UNICEF Country Office in Turkmenistan

Terms of Reference

Institutional Consultancy for Evaluation of the Government of Turkmenistan’s Policy on Early Childhood Development (ECD) and UNICEF’s contribution to its design, implementation and monitoring

Duration: 15 August 2019 – 30 June 2020 (54 days)

Location: Out-of-country with two visits to Turkmenistan (Ashgabat city with potential visits to velayats)

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Background

The early childhood period encompasses several quite distinct phases: from ‘conception to birth’ and from ‘birth to 3 years’, with emphasis on the first 1,000 days (from conception to 24 months), followed by the pre-primary years (3 years to 5 or 6 years, or the age of school entry).

Early childhood development is the continuous process of acquiring skills and abilities from conception to the age of school entry across the domains of cognition, language, motor, social and emotional development which help individuals to think, solve problems, communicate, express emotions and form

Early childhood development has been an integral focus of Turkmenistan’s social policy since independence in 1991. Its current trajectory can be traced to a focused resolve by UNICEF Regional Office in 2007 to capitalise on ECD regionally. This opened the way for a more robust dialogue between UNICEF Turkmenistan and the Government, resulting in the rapid expansion of the enabling policy environment for ECD. This includes the 2011-2015 Turkmenistan National Programme for Early Childhood Development and School Preparedness, the Law on the Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding and Child Food Requirements (2013) and related documents to enforce its implementation, the Maternal, New-born, Child and Adolescent Health (MNCAH) Strategy for 2015-2019, the Conceptual Framework for Implementation of Developmental Paediatrics and Early Intervention in Turkmenistan 2016-2020. Moreover, a new Early Childhood Development Strategy for the period of 2019-2025 has already been drafted and is expected to be adopted in 2019 in line with the National Plan of Action on Realization of Child Rights for the period of 2018-2022, which stipulated adoption of such a strategy.

Turkmenistan’s ECD policy is shaped and implemented by multiple entities, but the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry (MoHMI), Ministry of Education and to a certain degree, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection have the primary responsibility. Certain analytical work has been conducted over the last 10 years to assess progress towards stated objectives and identify entry points and next steps. Recognising the importance of the home-visiting service as a fundamental building block of ECD services, an assessment of the primary health care mother and child health home visiting system was commissioned with the support of UNICEF in 2012. The assessment found high levels of user satisfaction, but some regional inequalities in provision, and specific workforce capacity limitations. In 2014 UNICEF and the MoHMI of Turkmenistan costed and developed a ‘road-map’ for improving the effectiveness of home visiting services although there has been little progress with the reform and strengthening of home visiting services since then.

As defined in the 2016-2020 Country Programme Document (CPD) current efforts are concentrated on development of an integrated, coherent system which is effective in supporting children and families across four specific priority areas which can be likened to the five components of the 2018.

With the support of UNICEF and in line with the Conceptual Framework on Introduction of the Developmental Pediatrics and Early Intervention and Action Plan for 2016-2020, Ministry of Health has established the early intervention system within health sector. A draft Regulation on provision of the early intervention (EI) services at all levels development and under approval. With UNICEF technical assistance and cooperation with Ankara University the Human Resource Development Plan has been developed. Within its implementation two National Training Hubs on early intervention has been established. These Centers are equipped with trained cadre to provide transdisciplinary early intervention services. Capacity building process initiated in three velayats; Lebap, Mary and Dashoguz.
A Guide for Monitoring of Child Development (GMCD) has been adopted as a standard instrument for early identification of development. Currently the Ministry is in the process of adaptation of the GMCD application. UNICEF supports MoHMI efforts in establishment of the M&E framework to understand the progress of early intervention (EI) system development and its effectiveness.

With the support of UNICEF, the Ministry of Education is in the process of establishing early intervention and multi-disciplinary support services for young children with disabilities (CwD) and their families in education sector. The guidelines for medical-pedagogic commissions, an education sector assessment and referral mechanism for young children were updated and now include multi-disciplinary teams of professionals (pediatrician, psychologist, pedagogue, speech therapist, physical and occupational therapist), who initiate assessment and individual support for CwD and their families in line with the social model of disability. The above teams were established across 6 Rehabilitation Centers for CwD and two ECD Centers in regular kindergartens with the aim to empower these children towards their inclusion into mainstream education and overall social inclusion of their families. The ongoing Programme Cooperation Agreement with St. Petersburg Early Intervention Institute (Russian Federation) aims to set the operational framework for the above services across the education sector which includes update and/or development of the sectoral normative guidelines, capacity development and supportive supervision, development of monitoring system on CwD and their families including tracking and data collection, monitoring progress, referral (and/or transition to mainstream education facility) of CwD and their families in line with social model of disability, development of pre- and in-service training programmes in various disciplines required for multi-disciplinary support service provision.

UNICEF supported the MoE in the development of an operational plan for introducing one-year pre-primary preparation for all 5 years old children. This equity focused investment plan including costed options and models for pre-primary expansion with projected increase, timeframes and indicators for monitoring is expected to be initiated in one of the regions in the country.

