



## CONSULTANCY - TERMS OF REFERENCE

# Innovation Specialist: Integration and Nodes Implementation

*Division: Office of Innovation*

*Duration: 11.5 months (200 days over 12-month period)*

*Duty Station: New York*

### Advertising summary

UNICEF's Office of Innovation seeks an experienced and technically skilled Innovation Specialist to engage with pioneering research institutions with the aim to explore, synthesize and disseminate cutting-edge research in new areas of innovation with potential impact for children and young people at scale.

---

### 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:

NONE

**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):

NONE

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

---

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. To save their lives. To defend their rights. To help them fulfill their potential.

Across 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, every day, to build a better world for everyone.

And we never give up.

## For every child...innovate

UNICEF has a 70-year history of innovating for children. We believe that new approaches, partnerships and technologies that support realizing children's rights are critical to improving their lives.

The **Office of Innovation** is a creative, interactive, and agile team in UNICEF. We sit at a unique intersection, where an organization that works on huge global issues meets the start-up thinking, the technology, and the partners that turn this energy into scalable solutions.

UNICEF's Office of Innovation creates opportunities for the world's children by focusing on where new markets can meet their vital needs. We do this by:

- Connecting youth communities (or more broadly -- anyone disconnected or under-served) to decision-makers, and to each other, to deliver informed, relevant and sustained programmes that build better, stronger futures for children.
- Provoking change for children through an entrepreneurial approach -- in a traditionally risk averse field -- to harness rapidly moving innovations and apply them to serve the needs of all children.
- Creating new models of partnership that leverage core business values across the public, private and academic sectors in order to deliver fast, and lasting results for children.

## Our team

We're a global team tasked with identifying, prototyping, and scaling new technologies and practices. With our partners, we focus on convening and collaborating on new and different solutions, low- and high-tech.

Unlocking transformational change for children on a global scale requires us to come together with committed, forward-thinking partners to rapidly and significantly expand investment in the development and scale-up of innovations that address the most pressing problems facing children.

## How can you make a difference?

Innovation is one of UNICEF's change strategies with the purpose of accelerating the achievement of child-related SDGs and beyond 2030. [UNICEF Global Innovation Strategy and Framework 2.0](#) sets the direction and outlines the deliberate choices that align innovation with UNICEF's strategic goals. The Office of Innovation (OOI) is accountable for implementing the strategy.

This strategy explicitly recognizes the role of an ideation phase, which is characterized by discovery, exploration and engaging with the research and development process and you can be part of the team that realizes this:

"Ideation Insights from this phase of the process will identify gaps and opportunities and expose unproven approaches and technologies to be explored. Potential solutions will be co-created or discovered through scanning the horizon for new and existing ideas. Research and development will be undertaken to meet clearly defined requirements and gain an understanding of current and future demand."

[Innovation Nodes](#) have been established in UNICEF's Office of Innovation to engage with and learn from cutting edge research, ideas and networks. These are new types of collaborative arrangements that connect/embed UNICEF in locations with a critical gravity of research, development and deep expertise in key new and emerging technologies and other critical areas of knowledge. Node

[United Nations Children's Fund](#)

collaborations are with pioneering pre-eminent organizations with deep expertise and transdisciplinary capabilities and intentionally empower young researchers.

Innovation Nodes are collaborative spaces that illuminate, probe, reflect and generate novel ideas and research in new and unknown areas of potential innovation for children. Examples of current work include [second- and third-generation renewable energy](#), [precision health](#), applied biotechnology such as in [diagnostics](#), additive manufacturing, next-generation materials, emerging business models for innovation for sustainable development.

**The Innovation Specialist** will work directly with and under the overall supervision of the Senior Adviser on Innovation (HQ & Nodes). They will work in an environment that requires adaptability, flexibility, and the ability to creatively respond to rapidly changing innovation landscapes.

**Your main responsibilities will be:**

S/he will engage with pioneering research institutions with the aim to explore, synthesize and disseminate cutting-edge research in new areas of innovation with potential impact for children and young people at scale. Working under the supervision of the Senior Adviser on Innovation (HQ & Nodes) you will:

	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Deliverables/Outputs</b> <i>Can be invoiced earlier if deliverable completed to UNICEF's satisfaction in advance of delivery deadline</i>	<b>Delivery deadline</b>	<b>% of payment</b>
1	Prospect, secure new and maintain existing Nodes	<p>Deliverables: Implement, expand, iterate and maintain i) Node prospect list, ii) process, implement call/expression of interest, and iii) secure 5 Node agreements</p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide intellectual and technical expertise on prospecting, establishing and managing Innovation Node collaborations;</li> <li>- Engage with organizations with strong research capabilities such as universities and think tanks – and help to sustain and build the Innovation Node network contributing to this work;</li> <li>- Provide technical support to the development of proposals;</li> <li>- Support the transdisciplinary process of identifying potential new areas of investigations and future research that are aligned with the goals and priorities of UNICEF's current <a href="#">2022-2025</a> and future 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, UNICEF's Global Innovation Strategy and may contribute to UN-wide innovation-related initiatives;</li> </ul>	<p>Month 1: Onboard on required and existing processes; Refine existing resources.</p> <p>Month 2: Prepare Node call.</p> <p>Month 3: Issue Node call.</p> <p>Month 4-6: Review, select and prepare necessary documents to sign 5 agreements</p> <p>Month 8: Produce updated versions of the i) prospects; ii) OOI Nodes process documentation; iii) toolkit for other offices</p>	<p>M1: 5%</p> <p>M2: 8%</p> <p>M3: 1%</p> <p>M6: 7%</p> <p>M7: 7%</p>

