

TERMS OF REFERENCE
CONSULTANT / INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTOR

Section:	PMR, Monitoring Research and Data Unit	Date:	31.05.2021
Title:	UNICEF partnership with ECCAS and ECOWAS: A review of data and evidence, to make policy recommendations	Duty station:	Home based with the possibility of field missions
Reporting to:	Senior Monitoring Specialist (Data, research) – PMR section at the WCA Regional Office	Contract type:	International consultant
Duration:	55 days within 3 months	Start date:	1 st July 2021

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:

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):

The consultant will be working with publicly available anonymized data. S/he won't be accessing any kind of identifiable information that could put children at risk.

More information is available in the Child Safeguarding SharePoint and Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates

BACKGROUND

UNICEF has ongoing partnerships with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and is closely working with these two institutions to advocate and promote a gender-sensitive and child-centred agenda that is relevant to the geographical areas they each cover.

ECOWAS and ECCAS are inter-governmental organizations dedicated to regional integration in West Africa (15 member states¹) and Central Africa (11 member states²), respectively. Under the African Economic Community (AEC), an organization of the African Union (AU), each organization establishes a community of states designed to create a trading bloc for mutual economic development through economic cooperation that include: free trade areas, customs unions, a single market, a central bank and a common currency. Both ECOWAS and ECCAS are grounded in agreements between countries where barriers to trade are reduced or removed for a single market with a customs union.

AU Agenda 2063 lists the following ‘aspirations’ for the Africa ‘we want’:

- a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
- an integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa’s Renaissance;
- an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
- a peaceful and secure Africa;
- an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics;
- an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children;
- Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner.

In line with the AU’s Agenda 2063 aspirations (see box), and the “[Africa Agenda for Children 2040: Fostering an Africa Fit for Children](#)” with its 10 aspirations³, human and social development in the countries of the West and Central Africa region (WCAR) is one of the key challenges that the ECOWAS and ECCAS must address. Human and social development policies aim to improve the well-being and quality of life of all citizens in WCAR, and to enable them to reach their full potential. Hence both communities are collaborating with their Member States along with international agencies such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to review, update, amend and establish frameworks on multiple matters including: social policy, social safety net programmes, child abuse, juvenile justice, domestic violence, nutrition, education and care for the most vulnerable groups of our society, especially women and children. The countries of these Regional Economic Communities adopt a common approach to trade, health, education and the environment, as well as the development of critical sectors such as agriculture, tourism, peacekeeping and energy.

¹ Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Niger, Nigeria, Togo

² Gabon, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Congo Brazzaville and Equatorial Guinea

³ Aspiration 1: The African Children’s Charter, as supervised by the African Children’s Committee, provides an effective continental framework for advancing children’s rights. • Aspiration 2: An effective child-friendly national legislative, policy and institutional framework is in place in all member States. • Aspiration 3: Every child’s birth and other vital statistics are registered. • Aspiration 4: Every child survives and has a healthy childhood. • Aspiration 5: Every child grows up well-nourished and with access to the basic necessities of life. • Aspiration 6: Every child benefits fully from quality education. • Aspiration 7: Every child is protected against violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse. • Aspiration 8: Children benefit from a child-sensitive criminal justice system. • Aspiration 9: Every child is free from the impact of armed conflicts and other disasters or emergency situations. • Aspiration 10: African children’s views matter.

UNICEF WCARO has set strategic goals with ECCAS through an MoU and with ECOWAS in a draft partnership framework (updating a 1994 MoU) around sustainable development, with the intent to drive better socio-economic outcomes for all citizens of WCAR (plus Angola and Burundi), especially women and children. These strategic goals in each partnership agreement are aligned to and integrated with the SDGs.

In particular, UNICEF WCAR's partnerships with ECOWAS and ECCAS recognize that ending poverty and creating a brighter future for all must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and which address a range of social needs including education, health, child and social protection, and opportunities for youth while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

With widespread poverty already affecting children and their families (49.4% of children in West and Central Africa live in monetary poverty, according to official data⁴), the COVID-19 crisis and the disease containment measures that all countries are putting in place are expected to dramatically impact households' welfare, reducing incomes and access to critical services, like health, education, water and sanitation and child protection. Moreover, agricultural production is contracting as a result of trade blockages, and this combined with reduced food imports can contribute to a severe food security and nutrition crisis in the region. The consequences of increased poverty and insecurity, combined with the effects of ongoing humanitarian crises, impose an enormous toll on the well-being of children as they grow, stifling their ability to build a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.