In 2016, Turkmenistan adopted the SDGs, including ECD related targets. At the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals is the right of all children to physical and mental health and well-being, and to participate fully in life and society. Young children need conditions in which they can both survive and thrive. Target 4.2 states that by 2030 countries should, “ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education”. Targets on poverty, hunger, health (including child mortality), gender, water and sanitation and inequality broaden the commitment on ECD beyond education. MAPS (mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support) mission report of 2017 indicated first 2000 days as one of the sub-accelerators for achieving SDGs.

Despite the progress, there are certain challenges, in particular, cross-sectorial cooperation needs to be further developed. In addition, the development of the EI and multi-disciplinary support system requires availability of new cadres, qualified in provision of the emerging services as well as update of the existing or introduction of new disciplines required for institutionalization of the services. Accordingly, at this stage, the cadre limitation remains to be an ongoing challenge which prevents further scaling up.

While the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities commended Turkmenistan’s efforts to review and amend its legislation and change its practices in the field of comprehensive early identification, care and development by setting up early childhood development centres, it also expressed concerns about the lack of information on the concrete achievements of the programmes on
early childhood development and early identification of developmental delays and recommended evaluating the results achieved so far through the implementation of the programmes on early childhood development and strengthen those programmes and allocate adequate resources accordingly.

This evaluation is thus timely not only to respond to the recommendation of the UNCRPD, identify challenges and propose recommendations and key enablers that will help Turkmenistan achieve its ECD-related policy objectives and eventually related SDG targets.

Evaluation Rationale and Purpose

The main purpose of the evaluation is to take stock of the progress towards improved outcomes for young children, particularly for the most disadvantaged, to inform the Government policy formulation and implementation and help shape UNICEF’s further support in achieving ECD-related SDG targets and other international and national commitments.

The Object of the Evaluation

Objects of the evaluation are:

- Government’s ECD policy.
- UNICEF’s contribution to the design, implementation and monitoring, particularly during the current country programme.

ECD Policy: Whilst early childhood development has been an integral focus of Turkmenistan’s policy landscape prior to and since independence in 1991, its current trajectory can be traced to a focused resolve by UNICEF East and Central Asia Regional Office in 2007 to capitalise on ECD regionally. This opened the way for a more robust dialogue between UNICEF Turkmenistan and the government, resulting in the rapid expansion of the enabling policy environment for ECD. This includes policy and legislation which is both specific to and informs ECD, and includes the 2011-2015 Turkmenistan National Programme for Early Childhood Development and School Preparedness, the Law on the Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding and Child Food Requirements (2013, amended), the Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (MNCAH) Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2019, the present Conceptual Framework for Implementation of Developmental Pediatrics and Early Intervention in Turkmenistan 2016-2020 and the draft Turkmenistan Early Childhood Development Strategy 2019-2024.

The ECD programme in Turkmenistan has been evolving since 2007, building on success to design a current country programme which reflects the key components of the 2018 Nurturing Care Framework - adequate nutrition, good health, opportunities for early learning, safety and security and responsive caregiving; and which demonstrates that this has emerged from action on the four key components of the enabling environment - enabling policies, supportive services, empowered communities and caregiver capabilities.

Turkmenistan has just adopted a National Plan of Action on Children 2018-2022 and drafted a new generation of an Early Childhood Development Strategy with UNICEF support, which aims to improve the quality of health and education services for children aged 0-8, promote supportive parenting, increase the readiness of girls and boys for schooling, and strengthen the monitoring of progress towards these objectives.
**UNICEF’s Contribution:** UNICEF Turkmenistan Country Office (CO) supported the development of all policy documents mentioned above and has provided extensive support to the implementation of the National ECD Policy. UNICEF continues modelling innovative and replicable forms of quality and inclusive pre-school and pre-primary education and learning. This includes updating pre-primary curricula, developing school readiness standards, establishing teacher qualification requirements, designing child-friendly guidelines for comprehensive assessments of early learning achievements and school readiness and strengthening the capacities of parents to ensure early learning opportunities for children at home.

The Ministries of Education (MoE) and Health and Medical Industry (MoHMI) are establishing a system for early childhood intervention (ECI) and multi-disciplinary support services for young children with disabilities and their families, with support from the St. Petersburg Institute of Early Interventions and Ankara University, respectively. A determinant analysis with partners revealed that several bottlenecks had to be overcome for successful implementation of this programme.

The *Theory of Change* has to be reconstructed retrospectively considering that the ECD policy comprises of different elements, defined in the Country Programme Plan of Action and across the main programme components, there has not been a long-term planning and TOC construction, given the current political economy context, except probably when CPDs were developed. The ongoing “models” do not fully meet the 10 sine qua non conditions expected from models while efforts to establish proper M&E frameworks to assess their effectiveness and efficiency are underway. In addition, Turkmenistan’s plans and strategies usually do not have M&E frameworks. No ToC was prepared, but there is a logical model developed across the main programme components. There is also a Resources and Results Framework (RRF), which has had to be revised for multiple reasons.