2	Produce knowledge products	<p>Deliverables:</p> <p>Within the 11.5-month contract:</p> <p>i) Produce 5 Insight Reports (est. 80-pages see existing <a href="#">examples</a>) by editing, redrafting and supplementing references to frame the outputs of Node collaborations firmly within UNICEF's innovation focus for this work; coordinate internal and external review; produce final version of report and coordinate publication across multiple platforms;</p> <p>ii) Produce derivative works from the above Insight reports including but not limited to Insight briefs (2/3-pagers), articles, briefing notes, presentations, communication products.</p> <p>Activities: Produce high quality knowledge products, such as reports, peer-reviewed publications, policy briefs, and related materials, for diverse non-expert audiences that add value to UNICEF work as well as contributes to the global community of practioners in the development, humanitarian and social sectors.</p>	<p>Estimated report delivery by end of Months 3, 4, 6, 7, 11. Can be invoiced earlier provided completed to UNICEF's satisfaction.</p>	<p>M3: 9%</p> <p>M4: 10%</p> <p>M8: 10%</p> <p>M10: 10%</p> <p>M11: 10%</p>
3	Capture, distill and share learning	<p>Deliverables: i) Co-author learning-oriented piece by end month 5 and 9; ii) With close engagement of supervisor, produce collective Node compilation 'Year in' product with distilled meta-insights Month 8-9; iii) Help to design and deliver engagements to amplify learnings and engagement across variety of stakeholders/audiences.</p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capture and distil learning and share these widely through engagement mechanisms such as webinars, presentations, and fireside chats; and content for engagement moments.</li> <li>• Undertake innovative approaches to conduct and facilitate transdisciplinary research for innovation, documenting good practice;</li> </ul>	<p>M5: Learning piece, engagements</p> <p>M9: Compilation product, learning piece, engagements</p>	<p>M5: 8%</p> <p>M9: 10</p>
4	Project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliverables: i) refine existing Node project management processes, tracking and use of internal tools to do so; ii) throughout the contract period, maintain timely and accurate updates on the status, progress and results of the above work to support Node work planning, status monitoring, and reporting. lii) Participate in and support Node programme monitoring and contribute to continuous work planning processes, with the incoming Planning Specialist.</li> </ul>	<p>M1-12 invoiced at end of M12</p>	<p>M12: 5</p>

## To qualify as an advocate for every child you will have...

- An advanced university degree -- PhD is preferred due to the level of collaborators and research experience that this role requires -- in social sciences, sciences, international development, innovation, business or other relevant field.
- A minimum of 8 years of relevant professional experience that includes direct experience working in development or humanitarian role(s) in a developing country context, as well as research experience in either academia, think tanks or private sector lab.
- Proven publication record that demonstrates in-depth research, rigorous analysis, recognized excellence in the field. Publications can be from professional or academic journals, edited volumes, single-authored books, and/or policy-oriented publications.
- Understanding of humanitarian and development innovation and programming within the UNICEF context.
- High level of fluency in English required, in particular demonstrated expertise in research translation and science communication in English in a variety of formats is required. Knowledge of another official UN language (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish) or a local language is an asset.

## Travel:

- No travel is planned for this consultancy.
- Should travel become necessary during this consultancy, this contract will be amended and the consultant would be responsible to arrange his/her own travel, including visa and travel insurance.

## Payment details and further considerations

Payment of professional fees will be based on the 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.

## How to apply:

Interested applicants are required to submit their:

1. CV/resume
2. Examples of their publications, ideally demonstrating a variety of work
3. A financial proposal with all-inclusive fee. [Please see the financial proposal template here.](#)

**Applications without a financial proposal will not be considered.**

## For every Child, you demonstrate...

UNICEF's values of Care, Respect, Integrity, Trust, Accountability, and Sustainability ([CRITAS](#)).

To view our competency framework, please visit [here](#).

UNICEF is here to serve the world's most disadvantaged children and our global workforce must reflect the diversity of those children. The UNICEF family is committed to include everyone, irrespective of

**United Nations Children's Fund**

their race/ethnicity, age, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, socio-economic background, or any other personal characteristic.

UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants/individual contractors 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.

UNICEF has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UNICEF, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination. UNICEF also adheres to strict child safeguarding principles. All selected candidates will be expected to adhere to these standards and principles and will therefore undergo rigorous reference and background checks. Background checks will include the verification of academic credential(s) and employment history. Selected candidates may be required to provide additional information to conduct a background check.

**Remarks:**

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted and advance to the next stage of the selection process.

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 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 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.