

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
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Consultancy: Early Moments Matter Regional Headline

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office is seeking an individual consultant to provide technical assistance on cross-sectoral linkages for "Early Moments Matter" regional headline.

Purpose of Assignment:

To support various aspects of the implementation and documentation of multi-sectoral initiatives (Nutrition, WASH, Early Childhood Development and learning and Social Protection) under the "Early Moments Matter" (EMM) regional headline.

Background:

I. Why do "Early Moments Matter"?

The period from conception until the start of school is a critical and singular window of opportunity to shape the development of a child's brain, a period of rapid brain growth in which neural connections form and give shape to children's cognitive, emotional, and social development – influencing their capacity to learn, to solve problems, and to relate to others. This in turn has a significant impact on their adult lives, affecting their ability to earn a living and contribute to their societies and future happiness. A 20-year study showed that children from poor households who received high-quality stimulation at a young age earned an average of 25 per cent more as adults than those who did not receive the interventions. Yet, governments spend less than an estimated 2 per cent of their education budgets on early childhood programmes. Further, research shows that proper nutrition and hygiene (especially during the "first 1,000 days" window) are essential to optimize children's linear growth and neural development, leading to lifetime advantages of higher IQ and earning potential. EAPRO has recently published important work conceptualizing a paradigm shift towards a focus on cognitive capital¹. Cognitive capital represents intellectual skills, socio-emotional and executive function skills which jointly enable creativity, flexibility, and ability to work collaboratively. It principally develops in the antenatal period and in early childhood, when the returns on investment in integrated programming are the greatest. The formation of cognitive capital anchors the narrative on investing in the implementation of the early interventions which this consultancy supports.

¹ Samson M, Fajth G, François D. Cognitive capital, equity and child-sensitive social protection in Asia and the Pacific. *BMJ Global Health* 2016;1(Supp 2): e000191. doi:10.1136/bmjgh-2016-000191

II. Overview of the regional opportunities for “Early Moments Matter”

East Asia and the Pacific contains some of the world’s fastest growing economies and is home to the second highest number of ‘innovative economies’ in the world. However, the pace of change, innovation and technology-driven growth is also contributing to high or widening inequities. In today’s Asia, the winners are those who are well-nourished and are confident and intellectually equipped to participate in the higher value-add segments of the economy; those who are resilient against life threatening diseases and can take advantage of opportunities when they arise; and those who receive relevant quality education that allows them to compete for high-skill employment. UNICEF East Asia & Pacific is committed to supporting governments and other duty bearers to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for children. To this end, the organization has unveiled three Regional Headlines for East Asia & Pacific that embody its contributions to the SDGs in full alignment with its 2018–2021 Strategic Plan goals: (1) Early moments matter, (2) Adolescents’ potential unleashed, and (3) Children grow up in safe and sustainable environments.

Regarding “Early moments matter”, key programme opportunities for UNICEF in the East Asia and Pacific region include:

- (1) strengthening the “early stimulation” elements and sectoral convergence of UNICEF’s core business areas that affect children during the 1,000 day period from conception until two years of age (Health, Nutrition, WASH, Early Childhood Development and learning, Child Protection and Social Policy), and through health system contacts in general for all children under five;
- (2) strengthen the nutrition, WASH, and health elements of “preschool” (age 2-5) policies and programmes, and (as needed) improve upon the early stimulation and child protection elements of such programs; and
- (3) related to both of the above opportunities, it is necessary and timely to strengthen the internal understanding and capacity of UNICEF Programme Specialists, Chiefs, and Section Heads from various sectors on the “Why, What, and How” of integrated programme delivery for early childhood development and protection, towards the goal of cognitive capital formation for the region.

Work Assignment:

1. Overall “Early Moments Matter” (EMM) headline support:

- a) Assist with the preparation of presentations, materials, documentation, reports, etc., related to the EMM headline.
- b) Help organize and facilitate EMM webinars with country offices and meetings in EAPRO of EMM result area leads. The webinars may include external experts on key topics of relevance for the EMM result areas and broader cross-cutting topics, such as cognitive capital, IECD investment case, public finance, private sector engagement, theories of change, knowledge management.
- c) Draft an EMM e-newsletter (frequency TBD in consultation with EAPRO sections).