In 2018, a documentation exercise for the cross sectoral activities implemented in support of the ECD policy implementation was carried out under ECD. This exercise could well be a starting point and good base for the retrospective ToC construction.

Exact scope/object in terms of policy will be revisited/defined during the inception phase, on the basis of the recommended conceptual framework.

**Rationale, objectives and intended use:**

The timing of the evaluation is critical as the country is getting ready to adopt the next generation of an ECD Strategy as well as develop the next country programme of cooperation with the UN and UNICEF. Thus, the evaluation can help shape the programming and policymaking in ECD, including main elements of cooperation with UNICEF. The evaluation will also inform the reporting of the country to CRC in 2020 and UNCRPD in 2022.

- Conduct a comprehensive and independent evaluation of Turkmenistan’s ECD policy and UNICEF’s contribution, taking stock of Turkmenistan’s progress towards its ECD-related policy objectives, including assessment of whether the policies have led to improved, intended or unintended, outcomes for young girls and boys, including for the most disadvantaged.
- Review and assess UNICEF’s support to ECD policy development, implementation and monitoring, particularly in terms of relevance and effectiveness
- Draw lessons learned, positive or negative, particularly in relation to cross-sectoral coordination, synergies and a whole-of-the-government approach in the area of ECD to inform the action to accelerate progress towards ECD-related SDG targets
• Provide concrete recommendations to the Government of Turkmenistan, particularly the Ministries of Education and Health and Medical Industry, for future directions and further improvement of its policymaking and programming in the area of ECD and further institutional changes, if any, required for successful achievement of ECD related SDG targets and other international and national commitments.
• Provide concrete recommendations to UNICEF and broader UN for organizing and implementing its ECD related support, particularly during the next Country programme for the period of 2021-2025.
• Provide recommendations on how to improve the evaluability of the object of the evaluation on the experience of retrospective ToC reconstruction process.
• Promote result-based management and evaluation culture among ECD Stakeholders.

The use of the evaluation can include all or some of the below:
- Learning and improved decision-making (including through identification of lessons learned and good practices) to support ECD policy, with UNICEF and another actors’ support;
- Accountability for UNICEF interventions in terms of contribution to ECD policy and its implementation;
- Capacity development of government and other stakeholders in ECD.

Primary audiences: Ministries of Education, Health and Medical Industry, local governments, line ministries who are anticipated to use the results of the Evaluation as the main developers, implementers and monitors of the national programmes. The primary users need the Evaluation results to introduce corrective actions if needed, to use the best available practices, to bridge the inequality gaps and to allocate sufficient funds. UNICEF as one of the main knowledge brokers in ECD practices providing technical assistance for effective implementation of ECD interventions worldwide.

Secondary audiences: MPs need to be informed in order to introduce necessary legislative changes. International, academic, private and civil society organisations including UN agencies and educators should use the results of the Evaluation to gain more knowledge and to improve their advocacy and practical actions in introduction and implementation of the ECD programmes.

Advocacy and dissemination plan
Although the results of the evaluation will not be known until its completion UNICEF together with the team of evaluators will work together to prepare an initial dissemination plan to help focus the project and identify key audiences.

To provide an overview of the critical considerations, following is a preliminary list of some of the key elements that will be included in the dissemination and advocacy plan.

- Project overview
- Dissemination goals
- Target audiences
- Key messages
- Sources/messengers
- Dissemination activities, tools, timing, and responsibilities

Scope

Period to be covered: 2012-2018 (or earlier if evaluators will need to have a retrospective analysis).
The population group(s) covered: boys and girls (3 years to 5 or 6 years old), or the age of school entry; their caregivers, where possible, disaggregated by sex, age, socio-economic characteristics, etc. The evaluation will also involve duty bearers and other stakeholders in all stages, in accordance with highly participatory approach. This will further be discussed with selected institution as UNICEF programming in this area covered the age group of 0-8.

Geographical coverage: The evaluation’s geographic focus will be national. Focused assessment may be needed in selected areas to assess UNICEF contribution considering Lebap, Mary and Ahal velayats, which have moved ahead with the reforms and introduction of new services more actively and have been used as positive deviance examples.

The specific tasks for the consultancy:
1. Review background information on the Child Wellbeing, School readiness and Learning, including, health, growth monitoring, development outcomes of Turkmenistan, National Statistics, ongoing healthcare, education & social programmes and policy documents, etc. for 2012-2018 period including an analysis of gender-responsiveness of the state programmes and policies.
2. Reconstruct the Theory of Change (ToC) based on the regional ToC.
3. Evaluate the relevance and appropriateness of the national strategies and activities implemented in the health, social and education sectors in ECD;
4. Assess the national ECD policies for coherence to internationally recognized norms and practices;
5. Assess the level of inter-sectoral coordination (health, education and social) in terms of planning, resource management and implementation of the child care in family and preschool education
6. Assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and most importantly scalability and sustainability of existing focused work (models) with UNICEF support in some regions
7. Evaluate the efficiency and challenges in the coverage of the most vulnerable groups of children by health, education and social systems;
8. Review all UNICEF programmatic contribution during the period of 2012-18;
9. Prepare a stakeholder mapping, identifying the roles and relevance of different stakeholders
10. Conduct country mission(s), interview various stakeholders to document important lessons learned and best practices of the ECD national policies and activities;
11. Suggest strategic and operational recommendations that can be used by Government of Turkmenistan and UNICEF in the ongoing and future activities to improve ECD systems and achieve expected outcomes.
12. Validate the results of the Evaluation through consultations with stakeholders

