

Terms of Reference - **TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT**

Title & Level	Evaluation and Research Specialist, P3
Location	Freetown – Sierra Leone
Duration	364 days
Start Date	15 May 2024
Reporting to	Chief Evidence, Policy and Social Protection
Budget Code/PBA No	Non-grant
Project and activity codes	3900/A0/08/885/001/011

BACKGROUND

The fundamental mission of UNICEF is to promote the rights of every child, everywhere, in everything the organization does — in programmes, in advocacy and in operations. To the degree that any child has an unequal chance in life — in its social, political, economic, civic and cultural dimensions — her or his rights are violated. UNICEF and cooperating partners and stakeholders work to secure the rights of each child and the surrounding families, communities and nations.

The Sierra Leone Country Programme 2020-2023 has been extended for one year until the end of 2024. While the 2025-2030 Country Programme and associated resource and staffing plan are under development, an Evaluation and Research Specialist at P3 level is needed to bridge the period until the new Country Programme including staffing structure comes into effect.

PURPOSE OF THE TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT (TA)

The Sierra Leone Country Office is seeking to strengthen its capacity to undertake timely programme evaluations and fulfil its commitments in line with the Global Evaluation Policy, as well as to strengthen capacity to implement high quality research in line with the UNICEF Research Policy.

Job organizational context:

The Evaluation and Research Specialist reports to the Chief of Evidence, Policy and Social Protection for general guidance and direction and provides technical and operational support to the Country Management Team (CMT), in consultation with the Regional Office multi-country evaluation specialist and Regional Office staff with responsibilities for strategic evidence generation. The Evaluation & Research Specialist ensures credibility, impartiality, and independence of the evaluation function in the CO.

The incumbent works in accordance with the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the UNICEF evaluation policy, as well as the UNICEF Research Policy.

Purpose for the job:

Sierra Leone Country Office is seeking an Evaluation and Research Specialist to i) manage the implementation of activities under the 2020-2024 and 2025-2030 Costed Evaluation Plans and Integrated Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Plans (IMERP); ii) develop and implement a plan for national evaluation capacity development and iii) develop strategic partnerships for strengthening research.

The Evaluation and Research Specialist will be responsible for facilitating the overall planning, design, monitoring, updating and implementation of the country office Costed Evaluation Plan (CEP) - and associated annual evaluation plans - and is responsible for managing and monitoring the implementation of CEP efforts within the country office. She/he will undertake thematic evaluations,

evaluability assessments, and other evaluative activities for which the Country Office is accountable. She/he will be responsible for engaging competent evaluators who conduct their work in accordance with the norms and standards of the UNICEF evaluation policy.

The Evaluation and Research Specialist will take responsibility for strengthening national evaluation capacity with a particular focus on young evaluators, including both government, academia and other stakeholders, and will develop a costed plan for the national evaluation capacity development activities under the Country Programme. The incumbent will also take responsibility for implementing the activities under this plan.

The incumbent will take on responsibility for strengthening the research function in the Country Office, including providing technical input and guidance to Country Office researches and studies, undertaking capacity strengthening activities and developing strategic partnerships for research.

SUMMARY OF KEY FUNCTIONS/ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Evaluation Leadership

2. Evaluation Conduct and Use

3. Evaluation Capacity Strengthening and Partnership Building

4. Research Management

1. Evaluation Leadership

In collaboration with the CMT and national partners, take the lead to develop and implement a plan of evaluation activities that will provide relevant and strategic information to manage the Country Programme and relevant national policies and programmes toward achieving results for children in both humanitarian and non-humanitarian situations.

- Guide the Country Office and partners to identify priority evaluation topics in accordance with the UNICEF Evaluation Policy, the UNICEF Strategic Plan, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Country Programme Document and national policies and programmes.
- Identify the Evaluation objectives, priorities, and activities required for effective Country Office and partner Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans. In humanitarian response situations, adjust the prevailing evaluation plan in UNICEF Evidence Information System Integration system (EISI), in accordance with guidance for emergency situations. Likewise, adjust the evaluation plans in EISI in accordance with the transition through the stages of transition and recovery.
- Identify gaps in knowledge and work with sector managers to ensure these are addressed. Facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration in the execution of these efforts.
- Provide technical support to ensure that a set of evaluation performance indicators is monitored and fed into decision-making processes in the context of the multi-year and annual evaluation plans in EISI, as well as associated office-wide management plans and work plans, ensuring close follow up on the implementation of planned evaluative activities.
- Consolidate evaluation plans within required systems and documentation, including the EISI planning platform and in the Costed Evaluation Plan that accompanies the Country Programme Document for consideration by the Executive Board. Ensure that evaluation findings and lessons learned are incorporated in country programme, Programme Strategy Notes and other planning, and reporting documents. Support the conceptualization of MTRs from an evaluation perspective.
- Monitor progress and support Country Management Team (CMT), Country Office Annual Reports as well as other review moments that lead to plan revisions. Provide input to management reports, including relevant sections of the Country Office Annual Report.

2. Evaluation Conduct and Use

Ensure that UNICEF-supported evaluations are designed and implemented to established UN quality standards, and the results are disseminated in a timely fashion and used by stakeholders in order to improve programme performance and contribute to wider learning.