UNICEF partnerships with ECOWAS and ECCAS influence the choices governments make about where and how to spend public resources critical to breaking cycles of poverty. For example, through advocacy and policy dialogue efforts in 2019, UNICEF WCARO contributed to the adoption of a Regional Child Policy securing the commitment of ECOWAS Member States to increase budget allocations towards child protection by 3%. However, this commitment will undoubtedly be severely undermined in 2020 and beyond as decreases in national output continue resulting from the direct and indirect effects of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

The aim of the UNICEF WCAR – ECOWAS/ECCAS partnerships is also to help governments to assess both monetary and multidimensional child poverty⁵ –, and to address them through policies, programmes and budgets; like supporting the development or expansion of national cash transfer programmes, and strengthening social protection systems so that all families gain access to health care, education and social welfare, even in the face of humanitarian crises. For example, the draft ECOWAS Social Protection Framework was developed with UNICEF support to guide development and implementation of comprehensive social protection systems and is expected to be finalized in 2021. On adoption, it will complement the afore-mentioned ECOWAS Child Policy and Strategic Plan of Action (2019 – 2030), and the Regional Strategic Framework for strengthening national child protection systems in West Africa (2017), giving increasing impetus to the regional Child Agenda.

Both partnerships have contributed to cross-border efforts to strengthen intra-regional collaboration on cholera and Ebola epidemics and COVID-19 pandemic surveillance and response (especially as relates to the impact on children). They have also resulted in support to the adoption of a roadmap

⁴ Source: data.unicef.org, for SDG indicator 1.2.1 Proportion of children living below the national poverty line

⁵ measures of poverty and deprivation that go beyond income

and plan of action on child marriage by 15 Member States; a regional plan to address sexual violence and child abuse; reinforced capacity to set and monitor regional child protection mechanisms; support to regional level management of water resources and development of regional instruments for effective management of trans-border health issues.

UNICEF has also been involved in the development of the ECCAS Medium-Term Strategic Plan (2016-2020), in which the child component finds its place in specific areas. It draws on an inventory of the situation in the region to define strategic axes and priority action plans on societal and economic indicators to improve the situation of vulnerable citizen in that region. These include for example poverty rates, youth autonomy, gender equality, governance of public funds, and the resilience of economies. As a result of this collaboration, the Strategic Action Plan places increased emphasis on health and AIDS, nutrition, the situation of children in crises and conflicts.

Through longstanding formal engagement processes with the two Regional Economic Communities, UNICEF has been able to strategically position issues such as birth registration, child marriage, WASH in rural areas, Immunization, acceleration of the eMTCT, health and HIV/AIDS, nutrition, education in emergency situation and child protection during conflicts in the agenda of these sub-regional institutions. Building on these results and established relationships, UNICEF intends to continue this fruitful collaboration, especially to support the two Communities to respond to the numerous new challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis for children and their families.

I. PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTANCY

This consultancy is twofold:

On the one hand, the consultant will examine ongoing initiatives developed within the partnership framework of UNICEF and the two Regional Economic Communities, with the aim to better understand expectations, capacities and common agendas between all actors involved.

On the other hand, it will review existing information and data on children, including around the effect of COVID-19 on children and households. The aim is to prepare a concise evidence-based summary of progress and expected challenges for the coming years, aligned to child-centered SDGs and regional / sub-regional priorities, with the intent to contribute to decisions regarding which social policies should be prioritized in each of the partnerships. With a view to accelerate progress and guide future partnership effort, the consultancy will present findings, including emerging trends from existing and ongoing analysis of COVID-19 effects, and it will propose options on courses of action for UNICEF and the two regional commissions, and distill lessons learned to provide policy advice.