The suggested evaluation questions will be clustered around service delivery, coverage (demand and supply), and enabling environment (quality, workforce profiles, pre- and in-service training, information management systems, tools and equipment) components. Then based on the findings, the evaluators will document lessons learned and best practices, and draw strategic and operational recommendations.

Suggested Evaluation Questions: The evaluation will employ relevant internationally agreed evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.

The evaluation will answer the following preliminary research questions. These questions will be further elaborated during the inception phase and based on these, consultants are expected to propose their research questions for the evaluation:
Relevance:
- Were the government and UNICEF interventions in ECD relevant to existing service delivery structure in Turkmenistan?
- Were the needs of the most marginalized groups addressed?
- What is the value of the government programmes in ECD in relation to global principles (including in SDG 4) of early education and early development of children?
- Was the mechanism of ECD coordination with other services relevant?
- Was UNICEF programming relevant to the needs of the rights-holders and duty-bearers, and was it equity-, and human-rights based, as well as gender-sensitive?

Effectiveness: To what extent were the goals of the policy achieved? Did these catalyse equity focused results for children?
- Were contextual factors (political, social, economic, cultural) taken into account in the design/implementation of the ECD interventions?
- Were efforts made to establish an enabling environment (necessary and appropriate policies, legislation, budgets) for the expansion of ECD programmes?
- Are the public service delivery systems reaching the most marginalized groups and have they taken into account existing gender disparities?
  • What were the main constraints on supply? (existing coverage, range and quality of services provided, readiness and availability of resources);
  • What were the main constraints on demand? (extent of utilization of services by children and families, family waiting lists for pre-school services);
  • Which approaches in ECD were most and least effective?
  • Did the intervention results contribute to reducing the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination?

Efficiency: A measure of how economic resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) were converted to results.
- What strategies of Government (and UNICEF) were the most efficient in influencing improvements in access and equity?
- To what extent has age-, sex- and other disaggregated data been collected and monitored by UNICEF and partners?
- How cost-effective were alternative approaches for reaching the most marginalized groups? (Who finances services e.g., national government, local governments, non-governmental organizations, private entities?)
- Was funding leveraged from external and internal sources? (Are services available privately? Public private partnership developed?)
- Were cost-efficient models of ECD arrangements modeled?
- Were UNICEF’s investments in ECD cost-effective?

Sustainability: The continuation of benefits to most marginalized groups after major development assistance has been completed. Sustainability looks to the probability of continued long-term benefits to most marginalized groups.
  • Are the interventions supported by UNICEF sustainable and scalable?
  • What were/are and will be the enabling factors contributing to sustainability?
• Are inequities between best-off and most marginalized groups likely to increase, remain stable, or decrease when support is withdrawn?
• Will new ECD strategies be more widely replicated or adapted? Are they likely to be scaled up?
• To what degree did participating organizations change their policies or practices to improve HR & GE fulfillment (e.g. new services, greater responsiveness, resource reallocation, improved quality etc.)?
• Has UNICEF support enabled systemic level changes ensuring longer-term sustainability of new services and approaches?

The below will be used to assess UNICEF’s role.
• Advocating and communicating around key national policies, social issues and mind-sets and attitudes;
• Monitoring and evaluation, including assisting in independent assessments of the functioning of the system;
• Policy advice and technical assistance;
• Leveraging resources from public and private sectors;
• Facilitating national dialogue towards norms and standards in the child care field that are child friendly and respectful of children's rights;
• Enabling knowledge exchange;
• Developing and leveraging partnerships.
• Modelling/piloting of new services to inform policy making.

Potential limitations to the evaluation: Lack of disaggregated data and baseline data for some of the reform components might present a significant constraint for assessing evaluation effectiveness. The data mainly available from administrative sources and focus on aggregated numbers and not disaggregated by gender, location, disability, age, social status factors. Particularly, assessing efficiency will be challenging due to lack of budget data and in general, programme-based budgeting. Such approach presents a significant limitation to the Evaluation, as the reliability of poorly disaggregated administrative data will require additional methodological work though some reliable data on ECD might be retrieved from the 2006, 2015-16 and 2019 Turkmenistan MICS. Sensitivity of reported indicators on insufficient coverage or quality of early childhood development and education services might bring a challenge for evaluators especially during data collection stage, as respondents might not feel comfortable to talk openly.