- Undertake an evaluability assessment of themes listed in the Costed Evaluation Plan, as required, and make recommendations on changes to improve the evaluability of the programmes.
- Formulate Terms of Reference and evaluation designs of high quality.
- Manage the recruitment of appropriate and highly qualified consultants. The Specialist will closely monitor the implementation of the evaluation, quality review the deliverables and will indicate when the quality is high enough that it can be accepted. As part of this role, she/he will help establish and manage the necessary governance bodies (Steering Committee; Reference Group) for their inputs into the quality assurance process.
- Work closely with external evaluation consultants/teams to enable them to deliver results according to the agreed Terms of Reference. Exercise sufficient oversight that quality is assured, and any quality problems are detected soon enough that timely remedial action is possible.
- Develop and implement a multi-method communication plan to disseminate the evaluation report to intended audiences via user-friendly methods. Foster organizational accountability and learning based on the outcomes of the evaluations. Promotes further dissemination and use of evaluation to internal and external audiences, including national government, development partners, CSOs and private sector partners.
- Support stakeholders to prepare a formal management response that reflects their reaction/views on the evaluation recommendations. The Specialist will monitor and report on the implementation of agreed management response actions. At a larger scale, find means to engage partners around the value of the evaluation, with a consistent goal of increasing utilization and reach.
- Support country-led evaluations of policies and programmes and the consideration of the results by partners.

3. Evaluation Capacity Strengthening and Partnership building

Ensure that evaluation capacities of Country Office staff and national partners – including government and civil society – are strengthened, enabling them to increasingly engage in and lead evidence generating processes. Ensure that the Country Office is effectively linked to wider UNICEF capacity building developments in a way that both contributes to and benefits from organizational learning.

- Build and strengthen strategic partnerships through networking and advocacy with local/national governments and sub-regional governmental bodies, UN system agency partners, donors, NGOs, funding organization, research institutes, including universities, and the private sector. Promotes joint Govt/UNICEF evaluations that rigorously assess national policies, programmes and innovative models.
- Ensure that sufficient systems and procedures are in place within the CO for appropriate ethics reviews of evidence activities as per the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis.
- Foster policy-level and academic partnerships to support national evaluation capacity development initiatives. Ensure that evaluation capacities of country office staff and national partners – government and civil society – are strengthened enabling relevant Government units to increasingly engage in and lead evaluation processes.

4. Research Management

Ensure that UNICEF-supported research is designed and implemented according to established UNICEF policies and procedures, and the results are disseminated in a timely fashion to stakeholders in order to improve programme performance and contribute to wider learning.

- Establish and facilitate research quality assurance processes at the CO level in accordance with the UNICEF Policy on Research. Ensure that CO Standard Operating Procedures for Evidence Generation outline the quality assurance process for research and that checklists, guidance and other tools are available to research project managers from all sectors.
- Convene the CO internal Research and Evidence Generation Steering Committee.
- Technically support UNICEF programme specialists and programme partners to formulate Terms of Reference for high quality research projects.
- Review the Terms of Reference for upcoming research projects as well as draft research reports.
- Assist with the peer review process of major research projects and coordinate feedback to Supervisor/CMT/stakeholders to ensure quality and compliance with the UNICEF Policy on Research and country office research priorities.
- Assist with the recruitment and selection of appropriately qualified research consultants, ensuring that the selection process is in compliance with UNICEF standards for performance, accountability, transparency and ethics.
- Assist research project managers from all sectors with the development of a multi-method communication plan to disseminate research findings to intended audiences via user-friendly methods.
- Ensure all research follows the ethical principles and standards outlined in the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis.

QUALIFICATIONS OF SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

Education

An advanced university degree in the social sciences, economics, public policy, statistics, or in research methods is required. A degree or certification/accreditation in Evaluation is a significant advantage.

Experience

- A minimum of five years of professional experience in the implementation of equity-focused evaluations and strategic research.
- Experience in the management of research and evaluation function at national and international level, including developing strategic TORs, recruiting consultant teams and managing the research/evaluation process.
- Experience in evaluation design and in conducting evaluations as per UNICEF and UNEG norms and standards for Evaluation in the UN System.
- Experience in supporting national evaluation capacity and working with professional evaluation associations.
- Experience in developing strategic partnerships for research and evaluations.
- Familiarity with methods used in conducting both 'up-stream' research and evaluations (e.g. focusing on policies, strategies and systems), as well as 'down-stream' research and evaluations (e.g. focusing on delivery of programmes and projects) is an asset.
- Experience in development and/ or humanitarian settings is required.

Language requirements

Fluency in English is required. Knowledge of another official UN language or a prominent language of the duty station is an asset

COMPETENCIES OF SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

Core Values

Care

Respect

Integrity

Trust

Accountability

Sustainability

Core Competencies

Nurtures, Leads and Manages People (2)

Demonstrates Self Awareness and Ethical Awareness (3)

Works Collaboratively with others (3)

Builds and Maintains Partnerships (3)

Innovates and Embraces Change (3)

Thinks and Acts Strategically (3)

Drives to achieve impactful results (3)

Manages ambiguity and complexity (3)

Functional Competencies

Analysing (3)

Deciding and Initiating action (2)

Applying technical expertise (3)

Planning and organizing (3)

Persuading and Influencing (2)