**UNICEF China**

**Terms of Reference**

**For Consultant Recruitment**

**Job Title of Consultancy:** *Consultancy -* Research quality assessment, synthesis and dissemination

(Review of Social Policy Research in the 2016-2020 UNICEF China Country Programme, and development of the Social Policy 2021-2025 Research Agenda and Workplan)

**Requesting Section:** Social Policy and Reform for Children Section (SPARC)

**Name of Supervisor and Job Title:** Christina Popivanova, Chief of SPARC Section

**Background of Consultancy Request:**

UNICEF China’s Social Policy and Reform for Children (SPARC) section works to ensure that every child in China has access to the services and receives the support she needs to develop fully. An important way in which we do this is by working with Chinese government partners to produce research and evidence that informs the development of policies that advance equity and uphold child rights.

Research, studies, and evaluations (RSEs) in UNICEF China are conducted following a three-tiered classification and quality assurance framework. Tier 1 RSEs are flagship publications and other high-quality RSEs of high strategic importance to UNICEF’s Programming and Advocacy in China or at the Regional and Global levels, as well as publication-quality, peer-reviewed RSEs on specific topics. Tier 2 RSEs are high-quality RSEs that gather, summarize, and synthesize data, information, and knowledge from a variety of sources on a specific topic, typically closely related to UNICEF’s current or future programming and advocacy at the country level. Both Tier 1 and Tier 2 studies typically involve a significant financial investment by UNICEF. Tier 3 RSEs, on the hand, are smaller in terms of financial investment and exploratory in nature and are typically conducted in concert with national partners in order to advance understanding and expand the evidence base on emerging policy issues relevant for children. The RSE work of the SPARC section to date has consisted mainly of Tier 3 RSEs carried out together with Government Partners.

In 2017-2018 the SPARC team conducted a review of the research management process and its effectiveness, which helped identify opportunities for improvement. A collective insight generated by the team through the review process was that changes were needed in the way SPARC prioritizes, initiates, negotiates, and manages research with Government partners, in order to improve: 1) the internal relevance and usefulness of; 2) the policy relevance and usefulness to Government partners; 3) the dissemination and advocacy use of research.

The current context presents a unique opportunity for action on this front, as UNICEF China enters the final year of the current country program and develops the next one. The present consultancy thus aims to support the SPARC team and national partners to help consolidate the social policy research portfolio and transform the approach to evidence generation and policy advocacy followed by SPARC.

**Purpose of Activity/Assignment:**

The **purpose** of this assignment is to help the Social Policy and Reform for Children (SPARC) section of UNICEF China more effectively use existing and future research to influence UNICEF programming and national policy conversations to enhance equity and uphold child rights. The **objective** of the assignment is to critically review and summarize SPARC’s existing stock of research, and fully translate selected papers and reports to make them available for in-depth analysis, revisiting, and eventual publication.

**Major Tasks, Deliverables & Timeframe:**

The consultant for this assignment will work under the supervision of a senior consultant, who will provide general guidance and directions and assign tasks as needed. The junior consultant will:

1. **Screening and translation of research papers.** Under the direction of the senior consultant, the consultant will carry out an initial screening of 36 reports and/or research papers produced or facilitated by SPARC over the 2016-2020 UNICEF China programming cycle (based on criteria agreed with SPARC in the inception phase). He will then fully translate from Chinese into English a subset of those RSEs, selected by the senior consultant.

**Deliverable 1.1.**  A set of high-quality short critical summaries of SPARC’s 2016-2020 research papers and/or reports, in English.

**Deliverable 1.2.** A set of fully translated (from Chinese to English) research paper/reports, selected amongst SPARC’s 2016-2020 output.

1. **Technical support to development of peer-reviewed articles and/or working papers.** The consultant will assist the Senior Consultant in revisiting the highest-quality papers with the intention of eventually publishing them as: a. peer-reviewed journal papers or flagship publications (tier 1 RSEs); or b. “working papers” which will be used for information and advocacy by SPARC team and the broader CCO.

**Deliverable 2.1.**  Inputs to high-quality papers made ready for publication as either peer-reviewed or working papers, selected amongst SPARC’s 2016-2020 output.

1. **General language and technical support.** The consultant will assist the Senior Consultant in communicating with researchers, UNICEF staff, and others as needed in the course of interviews held as part of the Senior Consultant’s assignment. The consultant will also assist in facilitating and arranging such interviews, and will provide technical inputs, prepare consultancy materials, and participate in technical discussions as needed for the duration of this assignment.