Evaluability assessment will be undertaken during the inception phase based on the data and document review. The identified potential limitations should be closely considered during finalization of the evaluation methodology and data collection tools.

The following 10 determinants, or “conditions”, will help categorize critical bottlenecks and barriers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determinants</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Norms</td>
<td>Widely followed social rules of behavior that are followed within a society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation/Policy</td>
<td>Adequacy of laws and policies to reduce/avoid barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget / expenditure</td>
<td>Allocation &amp; disbursement of required resources that constrain effective coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management / Coordination</td>
<td>Bottlenecks that obstruct accountability and transparency, as well the impediments to coordination and partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of essential commodities / inputs</td>
<td>Essential commodities/ inputs required to deliver a service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conceptual framework and methodology

Consultants should propose a methodology taking into account the following approaches:

Evaluation approach

The ECD evaluation aims to make an overall assessment whether ECD policy outcomes, as well as the process put in place for policy implementation are aligned to the 4 main principles, to analyse remaining bottlenecks and barriers that hamper the realization of child’s rights to early childhood development and education, to identify the key lessons learned, to inform the country office on innovations and transformed engagement in these areas and to develop recommendations for strengthening the Early Childhood Development Policy in Turkmenistan

The evaluation will review changes, during the period 2012-2018 in terms of whether ECD policy outcomes, as well as the process put in place for policy implementation are aligned to the 4 main principles:

- Participation and ownership - actively involve stakeholders at all levels - from family and community level to policymakers - in the production and use of the gathered information;
- Equity, Access and Quality - to capture data that informs the government and UNICEF about improvements and use for policy advocacy;
- Feedback to guide critical reflection and action - to ensure progress indicators are shared with stakeholders, especially the frontline health and pre-school workers - to agree actions for quality improvements, and;
- Transparency, Trust and Respect - decisions regarding the uptake, contextualization and implementation of the Evaluation findings and recommendation.

The evaluation will have both summative and formative dimensions. It will provide recommendations for improvements of the effectiveness, scales and sustainability of Government’s ECD work and UNICEF’s support.

The Ministries of Education, Health and Medical Industry, as the main Government entities responsibly for development and implementation of the ECD, will be the main stakeholders along with; the Institute of State, Law and Democracy (ISLD) as the custodian for the implementation of the NPAC and as UNICEF and broader UN.

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Access to adequately staffed services, facilities and information

Financial access

Social and cultural practices and beliefs

Timing and Continuity of use

Quality of care

Target population’s physical access to the relevant services, facilities and information

Direct and indirect costs that prevent target group from utilizing available services or adopting certain practices

Individual/community beliefs, behaviors, practices, attitudes

Completion/ continuity in service, practice that undermine the effectiveness of such service, practice, or other intervention

Adherence to quality standards (national or international)

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2 Turkmenistan’s ECD policy includes; 2012-16 Early Childhood Development and readiness to school strategy, National Plan of Action for Realization of the Rights of the children for the period of 2018-22 etc.
UNICEF brings a human rights perspective and strives to mainstream gender issues in all its work for children, with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as a principal reference, and recognizes the mutually supportive relationship between the CRC, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. UNICEF recognizes that the empowerment of women is especially important for the realization of the rights of girls and boys, and for the creation of healthy families and society.

The evaluation is a part of an organizational focus on equity and a process of strengthening reforms that target inequities affecting the most disadvantaged women and children in Turkmenistan. An equity-based approach to UNICEF’s evaluation seeks to understand whether the undertaken interventions managed to address the needs and uphold the rights of the specific groups of the most vulnerable women and children in Turkmenistan as well as the root causes of inequity.

Evaluation should contribute to the UNICEF ‘theory of change’ as related to the evaluated areas. UNICEF involvement in ECD reform in the country and in the ECARO region is partially guided by the regional ‘theory of change’ approach based on understanding that the progressive realization of child rights and reduction of equity gaps is best achieved through changes in systems at national/regional/local levels and that sustained UNICEF engagement through its core roles contributes to these system changes.

The evaluation will present a broader review of progress in improved ECD policies for children and will look at specific UNICEF’s contribution and reduction of bottlenecks in effective delivery of interventions. The Inception Report should recreate the ToC, using the regional ECD ToR. The “theory of change” will specifically look at how UNICEF contributed to the changes in selected system areas by executing its Core Roles according to the established priorities for the country office. UNICEF’s work is guided by a set of Core Roles which are common to most country contexts for a sustainable UNICEF engagement and its universal presence in support of results and the realization of the rights of children everywhere:

- **The ‘Voice’ for children and adolescents** – advocating and communicating around key national policies, social issues, mindsets and attitudes;
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – assisting independent assessments of the functioning of the Child Rights guarantee systems, the progressive realization of child rights and the reduction in equity gaps in child well-being;
- **Policy advice and technical assistance** – through well-designed UNICEF positions (based on local, regional, international best practices) on key issues, supporting the development of the normative frameworks related to specific national legislation, policy or programme as well as private sector standards that can improve equity;
- **Leveraging resources from the public and private sectors** – accompanying and redirecting reforms;
- **Facilitating national dialogue towards child friendly social norms** – bringing together government, private sector and civil society, as well as convening divergent forces to enhance public debate, participation and action around equity and child rights;
- **Enabling knowledge exchange** – fostering horizontal cooperation and exchange of experience among countries and regions on ‘what works’ for enhancing child well-being and equity.
- **Modeling/piloting** – demonstrating how system could meaningfully evolve to reduce equity gaps and children’s rights violations.

