

TERMS OF REFERENCE

SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

Pacific Regional Home and School Transitions Framework

BACKGROUND

As part of the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF), within the policy area of Learning Pathways, Pacific education systems identified the need to develop a framework for the Pacific on the domains of home to school and through-school transitions to support systems to scaffold learners, their families, and schools through the points of change and transition across education (including transitions in/out and between schools/systems as relevant). The framework is intended to support two distinct outcomes of the Learning Pathways policy area:

- i) our youngest learners (pre-schoolers) are prepared to engage in formal schooling
- ii) linked pathways between levels of schooling and beyond.

This will mean the framework needs to consider both the initial transitions from home to ECE and into primary education but also other points of transition in a young person's schooling e.g. from primary to lower secondary, or the transition from schooling to the world of work or higher education. The framework is intended to support countries to meet the needs of learners, schools and families at different points of transition based on country systems, culture and contexts..

The framework will consider the roles of school, students and family/community, including all the stakeholders (e.g. churches/faith-based organizations, traditional elders, peers) who form part of each students "community." It will need to consider partnerships and relationalities across these stakeholders including within the education system, across other government agencies and civil society to identify the actors whose roles and relationships create and differentiate the supportive environments needed at all levels of transition and learning.

The framework will consider the dimensions/characteristics identified in research through a Pacific lens, creating a broader understanding through the cultural perspectives of Pasifika. It will need to consider Pacific concepts of learning and the eco-social context in which young people in the Pacific have learnt new knowledge and skills for thousands of years and the avenues for support they receive through the course of their schooling years¹. The development of any framework for education must reflect how Pacific people are socialized, learn and communicate with one another².

Transition is also an equity matter. Those from the least advantaged background are more likely to benefit from good transition practices³. With this in mind, the framework should also provide for the transitions of our most vulnerable learners including those with a disability, those who live in remote areas where access can create its own barriers or those whose family circumstances create vulnerabilities. Consideration of gender equity should also be included, noting that this may be different for different points of transition eg ECE – Primary or primary to lower secondary. Poverty in particular is shown to have the strongest effect on a young child's development in the earliest years⁴ where circumstances mean that children may not receive the stimulation they need or learn the social skills that will help prepare them for school. Consideration will also need to be given to

¹ An All-Life Skills regional framework has been developed as a PacREF outcome which may help to inform this thinking.

² Thaman, K. (2013) *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, 2013, 12(1), 98–118

³ Caspe, M., Lopez, M., Chattrabhuti, C. Four Important Things to Know About the Transition to School, Harvard Family Research Project, Retrieved from: https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Four-Important-Things-to-Know-About-the-Transition-to-School_HFRP_March2015.pdf

⁴ Britto, P. (2012), *School readiness: a conceptual framework*. United Nations Children's Fund, New York.

transitions for students who for different reasons may experience their first transition into school later than the majority eg where distance, sickness or disability has meant they start formal schooling later.

This framework contributes to PacREF Regional Good 7: Regional knowledge and frameworks for family-learner-school partnerships so countries can engage all stakeholders in supporting learning at all levels. It may draw on a variety of contributing PacREF activities and related regional goods, as well as the aims of PacREF itself, the 2050 Strategy for a Blue Pacific, the Pasifika Call to Action for ECD, and the Pacific Culture Strategy.

OBJECTIVE / SCOPE OF WORK

The ultimate aim of this consultancy is to support Pacific countries to strengthen holistic support to students in a way that is truly grounded in Pacific culture as they transition to and through schooling.

The objectives of the ToR for this work are to:

- identify domains for a Pacific Framework on home and school and through school transitions through a wide review of literature and consultation with a range of stakeholders across all PICT
- identify the different actors, roles, and relationships that contribute to each domain for different levels and types of transition
- Develop descriptors and self-assessment rubrics of continuum for each domain, including how these could be monitored, with examples of strategies/mechanisms to guide regional and national activity and recognize the longitudinal nature of success. explicitly address equity issues in relation to gender, disability and groups of learners who may be at risk at points of change to ensure that the framework meets their needs and will advocate for their successful transition. Finalise the framework through a highly consultative process that engages Pacific country voices, including key experts from the region, well-prepared for validation and finalization, and launch/dissemination in PHES, CPEM and at national-levels to guide next steps at regional- and national-levels. Note that there is a slight shift in intent as reflected in the language of the broader regional good, as compared to the activity name, but this can form part of consultations in the scope of the work.

