculated based on economy class travel, regardless of the length of travel. Costs for accommodation, meals and incidentals shall not exceed applicable daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, as promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC at <http://icsc.un.org>). The consultant must travel on UNICEF approved airlines.

Remark:

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 (unless it is a full time Individual Contract, where the contractor is eligible for Paid Time Off and paid UN official Holidays) or 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.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

I. Academic qualifications:

Master’s degree or PhD in Public Health/Nutrition, Nutrition Epidemiology, Statistics, or a related field.

A first-level university degree with additional 2 years of required relevant experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.

II. Work experience / Technical competencies:

- A minimum of 8years of experience in conducting primary data collection or secondary data analysis and documenting public health and nutrition work at national and international level is required. Publication on stunting, IYCF, and other nutrition issues is an asset.
- Demonstrates experience in data analytics and synthesis to inform decision making.
- Demonstrates excellent writing skills, and strong communication, in particular for the development of technical documents is essential.
- Demonstrates experience and knowledge of the latest developments and issues related to public health nutrition is essential.

III. Language requirement:

Fluency in English (both written and verbal) is required

EVALUATION PROCESS (OF APPLICATIONS):

Qualified candidates are requested to submit:

1. Applications through UNICEF's Talent Management System (TMS)
2. Cover Letter
3. CV.
4. Financial quote as lump sum for professional fees only
5. Examples of previous work/proposed methodology/approach to managing the project
6. At least 3 Referees from Direct Supervisors

Shortlisted applicants may be invited for further technical assessment. Final recommendation will be made based on "best value for money", i.e. the hiring section/office shall normally select the individual who quoted the lowest fee from among the candidates who are assessed as suitable for achieving all tasks on time, as per the criteria stipulated in this ToR, and based on the outcome of the evaluation/assessment conducted.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

Select proposed methodology: By Deliverable

The payment of professional fees will be made in three installments, as indicated in the Description of Assignment schedule, against the submission of the deliverables and UNICEF acceptance and approval.

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.