**Evaluation methodology**
In order to deliver this assignment, an institution will be working in close collaboration with a national expert to assist in evaluation design, to undertake the country mission and analysis. The national expert will also provide inputs and feedback to the evaluation report. The international + a national expert will work jointly under guidance of the UNICEF CO and in close cooperation with both Ministries and other partners.

An institution is expected to submit a work plan of assignment and to confirm the evaluation methodology and tools with the CRM Specialist within the framework of the Inception report development, after careful evaluability assessment and review of available data and information.

In gathering data and views from stakeholders, the evaluation team will ensure that it considers all the stakeholders (decision makers, programme personnel, beneficiaries, etc.) with potentially diverse views to ensure the evaluation findings are as impartial and representative as possible. The approach followed from the outset of the evaluation will be as participative as possible. Stakeholders will participate in the evaluation through interviews, discussions, consultations, providing comments on draft documents and developing management responses to the recommendations of the evaluation.

During the **inception phase**, the evaluation team will design the evaluation methodology to be presented in an inception report. The methodology should:

- Reconstruct the ToC building on the ECARO theory of change and on the common objectives arising across interventions to develop an evaluation matrix
- Be geared towards refining and addressing the evaluation questions. A model looking at groups of “main activities” across a number of interventions rather than at individual operations should be adopted. These could be organized around the determinants framework.
- Take into account the limitations to evaluability described earlier as well as budget and timing constraints.

To the extent possible, secondary data will be assessed during the pre-mission phase to start addressing evaluation issues and identifying the information gaps prior to the in-country mission.

The selected team of international and national experts/institutions is to:

- Work jointly in interviews with relevant national and local partners;
- Discuss comments/feedbacks of the results of the field research and provide clarifications, apply data quality check/validation efforts when required;
- Present the draft evaluation report with organizing a consultative process under the guidance of the UNICEF Deputy Representative, M&E/CRM, Health and Education Specialists and with major in-country stakeholders, as well as in promotion of the evaluation report;
- Use applicable international and corporate norms and standards for evaluation;
- Demonstrate impartiality and lack of biases by relying on a cross-section of information sources (e.g. stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries, etc.) and using mixed methods (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, participatory) to ensure triangulation of information through a variety of means. Participatory methods will be emphasized with all partners, including the CO. The selection of field visit sites (if any) will also need to demonstrate impartiality;
- Support the reconstruction of the Theory of Change to enable the development of targeted and focused evaluation questions
- Be geared towards addressing the key evaluation questions taking into account the evaluability challenges, the budget and timing constraints;
- Be based on an analysis of the logic model of the operation and on a thorough stakeholders analysis;
- Ensure through the use of mixed methods and appropriate sampling that women, girls, men and boys from different stakeholder groups, including the most marginalised-participate and that their different voices are heard and used;
- Be synthesized in an evaluation matrix, which should be used as the key organizing tool for the evaluation.

**Ethical considerations:** The evaluation design and implementation should consider ethical safeguards where appropriate, including protection of confidentiality, dignity, rights and welfare of human subjects particularly children, and respect of the values of the local community. Please refer to UNEG ethical guidance for evaluation[^3], which outlines the ethical principles in part of evaluation intentionality, obligations of evaluators, obligations to participants and evaluation process and product.

Throughout the process of evaluation, it shall comply with the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards[^4].

**Key sources of information:**
- Country Programme Document
- COARs;
- UNCRC, UNCRPD and UPR recommendations;
- MICS 2015-16
- MICS 2019 (TBD)
- KAP ECD
- ECD Strategy for the period of 2012-16
- Draft ECD Strategy for the period of 2019-24
- Documenting Early Childhood Development Services in Turkmenistan, 2018
- ECD in EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, UNICEF ECARO, 2018
- Other relevant documents

**Workplan and deliverables**

The anticipated duration of the consultancy is approximately 54 working days, covering the period of **15 August 2019 – 30 June 2020**. The distribution of days by tasks and corresponding deliverables is suggested below. The consultant(s) is expected to work home-based most of the time undertaking two country visits (15 net working days) during the consultancy period. The below timeline is a decent attempt of deadlines, considering the period that will be needed for translation, sharing of document and receipt of feedback. Depending on the progress and details, more than 2 reviews of some documents may be required, which may affect the timelines.