In this way, the work will contribute to Regional Good 7 of the PacREF; Regional knowledge and frameworks for family-learner-school partnerships so countries can engage all stakeholders in supporting learning at all levels. The framework will contribute directly to two focus areas of PacREF. In Learning Pathways, the framework will contribute to the strategy of *supporting education systems to recognise and mitigate challenges and risks associated with transitions in education* and in Student Wellbeing and Outcomes the outcome of *improved participation and success rates at all levels, especially in ECCE and secondary and TVET* by supporting successful transitions between each level.

The framework can guide policy, advocacy and communications, strategy development and resourcing. It should also outline how to monitor and evaluate actions taken, noting that success of transitions are longitudinal in nature and need to be determined from various perspectives⁵ and the relationships between them.

It is expected that the framework will draw upon any current frameworks or policy currently utilized the region as well as recent literature. The consultancy should be guided by PacREF Research Framework, in order to ensure both methodology and outcome reflect Pacific approaches to consultation, sharing of knowledge and findings and reciprocity in relationships. Consultations and research should follow Pacific methodologies and where necessary, research consent from individual countries may be required.

This consultancy will support the development of this framework in close collaboration with senior education officials across the region, the PacREF Early Learning taskforce, the Pacific Inclusive Education Taskforce, relevant NGO and CSO, and other development partners active in the sector (and other sectors). UNICEF will facilitate the formation of a Reference Group from selected representatives of education leaders, academics and partners across the region to support thought leadership from countries and provide the consultant with advice and guidance as required, particularly in ensuring the framework reflects the Pacific and provides opportunity for each country to utilize as a tool for supporting transitions in the national context.

The consultancy will cover the following activities and deliverables:

⁵ Peters, S. (2010), *Literature review: transition from early childhood education to school*. Ministry of Education, Wellington, New Zealand. Retrieved from: <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/ECE/98894> on 17 June, 2021

1. **Inception Report with Desk Review**-Conduct desk review of existing documents, data, and recent research with a focus on available research in the region. Carry out initial consultations with the reference group and senior officials or their nominees to co-construct the methodology with proposed approach, including the modality for ongoing engagement with countries. As part of the preparation for the inception report, the consultant will complete a preliminary literature review of the documents sourced. An initial meeting with UNICEF and possibly Reference Group representatives in which the consultant will share their initial thinking on approaches and methodology prior to commencement on the Inception Report is expected.
2. **Development of First Draft**- Based on the agreed methodology to consultations, research and technical inputs of regional officials and partners, draft an initial framework including: rationale, domains/dimensions, descriptors and rubrics of continuum for each domain, indicative indicators and M&E activity. Where possible, examples of strategies to guide regional and national activity should be provided to illustrate domains and rubrics. Short case studies of current practice may also be included.
The consultant will participate in consultations with the Reference Group to gather and document initial feedback on the draft. The consultant is also expected to provide guiding questions which can help countries provide their feedback.
3. **Second Draft of Report**- Based on the feedback provided in the first draft, and in collaboration with the reference group, revise the framework and develop a second draft. Share again with countries to ensure that feedback has been interpreted and integrated as intended.
4. **Presentation of Framework**- Based on the feedback received on second draft, finalize the framework and prepare a presentation for the Pacific Heads of Education (PHES)⁶ for their endorsement
5. **Dissemination**- The consultant is expected to develop, and co-facilitate with members of the Reference Group a regional workshop for dissemination of and capacity building in the Framework. The modality of the workshop will be dependent on complimentary regional activity with the intent of promoting national contextualisation of the framework. The consultant will be expected to create an online shared folder of all documents reviewed, minutes of consultations, and the final versions of all deliverables and share with UNICEF. The Consultant should prepare two powerpoint presentations (one for high level advocacy and one for community dissemination), that countries may revise and use for further national work with the Framework.

The approaches to the consultancy as described above are indicative. It is expected that the consultant will also propose improved approaches as relevant, in discussion with UNICEF and other stakeholders..