2. Tasks to strengthen linkages between IECD sectors (especially Nutrition, WASH and ECD:

- a) Finalize updates to the holistic ECD Toolkit and materials to disseminate it. These may include costing tools, parenting and social protection components.
- b) Work with at least 3 of the “early riser” countries to take stock of infant and young child feeding (IYCF) counseling implementation and degree of institutionalization in the health system, update their IYCF counseling training package to incorporate early childhood care and development (ECCD) elements, as

per the 2013 UNICEF IYCF package, or an updated version in coordination with the UNICEF HQ initiative at enhance the ECD aspects of the Community IYCF package (if timely). Target countries to include the Philippines, Lao PDR, Indonesia (which adopted the earlier 2010 edition of the UNICEF IYCF package), and possibly Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia and PNG which had not adopted the package to date.

- c) Attend ECD/ Parenting Basic course – and identify opportunities and entry points from that workshop for implementation across the EMM sectors (Nov 2018).
- d) Work with Internet of Good Things (IoGT)/Communication for Development (C4D) and ECD contacts to work on rising social demand for support to infants/young children.
- e) Embed use of IoGT in IYCF-Care for Child Development (CCD) trainings.
- f) Develop “next 1000 days” (> 2 years up to 4 year olds) core messages (in collaboration with ECD team).
- g) Co-construct Nutrition-ECD strategy to engage private sector – led by ECD, in collaboration with PFP and ensuring that conflict of interest is avoided.
- h) Develop at least one key publication around ECD-Nutrition – (TBD) in collaboration with ARNEC partner. (e.g. summary of regional ECD-nutrition case studies of promising practices).
- i) Work with UNICEF EAPRO staff to plan, prepare for, and facilitate an “EMM” Network meeting in 2019, combining WASH-Nutrition-ECD agendas.
- j) Facilitate and document the process of implementing WASH-Nutrition-ECD Theory of Change (ToC) in Myanmar (Oct/Nov 2018).
- k) support additional WASH-Nutrition-ECD ToC workshops in at least three countries (Possibly Vietnam, China and Indonesia or the Pacific, pending green light from the COs).
- l) Provide inputs to regional advocacy materials, reports and publications on WASH and nutrition.
- m) Support WASH & Nutrition Sections in developing and/or updating a lessons learned document, consolidating the experiences from the roll-out of the WASH-Nutrition Toolkit into a Field Note.

3. Regional nutrition meetings (RISING initiative)

- a) Facilitate Asia UN Network for SUN (AUNNS) meeting in Q1 2019.
- b) Facilitate ASEAN meetings on IYCF, maternal nutrition, integrated management of acute malnutrition, data and school nutrition standards (depending on availability and prioritization to be done in collaboration with ASEAN Secretariat and Member States).

4. EMM support to selected country offices

- a) UNICEF Thailand – Support on designing training package and training approach for health and ECD professionals on the Nutrition and Hygiene Guidelines. (NB there may be additional ECD/parenting/nutrition tasks TBC and possibly the development of an IYCF policy to be added at a later stage following discussions with the MOH and within TCO).
- b) UNICEF Myanmar – provide technical and writing support to the inception phase of the national plan of action for nutrition (NPAN) of Myanmar.

NB additional countries may be added depending on needs. These may include Cambodia, Indonesia the Philippines and Vietnam, based on previous support and ongoing integrated ECD initiatives.

