**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS**

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| **Title:** **Consultant to support the review of the South Asia Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage**  | **Funding Code:** WBS: 297R/A0/11/203/001/005, Grant: SC160258  | **Type of engagement**[x]  Consultant  | **Duty Station:**Home-based |
| **Purpose of Activity/Assignment:**  Under the coordination of SAIEVAC, and with support from UNICEF ROSA and SACG[[1]](#footnote-1) members, the consultant will provide technical assistance to update the South Asia Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage for the period 2025 – 2030. The consultant will develop tools to facilitate consultations on child marriage and provide technical support in updating the regional action plan.  |
| **Introduction and scope of the work** **Introduction**Child marriage, despite substantial reductions, remains a pervasive issue in South Asia. The region is home to approximately 290 million child brides, accounting for 45 percent of all child brides globally. The prevalence of child marriage varies considerably not only between countries but also within them, reflecting diverse cultural, economic, and social dynamics. For instance, rural areas often see higher rates of child marriage compared to urban areas, and marginalized communities are disproportionately affected. Child marriage violates the fundamental rights of children, undermining international commitments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It profoundly impacts the health, education, and overall well-being of child brides and grooms, their families, and communities. Child marriage often leads to adolescent pregnancy, which poses serious health risks for young girls, including increased maternal and infant morbidity and mortality rates. Child brides are also more likely to experience domestic violence and face restrictions on their education and economic opportunities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality. Furthermore, child marriage has broader implications for the society as a whole. It hinders national development goals by limiting educational attainment and workforce participation, thereby affecting economic growth. Ending child marriage requires a multi-faceted approach that involves legal and policy actions, multi-sectoral programme interventions, and the empowerment of young people including adolescent girls and boys, their families and communities. Governments, civil society organizations, and international organizations must work together to implement effective strategies that challenge harmful social norms and provide alternatives to child marriage, such as access to quality education and economic opportunities. While progress has been made in reducing child marriage in South Asia, the issue remains a significant barrier to achieving gender equality and improving the lives of millions of children and young people, their families and communities. Continued efforts are essential to accelerate the progress observed to end child marriage.Child Marriage is one of the five thematic areas of SAIEVAC’s [[2]](#footnote-2)work, and its five-year work plan includes indicators aimed at effectively addressing this issue. Recognising child marriage as a violation of human rights, governments in the region have been taking legal, policy, and programme measures. To support these efforts, SAIEVAC adopted the Regional Action Plan (RAP) to End Child Marriage[[3]](#footnote-3) as well as the Kathmandu Call for Action in South Asia[[4]](#footnote-4), as outcomes of a series of meetings and consultations.The second phase of the RAP (2018 – 2023) encompasses the following outcomes as priority areas of focus for the 8 Countries of South Asia:* Effective enactment, enforcement and use of national policy and legal instruments to increase the minimum age of marriage for (both boys and girls) to 18.
* Improved equal access to quality education, particularly secondary education.
* Increased mobilization of girls, boys, parents, media, religious and community leaders to change harmful gender norms and practices.
* Increased prevention of child marriage by addressing its root causes and creating alternative social, economic and civic opportunities for girls.
* Existing and new evidence collected on status of married girls below 18 years, and on good programme practices to address their rights and needs.
* Enhanced advocacy to mobilize action and support for girls who are already married (through options for schooling, sexual and reproductive health information and services, including HIV prevention, livelihoods skills and recourse from violence in the home).
* Improved monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of programmes to end child marriage in South Asia.

As the RAP concluded in 2023, SAIEVAC and SACG are working together to update the regional action plan based on progress made and the evolving context of child marriage in South Asia. This consultancy will support the government led national consultations as well as the regional consultation that will be supported by the SACG. The consultant will work with SAIEVAC and SACG in their efforts to update the regional action plan. The review process will be led by Governments at the national level, and coordinated by SAIEVAC at the regional level. **Scope of work**Under the coordination of SAIEVAC, and with support from SACG members, the consultant will provide technical assistance to update the regional action plan for the period 2025 – 2030. The consultant will develop tools to facilitate consultations and contribute technical support in updating the regional action plan. The consultant will work with diverse partners to ensure a collaborative approach and positive working relationships. **The scope of work includes**: 1. **Develop a background paper**: building on review of latest evidence on child marriage approaches, strategies, trends, progress, investments and lessons from programmes, the consultant will develop a background paper to inform the review process.
2. **Support the development of RAP review tools:** develop tools to facilitate the review of country-level progress against RAP indicators using secondary data and interviews with key partners. Consultations will be organized at both national and regional levels, to gather insights from stakeholders, including children and adolescents whose views will be integrated into the review. The consultant, with guidance from SAIEVAC and the TWG will develop a common framework and set of questions for national consultations with children and stakeholders.
3. **Document key inputs:** summarisekey findings from national consultations to inform the RAP update.
4. **Identify key areas for the RAP revision**: draft recommendations for the RAP update based on the desk review and consultations. These could include:
	1. Priority areas for accelerating change on addressing child marriage in South Asia. These priority areas will be thrust areas for the updated RAP strategies.
	2. Focus on emerging areas such as online safety, climate change, and humanitarian crises (including the impacts of flooding in Pakistan and Bangladesh).
	3. Alignment with SDG targets and other regional commitments such as SAARC action plan on adolescent pregnancy.
5. **Support regional consultations**: support the organization of a regional online workshop and consolidating feedback from SACG and other key stakeholders.
6. **Validation and dissemination;** this includes:
	1. Develop a concept note and tool to facilitate regional consultations.
	2. Support SAIEVAC to organise a regional consultation with key stakeholders including SAARC secretariat, government stakeholders, civil society, UN agencies, researchers and other experts.
	3. Consolidate inputs from the regional consultations.
	4. Support SAIEVAC in the finalisation of updated the action plan based on stakeholder feedback.
7. **Monitoring and reporting:** Develop monitoring and reporting tools to track progress on the implementation of the updated action plan.