The evaluator will be responsible for implementation of the tasks identified in an agreed “Methodology” Section and will follow the timeline for deliverables as follows:

[^3]: [http://www.unevaluation.org/ethicalguidelines](http://www.unevaluation.org/ethicalguidelines)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home-based consultancy work, to conduct desk review</strong> of the relevant laws, policies, concepts, studies, reports, research documents, coordination mechanisms, formal and in-formal services, available statistics. The documents for review to be provided by UNICEF and the Government. They should be submitted two weeks prior to the first in-country mission for dissemination among national partners. Additionally, terms of reference for national expert institution should be developed and national consultant should be hired in consultation with UNICEF CO;</td>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>End of September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In consultation with UNICEF and state stakeholders to develop an inception report with the suggested methodology and data collection tools for the evaluation. The inception report should refine the scope of the evaluation and evaluation questions and identify additional data needs. The UNICEF office in Turkmenistan will then make official request for data to the relevant Government offices.</td>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>End of October 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First country mission:</strong> During the first in country mission (estimated at 10 days) in collaboration with the selected national expert(s) finalize and agree on the methodology of the assessment. Initiate the evaluation by conducting interviews with relevant partners and accompany local research teams for the fieldwork, during the first week.</td>
<td>Contractor with the support of UNICEF and the Government</td>
<td>October-December 2019 - field work by the international and national evaluator(s) 10 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reporting:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st interim report (including UNICEF and external versions) and incorporation of UNICEF and Government comments</td>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>Dec 2019 -Feb 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd version of report after incorporation of UNICEF and Government comments</td>
<td></td>
<td>30 April 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of the findings and discussion of recommendations: Second in-country mission (estimated at 5 days), to present the pre-final report to Contractor</td>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>March-April 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the team of key national experts and the Ministries of Education and Health, conduct a consultation for final review of the report, seek final comments and feedback, agree on the recommendations, and present key findings/recommendations to main stakeholders;

**Finalization of the report, including recommendations to UNICEF and the Government of Turkmenistan:**
Finalize and submit the report within 30 days from the second in country mission.

The evaluation mission will present its findings to UNICEF and the main stakeholders (i.e. relevant ministries) in written form (report) in English language including an executive summary of the findings of the evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contractor</th>
<th>15 May 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Follow up and use of evaluation findings:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissemination of the final report to all partners and stakeholders</th>
<th>UNICEF and the Government</th>
<th>Starting from May 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of management response</td>
<td>UNICEF and the Government</td>
<td>June 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reporting requirements**

All the reports and documents will be developed in English and translated by UNICEF, as needed.


1. The title page and opening pages
2. Executive Summary (6 pages)
3. Annexes
4. Object of Evaluation
5. Evaluation Purpose, Objective(s) and Scope
6. Evaluation Methodology
7. Findings
8. Conclusions and Lessons Learned
9. Recommendations
10. Gender and Human Rights, including child rights

Note: All submissions should be electronic (Word and Power Point). Deliverables cannot be reproduced, distributed or published without written permission from UNICEF.
UNICEF will keep the right to share the adapted version of the report with the Government and make it public.

**Payment schedule**

The payment will be made in instalments, according to the following schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- First installment upon completion of the draft report. This payment will cover fees for the first 27 days and include the costs of the first mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Final payment upon submission of the final report, evaluation brief with visuals and recommendations to UNICEF based on the Evaluation Policy Standards. This payment will cover fees for the remaining 27 days and cost of the second mission.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work arrangements**

The group of consultants (at the minimum the team should consist of a Team Leader/Technical Expert and a National Consultant) will be supervised and report to UNICEF M&E/Child Rights Monitoring Specialist in Turkmenistan with a regular de-briefing on the progress of the assignment to the Evaluation Reference Group which will consist of UNICEF CRM Specialist, Health Officer and Education Specialist and national and stakeholders/partners.

UNICEF will regularly communicate with the selected organization and provide formats for reports, feedback and guidance on performance and all other necessary support so as to achieve objectives of the exercise, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to expert’s performance and quality of work. UNICEF will provide logistical support for the in-country trips, such as provision of office space, vehicle for site visits and official meetings, organisation and coordination of meetings, interpretation and translation and support with obtaining visa and registration, once in-country.

The selected institution will make own arrangements for the travel. Travel costs for two trips in this consultancy should be estimated and included into the proposal (lump sum and break down by budget lines) along with the requested daily fee.\(^5\)

Travel costs not actually incurred due to travel mission cancellation, delays, contract termination or modification are subject to deduction from final contract amount.

Before you leave for Turkmenistan, you need to obtain a valid visa and/or the Letter of Invitation (LoI) - official visa support letter (VSL) approved by the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan to enter the country. Before visiting Turkmenistan, ensure that your UNLP or national passport is valid for at least six (6) months at the time of applying for a LoI.

\(^5\) **UNICEF is not covering any travel-related insurance (whether for health, third-party liability, accident or otherwise) nor does it provide any insurance coverage for this consultancy. The consultant is solely and fully responsible for (and UNICEF will not be liable for) (a) any insurance coverage which may be necessary or desirable for the purposes of travel and (b) any and all liability, costs, expenses and claims arising out of or related to consultancy travel. Consultant must travel on UNICEF-approved airlines.**
The request for the LoI should be sent at least three (3) weeks before planned arrival. It should contain a copy of valid passport with the following details: full name, passport No., citizenship, date of birth (DOB), date of passport issue, date of expiration (DOE), purpose of visit, occupation, and the period of the stay. The conditions for the registration depend on the type of passport.