Work Schedule, and Deliverables:

Deliverables	Estimated Duration (days)
1. Overall “Early Moments Matter” (EMM) headline support	
a. Assist with the preparation of presentations, materials, documentation, reports, etc., related to the EMM headline	7
b. Help organize and facilitate EMM webinars with country offices and meetings in EAPRO of EMM result area leads	7
c. Draft an EMM e-newsletter (frequency TBD in consultation with EAPRO sections)	5
2. Tasks to strengthen linkages between IECD sectors (especially ECD, Nutrition, WASH)	
a. Finalize updates to the holistic ECD Toolkit and materials to disseminate it	14
b. Work with countries to update their IYCF counseling training package to incorporate early childhood care and development (ECCD) elements	20
c. Attend ECD/ Parenting Basic course – and identify opportunities and entry points from that workshop for implementation across the EMM sectors	6
d. Work with Internet of Good Things (IoGT)/C4D/ECD contacts to work on rising social demand for support to infants/young children	7
e. Embed use of IoGT in IYCF-CCD trainings	2
f. Develop “next 1000 days” core messages (in collaboration with ECD team)	7
g. Co-construct Nutrition-ECD strategy to engage private sector	5
h. Develop one key publication around ECD-Nutrition – (TBD) in collaboration with ARNEC partner	10
i. Work with UNICEF EAPRO staff to plan, prepare for, and facilitate an “EMM” Network meeting in 2019	20
j. Facilitate and document the process of implementing WASH-Nutrition-ECD Theory of Change in Myanmar	12
k. Support additional WASH-Nutrition-ECD ToC workshops in at least three countries (Possibly Vietnam, China and Indonesia or the Pacific)	15
l. Provide inputs to regional advocacy materials, reports and publications on WASH and nutrition	5
m. Support WASH & Nutrition Sections in developing and/or updating a lessons learned document, consolidating the experiences from the roll-out of the WASH-Nutrition Toolkit into a Field Note	10
3. Regional nutrition meetings (RISING initiative)	
a. Facilitate AUNNS and nutrition partners’ meeting in Q1 2019	7
b. Facilitate 5 ASEAN meetings on IYCF, maternal nutrition, IMAM, data and school nutrition standards	25
4. EMM support to selected country offices	
a. UNICEF Thailand – Support on designing training package and training approach for health and ECD professionals on the Nutrition and Hygiene Guidelines	9
b. UNICEF Myanmar – provide technical and writing support to the inception phase of the NPAN	14
SUB-TOTAL:	207

Estimated Duration of Contract: 207 working days within 11.5 months, starting 26 October 2018 (with possibility of extension).

Official Travel: Bangkok based consultancy with travel in the EAP region as required.

Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required:

- Postgraduate Degree (at least Master's Degree) in public health, with a focus on early childhood health, development and nutrition issues.
- At least ten (10) years' experience with proven record of accomplishment and exposure dealing with nutrition programmes, especially multi-sectoral engagement at the policy, advocacy, and programme levels.
- Demonstrated competency to plan, facilitate, and report on successful meetings, trainings and events, including high level and large events.
- Demonstrated competency in technical and advocacy writing, reviewing, editing, and production/publication.
- Sound interpersonal skills, including experience in cross-cultural environment and international settings. Demonstrated ability to motivate staff, influence stakeholders and work effectively with people at all levels of the organisation and across multiple organisations. Demonstrated ability to develop and maintain sound working relationships with stakeholders and commitment to collaborative work practices.
- Demonstrated sound and wide-ranging oral communication skills in English.
- Demonstrated sound and wide-ranging writing skills in English. Lead role in developing large publications with multiple stakeholders.
- Relevant experience in the Southeast Asia region is an asset.
- Competency in computer skills with sound knowledge of Microsoft Office, web-based research and web-based applications for knowledge management.
- Proven ability for accuracy under pressure and adherence to deadlines.

Interested candidates are requested to submit CV or P-11, full contact information of minimum 2 references, availability, and proposed daily professional fee in USD by **14 October 2018**.

Only short listed candidates will be notified.

UNICEF is committed to diversity and inclusion within its workforce, and encourages qualified candidates from all religious and ethnic backgrounds, including persons living with disabilities, to apply to become a part of our organization.

UNICEF has a zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, and on any kind of harassment, including sexual harassment, and discrimination. All selected candidates will, therefore, undergo rigorous reference and background checks.