The summary is expected to take the shape of a policy brief about children in ECCAS and in ECOWAS countries (one policy brief for each sub-region), presenting an analysis disaggregated at the sub-regional level (i.e. for the two groups of countries composing each community). The brief will use the most recent available data and information about child-focused SDGs, UNICEF strategic corporate goals, as well as regional frameworks of the AU and the two commissions⁶. The briefs are not expected to require the collection of primary data, with the exception of a few interviews with key actors

⁶ E.g. the ECOWAS draft Vision 2050

involved in the partnership. The briefs should highlight where there are significant data gaps, especially with regards to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

The objectives of these briefs are to:

- Better present and disseminate to regional and national audiences, including national and local governments, current knowledge of the state of children's right in the respective geographical zones that ECCAS and ECOWAS cover,
- Help to understand the changes that COVID-19 is bringing, and what are the most urgent actions to take for the promotion of a relevant and prioritised gender-sensitive and child-centred regional agenda
- Identify areas where additional information is required, to help inform a regional research agenda
- contribute to a more focused children's agenda led by ECCAS and ECOWAS in their respective geographical zones of influence.

II. SCOPE OF WORK:

Under the overall direction of the Senior Monitoring Specialist, the consultant will accomplish the following objectives:

- **Review ongoing and past initiatives under the UNICEF partnerships with both ECCAS and ECOWAS:** this work will consist primarily of a desk review, but it will also be accompanied by brief interviews with stakeholders, from UNICEF, ECCAS and ECOWAS.
 - Organized by areas of work / sector; aimed at understanding strengths and weaknesses of each partnership; and potential for further joint work;
 - Include a review of how COVID-19 would affect and/or has already been affecting these partnerships.
- **Compile a summary of the state of children's right pre- and post-COVID-19, vis-à-vis the strategic objectives of each partnership:** this will consist primarily of a desk review and analysis of existing information and data. The outputs will include:
 - Tables with data around key indicators for each strategic objective (SDGs, KRCs – inputs provided by UNICEF)
 - Table / summary of what emerging evidence is showing around the effects of COVID-19, e.g. poverty increasing, nutrition decreasing, more kids out of school, etc. (not necessarily from robust statistics, but can be from small surveys and/or prelim results)
- **Present recommended actions to strengthen the partnerships between UNICEF and each of the two communities,** specifically to improve how these can be more evidence-based.

- These documents – one for each of the two partnerships - is intended as an internal document for UNICEF and ECOWAS/ECCAS audiences, to improve how the partnership works.
- **Produce two policy briefs**, using a similar template and structure but each focused on a regional community (ECOWAS and ECCAS), to provide a **brief situation overview**, including an assessment of how COVID-19, climate change, and conflict are impacting on this, going forward; and **to make key recommendations around policy actions**.
 - The briefs will serve as a vehicle for providing policy advice to policymakers at regional / sub-regional level.

III. DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

As the result of his/her work, the consultant is expected to deliver the following products at the indicated point of time, after the start of the contract, as indicated in the below table.

Deliverables	Description	Duration	Comments
DELIVERABLE 1: Inception presentation: Power Point presentation describing the approach for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review of strengths and weaknesses - Interviews with stakeholders in UNICEF and ECCAS/ECOWAS - Data tabulation and analysis (including data needs from UNICEF) - Analysis of findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The presentation should be delivered to UNICEF team, within 10 days of signature of the contract. ▪ It is expected to reflect the contractor's understanding of the scope of work, indicating the methodology, the data needs and the specific inputs required from UNICEF staff. ▪ It is envisaged as an opportunity to agree on specific issues, and outline in more details all the steps to complete deliverables 2-3-4 	10 days / 20% of payment	The PME team and other UNICEF staff will be available to discuss aspects of the work prior to this presentation
DELIVERABLE 2: Two tables with validated data for all child centered SDGs, the UNICEF SP and KRC indicators for both ECCAS (1 table) and ECOWAS (1 table) countries. Tables with available "COVID data" to show effects and emerging trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The deliverable will be an update to the work conducted in 2019, an overview of the State of Children's Rights in the member states ▪ Data will be taken from the KRC dashboard, CRAVE, SOWC, and from other validated global or regional database, as needed. ▪ Additional data will be presented from emerging evidence on the effects of COVID-19 – this might include different sources of data, big data etc. 	15 days / 30% of payment	The PME team will provide the data needed for the consultant to compile and analyze