A detailed action plan will be developed in consultation with SACG members. |
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| **Child Safeguarding** Is this project/assignment considered as “[Elevated Risk Role](https://unicef.sharepoint.com/sites/DHR-ChildSafeguarding/DocumentLibrary1/Guidance%20on%20Identifying%20Elevated%20Risk%20Roles_finalversion.pdf?CT=1590792470221&OR=ItemsView)” from a child safeguarding perspective?        [ ]    YES    [x]    NO     If YES, check all that apply:                                                                                                                                                     **Direct contact role**[ ]  YES     [x]   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:

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 **Child data role**[ ]  YES    [x]   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):

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More information is available in the [Child Safeguarding SharePoint](https://unicef.sharepoint.com/sites/DHR-ChildSafeguarding/SitePages/Amendments-to-the-Recruitment-Guidance.aspx) and [Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates](https://unicef.sharepoint.com/sites/DHR-ChildSafeguarding/DocumentLibrary1/Child%20Safeguarding%20FAQs%20and%20Updates%20Dec%202020.pdf)   |

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| **Budget Year:** | **Requesting Section/Issuing Office:** | **Reasons why consultancy cannot be done by staff:** |
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| **Budget Year: 2024**  | **Requesting Section/Issuing Office: Child Protection**  | **Reasons why consultancy cannot be done by staff:**  As the RAP concluded in 2023, SAIEVAC and SACG are working together to update the action plan based on progress made and evolving context of South Asia. A desk review will be undertaken to inform the necessary updates to the RAP. This consultancy will support the government led national consultations as well as the regional consultation that will be supported by the SACG. The consultant will work with SAIEVAC and SACG in their efforts to update of the regional action plan. The review process will be led by Governments at the national level, and coordinated by SAIEVAC at the regional level.The scope of work requires engagement across multiple partners, making it essential to have a dedicated individual who can focus on coordination and ensure consistency across stakeholders. It will foster collaboration and balanced inputs and ownership across agencies. The work also requires specialized expertise to develop tools to guide children’s consultations and multi-agency consultations and consolidate the outcomes of these consultations to inform the update of the regional action plan. This will also allow CP team to maintain focus on key responsibilities of managing the partnership and technical assistance while the consultant addresses specific needs that will be coming with the process of revising the regional action plan.  |
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| **Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan***:* [x]  Yes [ ]  No, please justify: |
| **Consultant sourcing:**[ ]  National [x]  International [ ]  Both**Competitive Selection:**[x]  Advertisement [ ]  [ ]  Roster **Single Source Selection** [ ]  (Emergency - Director’s approval) | **Request for:**[x]  New SSA – Individual Contract[ ]  Extension/ Amendment |
| **If Extension, Justification for extension:** |
| **Supervisor: Belete Birara, Child Protection Specialist**  | **Start Date: 15 December 2024** | **End Date: 31 August 2025** |
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| **Work Assignments Overview** |  |  |  |
| **Tasks/Milestone** | **Deliverables/Outputs** | **Delivery deadline** | **Estimated Budget** |
| Building on review of latest evidence on child marriage approaches, strategies, trends, progress, investments and lessons from large scale programmes, the consultant will develop a background paper to inform the review process. | **Background paper on ending child marriage**  |  |  |
| Develop tools to facilitate the review of country-level progress against RAP indicators using secondary data and interviews. | **RAP review tools** |  |  |
| Summarisekey findings from national consultations to inform the RAP update | **Summary report from the four national consultations**  |  |  |
| Draft recommendations for the RAP update based on the desk review and consultations  | **Draft Regional Action Plan**  |  |  |
| Support the organization of a regional online workshop and consolidating feedback from SACG and other key stakeholders | **Regional consultation report** |  |  |
| Develop monitoring and reporting tools to track progress on the implementation of the updated action plan | Monitoring and reporting tools developed |  |  |
| **Estimated Consultancy fee** |  |  |
| Travel International (if applicable) |  |
| Travel Local (please include travel plan) |  |
| DSA (if applicable) |  |
| **Total estimated consultancy costs[[5]](#endnote-1)** |  |  |
| **Minimum Qualifications required\*:** | **Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required \*:** |