The consultancy is also expected to identify, leverage and collaborate with other existing expertise, analyses and initiatives, maximizing any potential synergies with other ongoing or planned efforts in the region, particularly in relation to PacREF.

ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES, PLUS PAYMENT SCHEUDLE PER DELIVERABLE

ACTIVITY	DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE	PAYMENT (%)

⁶ This may be the full PHES or their Steering Committee dependent on timing.

Initial desk review of documents, data and research from the region. Meeting (s) with reference group and senior officials to co-construct methodology and approaches to consultation.	Inception Report		
Draft an initial framework including: rationale, domains/dimensions, descriptors and rubrics of continuum for each domain, indicative indicators and M&E activity. Provide examples of strategies to guide regional and national activity to illustrate domains and rubrics. Short case studies may be included.	First Draft		
Ongoing consultations with the Reference Group to gather and document initial feedback on the draft. The consultant is also expected to provide guiding questions which can help countries provide their feedback. - Based on the feedback provided in the first draft, and in collaboration with the reference group, revise the framework and develop a second draft	Second Draft		
Based on the feedback received on second draft, finalize the framework and prepare a presentation for the Pacific Heads of Education (PHES) or PHES SC for their endorsement	Final Draft PHES Presentation		
Develop, and co-facilitate with members of the Reference Group a regional workshop for dissemination of and capacity building in the Framework. Create an online shared folder of all documents reviewed, minutes of consultations, and the final versions of all deliverables and share with UNICEF. Prepare two powerpoint presentations (one for high level advocacy and one for community dissemination), that countries may revise and use for further national work with the Framework.	Final Framework and dissemination materials (including workshop)		

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES

Bachelors Masters PhD Other

At least a Masters degree or higher in education, childhood development, social sciences or related field.

- At least 10 years of proven experience and expertise in education research and policy and planning with a focus on relevant areas of work including child development and wellbeing, school management, parent and community roles in education, partnerships for learning etc.
- Substantial experience in conducting literature reviews, planning for and facilitation consultation, analysis of primary and secondary data and producing user-friendly syntheses and presentations for a range of different audiences.

- Experience of developing technical user-friendly and easy to understand guidance documents to be used by ministries of education.
- Knowledge of Pacific cultures and education systems, including Regional frameworks, institutions and partnerships and institutions required.
- Understanding of the broader crosscutting issues such as: gender mainstreaming, inclusion, child protection, Climate Change Awareness/Disaster Risk Reduction
- Demonstrated ability to establish harmonious and effective working relationships across cultures and disciplines, including doing so remotely
- Strong communication and facilitation skills
- Diplomatic skills to liaise with counterparts and different stakeholders

CONDITIONS OF WORK AND CLARIFICATION ON SUPERVISION

The consultant is ultimately supervised by the Chief of Education -UNICEF Pacific Multi-country Office but will have day-to-day supervision and liaison with the nominated Education Specialist in the Suva team for this work.

The bulk of the consultancy is expected to be remote/home-based. Travel to Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Samoa is indicated for face-to-face consultation in different contexts, and to Fiji for the PHES presentation and regional workshop (modality to be confirmed) with countries depending on relevant opportunities complimentary to other regional workshops is expected, with exact destinations and arrangements to be decided later.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- 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 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 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.
- The selected candidate is solely responsible for ensuring 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 candidates 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. It 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 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.
- No contract may commence unless the contract is signed by both UNICEF and the consultant/ contractor.
- Consultant/Contractor will be required to complete mandatory online courses (e.g. Ethics, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Security) upon receipt of offer and before the signature of contract.

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

- All applications should be supported by a cover letter, a technical proposal defining the approach and methodology for executing the consultancy with critical consideration on how a strong Pacific approach will be adopted, and a financial proposal with per day professional fees in US dollars and other costs.

- The financial proposal should be a **lump sum amount for all the deliverables** and should show a breakdown for the following:
 - Monthly / Daily fees– based on the deliverables in the Terms of Reference above
 - Travel (economy air ticket for applicable field mission travel)
 - Living allowance where travel is required
 - Miscellaneous- to cover visa, health insurance (including medical evacuation for international consultants), communications, and other costs.