Deliverables	Description	Duration	Comments
The data tables should be accompanied by a 2-page methodology note	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The information will be organized around the “strategic objectives” of each partnership ▪ This will help focus the analysis, make use of existing data as well as point out data gaps to fill. 		
DELIVERABLE 3: A 6-to-10 - page document with partnership recommendations, emerging from the desk review for both ECCAS and ECOWAS, based on key documents (UNICEF SDG brochure, SOWC, UNICEF N-moda analysis, Country SITAN reports, analysis of social investments for children, humanitarian situations, etc.) and interviews with key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The document is an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the partnerships, vis-à-vis the current situation of children including the ongoing COVID-19 crisis ▪ The document can be organized by areas of work / sector; describing strengths and weaknesses of each partnership; and the potential for further joint work; <p>Include a review of how COVID-19 would affect and/or has already been affecting these partnerships.</p>	10 days / 30% of payment	It might require conducting brief interviews with stakeholders in UNICEF, ECCAS, ECOWAS to record their experiences, and to get their views vis-à-vis the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.
DELIVERABLE 4: Two policy briefs (one for each partnership, 10-15 pages as indicative length), summarizing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Situation overview in the sub-region (ref deliverable 2) - Strengths, weaknesses and potentials (ref deliverable 3) And making macro-level policy recommendations for decision-makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of ECCAS and ECOWAS sub-regions socio-economic and political context, that of social sectors, and that of thematic issues (gender, adolescents, emergencies and children on the move, etc.) with linkages to ECCAS and ECOWAS current agenda and priorities for children. <p>The expected format is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key elements of ECCAS socio-economic context ▪ Key elements of the situation of children in ECCAS by sector, by age (lifecycle) ▪ User-friendly graphs presenting social services, privations data ▪ Analytical boxes about thematic issues such as (gender, adolescents, children on the move, etc.) ▪ Concluding points, recommendations and key messages 	20 days / 20% of payment	<p>Documents to review will be made available to the consultant</p> <p>While analytical, the brief is designed for a decision-maker as well as a general audience.</p>

IV. TIMING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

UNICEF will provide comments within 10 days after receipt of the draft versions of each deliverable. The consultant will need to integrate these to produce the final versions of each report, that include all comments received from UNICEF.

The timelines indicated here refer to the total number of working days required for the finalization of each deliverable. This consultancy is part-time spread within 3 months from the date of signature of the contract.

V. PROFILE REQUIREMENTS

Qualifications of successful candidate:

(1) Education

- An advanced university degree in social sciences, public policy, international affairs or related field with a focus on children's rights and social policy data analysis. *A Bachelor's degree with 2 additional relevant work experience might be accepted in lieu of the Master.

(2) Work experience

- Minimum of eight (08) years of progressively responsible professional work experience in children's rights and social data analysis
- Strong familiarity with UNICEF's organizational structure, WCAR programming and key partners strongly preferred
- Strong familiarity with data used for global monitoring of the wellbeing of children and/or experience working with household survey data (DHS, MICS, etc.) preferred
- Strong familiarity with UNICEF mandate and the child-centered Sustainable Development Goals

(3) Languages

- Excellent analytical, written, and verbal communication skills both in French and English is required.

(4) Competencies of successful candidate:

- A proven knowledge and experience in analyzing data and child-centered issues (CRC, SDGs, etc.) using a human-rights, gender, and equity perspective.
- Expertise in situational analysis strongly preferred
- Proven experience in developing effective reports, briefs, articles in the relevant social policy areas of work for monitoring and communication
- Good knowledge of the ECOWAS and ECCAS regions and their different contexts

Two written work samples should be submitted when applying for this consultancy.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- The research team will work from their own offices, provide their own equipment (hardware and software) and organize all aspects of field logistics themselves. All costs related to this assignment have to be included in the financial proposal. No additional payments for staff time, travel or per diems will be provided outside the financial proposal.
- UNICEF will bear the costs for workshops and meetings with external partners (such as the reference group) as outlined in this TOR.