| [ ]  Bachelors [x]  Masters [ ]  PhD [ ]  Other Advanced university degree in social sciences including Social Work, Human Rights, Gender Studies, International Development, Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Law, Public Health and related studies. A university degree in a related field plus an additional two years of required relevant professional experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.  | * At least eight years of professional work experience in child protection, child rights, gender, advocacy or related.
* Proven programme and advocacy experience and good knowledge of development issues, especially children’ rights.
* Excellent analytical and writing skills.
* Able to work effectively in a multi-cultural environment.
* Knowledge of South Asia context is a bonus.
* Demonstrates and shares detailed technical knowledge and expertise
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| \*Minimum requirements to consider candidates for competitive process  | \*Listed requirements will be used for technical evaluation in the competitive process |
| **Evaluation Criteria (This will be used for the** [**Selection Report**](https://unicef.sharepoint.com/%3Ax%3A/r/sites/DHR/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B86E327DF-70C8-4D8F-AC97-D7616AC383E4%7D&file=Selection%20Report%20Template.xlsx&action=default&mobileredirect=true) **(for clarification see** [**Guidance)**](https://unicef.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/DHR/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BB3E3517A-8BBF-4368-90FE-7DBCD31544EA%7D&file=Guidance%20on%20Completing%20the%20Selection%20Matrix%20for%20Consultants%20and%20Individual%20Contractors.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)A) Technical Evaluation (e.g. maximum 75 Points) B) Financial Proposal (e.g. maximum of 25 Points)* Relevant educational background
* Demonstrated professional experience relevant to child protection, gender, GBV, and related programmes
* Understanding of the child marriage context in South Asia
* Prior experience of developing an inter-agency programme and action plan related to child protection, child marriage.
* Experience in Ending Child Marriage programme management including planning and implementation of multi-stakeholder programmes.
* Technical knowledge of child marriage programme areas
* Strong analytical and advocacy skills
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| **Administrative details:**Visa assistance required: [ ] [x]  Home Based [ ]  Office Based: | **If office based,** seating arrangement identified: [ ] IT and Communication equipment required: [ ] Internet access required: [ ]  |
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 Costs indicated are estimated. Final rate shall follow the “best value for money” principle, i.e., achieving the desired outcome at the lowest possible fee. Consultants will be asked to stipulate all-inclusive fees, including lump sum travel and subsistence costs, as applicable.

Payment of professional fees will be based on submission of agreed 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

Individuals engaged under a consultancy 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. Consultants 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 consultant is solely responsible to ensure that the visa (applicable) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected consultant 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. The vaccine mandate, 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](https://www.unicef.org/careers/unicef-provides-reasonable-accommodation-job-candidates-and-personnel-disabilities) 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.

1. The South Asia Coordinating Group on Accelerated Action to End Violence against Children (SACG) is an inter-agency group of United Nations (UN) agencies, International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) and other actors engaged in child rights and protection at the regional level in South Asia. SACG’s vision is that all children in South Asia enjoy their right to protection from all forms of violence in multiple settings. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Regional Action Plan (RAP) to End Child Marriage](file://C:\Users\bbirara\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\0E9YCL3G\unicef.sharepoint.com\teams\SAR-ChildMarriage\DocumentLibrary1\Forms\AllItems.aspx?id=\teams\SAR-ChildMarriage\DocumentLibrary1\Regional%20Action%20Plan%20(RAP)%20to%20End%20Child%20Marriage%20in%20South%20Asia%202018-2023.pdf&parent=\teams\SAR-ChildMarriage\DocumentLibrary1) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Kathmandu Call to Action](file://C:\Users\bbirara\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\0E9YCL3G\unicef.sharepoint.com\teams\SAR-ChildProtection\DocumentLibrary3\Forms\By%20Thematic%20Area.aspx?id=\teams\SAR-ChildProtection\DocumentLibrary3\Kathmandu%20Call%20for%20Action%20to%20End%20Child%20Marriage%20in%20South%20Asia%202014.pdf&parent=\teams\SAR-ChildProtection\DocumentLibrary3) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)