**Deliverable 3.1.** General language and technical support report: the consultant will draft a report outlining the support provided to the Senior Consultant during the assignment.

**Methodology & Expected Output:**

This assignment is expected to be largely desk-review based, with interviews and consultation with UNICEF staff, researchers, government partners, and other key individuals as needed. The consultant will receive a package of relevant existing documentation for their review. This will include but will not be limited to:

* The UNICEF China RSE Booklet,
* The UNICEF RSE Quality Assurance SOP
* Documents arising from SPARC’s internal review of its own research processes.
* An externally commissioned review and strategy for high-level advocacy for children in the China CO.
* Other relevant documents.

An indicative plan for deliverables and timelines is provided in Table 1. The final set of deliverables and the timetable will be discussed with the selected consultants prior to contract signature. Failure to agree on a set of deliverables and timetable can result in the offer being rescinded and being offered to the next shortlisted candidate(s).

The consultancy is expected to span 60 working days from September to November 2020. The exact workload in number of days will be determined jointly between UNICEF and the consultant.

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| **Table 1. Deliverables and timeline** |
| **Activities**  | **Deliverables** | **Timeframe (in working days)** | **Months (from start of consultancy)** |
| **In-country** | **Remote** | **Total** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |
| 1.Screening and translation of research papers. | 1.1. A set of high-quality short critical summaries of SPARC’s 2016-2020 research papers and/or reports, in English. | 10 |  | 10 |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.2. A set of fully translated (from Chinese to English) research paper/reports, selected amongst SPARC’s 2016-2020 output  | 10 |  | 10 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Technical support to development of peer-reviewed articles and/or working papers.  | 2.1. Inputs to high-quality papers made ready for publication as either peer-reviewed or working papers, selected amongst SPARC’s 2016-2020 output. | 20 |  | 20 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. General language and technical support | 3.1. General language and technical support report. | 20 |  | 20 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total** |  | **60** |  | **60** |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

**Start Date:** 1st September 2020

**End Date:**  End of November 2020

**Total Working Days**: 60 working days

**Consultancy Requirements:**

This assignment requires a mid-career consultant, preferably a Chinese national with experience in policy-oriented research and a deep familiarity with the Chinese policy environment, who understands and identifies with UNICEF’s mandate to ensure the right and full development of every child. The consultant is expected to work under the guidance of the Senior Consultant to produce the deliverables outlined above.

* **Minimum Academic Qualifications required and disciplines:**
* Post-graduate degree in economics, public policy, development economics, international development, or social science;
* **Knowledge/Experience/Expertise/Skills required:**
* At least 3 years of prior experience in research;
* Familiarity with the Chinese socioeconomic context, China’s governance structures, and current and emerging socioeconomic policy and governance issues and debates in China;
* Fluency in English with excellent communication and writing skills;
* Fluency in Mandarin Chinese, reading, writing, listening and speaking.
* UNICEF, UN, or other development agency experience is a strong asset.
* **Other**

* Availability at short notice;
* Ability to work to an equally high standard both independently and as part of a team.

**Working Conditions and Payment Method**

The consultancy will be conducted in its entirety in Beijing, China. However, the consultant may be asked to work from their accommodation and make frequent visits to the UNICEF China Office.

Payments will be made as follows:

* 30% will be paid upon the submission and acceptance of deliverables 1.1 and 1.2;
* 40% will be paid upon the submission and acceptance of deliverable 2.1
* 30 % will be paid upon the submission and acceptance of deliverables 3.1 and 5.2.

# Bids for consideration

UNICEF invites bids for consideration against these Terms of Reference from qualified parties. Bids should address all major aspects of the ToR and comprise of both a technical and a budget proposal. UNICEF will consider each element of the bid separately, awarding a 70% weighting and 30% weighting to the technical and financial proposal components respectively.

Technical proposals should cover the following elements:

* A summary of the proposed approach to carrying out this work. This includes a brief outline of the methodology.
* CVs of consultant and a table responding to the requirements outlined in these TOR.
* Proposed work plan and timeline.
* Samples of peer reviewed articles or other evidence of high-quality research experience.

The budget proposal must contain:

* Daily consultancy rate, number of days, and total consultancy fees (daily rate x number of days).

Technical proposals should be a maximum of 5 pages in English (excluding annexed CVs) in 12 font. For any questions on this TOR, please consult with Ms. Xiaojing Bai xbai@unicef.org. Any requests for clarification prior to bid submission must be sent to the above e-mail address no later than [three full working days before the submission deadline].