**General Terms and Conditions**

UNICEF’s general terms and conditions will apply to the contract awarded to the vendor. Please note that, in the evaluation of the technical merits of each proposal, UNICEF will take into consideration any proposed amendments to the UNICEF General Terms and Conditions. Proposed amendments to the UNICEF general terms and conditions may negatively affect the evaluation of the technical merits of the proposal.

UNICEF retains the right to patent and intellectual rights, as well as copyright and other similar intellectual property rights for any discoveries, inventions, products or works arising specifically from the implementation of the project in cooperation with UNICEF. The right to reproduce or use materials shall be transferred with a written approval of UNICEF based on the consideration of each separate case. Consultants should always refer to UNICEF Turkmenistan support in developing the materials when publishing the results of the research conducted while in Turkmenistan in academic journals, books and websites.

In the event of unsatisfactory performance, UNICEF reserves the right to terminate the Agreement. In case of partially satisfactory performance, such as serious delays causing the negative impact on meeting the programme objectives, low quality or insufficient depth and/or scope of the assignment completion, UNICEF is entitled to decrease the payment by the range from 30% to 50% of the contract value as decided jointly by the Contract Supervisor and Operations Manager.

**Qualifications and Skills Required:** The Evaluation is expected to be undertaken by team a of evaluators (at a minimum the team should consist of a Team Leader/Technical Expert and a National Consultant), collaborating to produce the expected results. Experts undertaking this Evaluation should either individually or as a team have the following qualifications:

- Advanced university degree in child health, development and education and/or social sciences
- Extensive working experience in early childhood development and/or early childhood education and Education with knowledge of technical aspects of ECD services/programmes
- Strong and proven level of expertise on gender equality and child/human rights,
- Demonstrated expertise in data collection, analysis and reporting of quantitative and qualitative data
- Work experience and/or technical knowledge of ECD programmes in an international context, and of the ECARO region.
- Good training skills for assessment of child development and programme evaluation
- Demonstrated capacity and partnership building skills with local partners
- Good communication and advocacy skills
- Knowledge and experience of research on socio-economic issues in ECARO region. Field experience in ECORO countries is an asset.
• Record of research experience and/or written publications at the regional level.
• Experience in designing and implementing evaluation and surveys.
• Excellent written English language skills, demonstrable with samples of publications. Knowledge of Russian is a very strong asset.
• Excellent drafting skills and ability to synthesize complex information and issues.
• Strong analytical and conceptual thinking.
• Ability to organize and plan complex work following the established timeframes.

Submission of Proposal and evaluation criteria
The proposal for this consultancy should consist of technical and financial parts. While evaluating, 70% will be the share of technical rigor while 30% will be given for budget proposal:

Financial Proposal
Institutions applying for the contract are expected to submit a lump sum financial proposal to complete the entire assignment based on the terms of reference. Number of working days for each consultant should be suggested by an applicant. The lump sum should be broken down to show the details for the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Number of persons</th>
<th>Unit cost in USD</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultants (54 days in total)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airfare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>2 visits to Turkmenistan</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Country</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2 Velayats</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living costs (in calendar days)</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>18 days</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Specify</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Total in USD:

Please note that i) travel costs shall be calculated based on economy class fare regardless of the length of travel and ii) costs for accommodation, meals and incidentals shall not exceed the applicable daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, as propagated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). Details can be found at http://icsc.un.org
Technical proposal
Each proposal will be assessed first on its technical merits and subsequently on its price. In making the final decision, UNICEF considers both technical and financial aspects to ensure best value for money. The Evaluation Team first reviews the technical aspects of the offer, followed by review of the financial offers of the technically compliant vendors. The proposal obtaining the highest overall score after adding the scores for the technical and financial proposals together, that offers the best value for money will be recommended for award of the contract.

Your technical proposal should address all aspects of the above terms of reference. It will be evaluated against the pre-established technical evaluation criteria. As a minimum, your technical proposal should include the following:

- A cover letter, including
- Assessment of suitability vis-à-vis the requirements of this ToR;
- A summary of experience in similar assignments;
- Links to/attachments of examples of similar work;
- Comments and suggestions on the ToR and proposed workplan and deliverables
- CV of each team member (including qualifications and experience)
- References

Please make sure to provide sufficient information/substantiating documentation to address all technical evaluation criteria. The assessed technical score must be equal to or exceed 70 of the total 100 points allocated to the technical evaluation in order to be considered technically compliant and for consideration in the financial evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Criteria</th>
<th>Technical Sub-Criteria</th>
<th>Maximum Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Response</td>
<td>Completeness of proposal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenderer’s understanding of objectives and how they propose to perform the tasks in order to meet the objectives and requirements of the ToR</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution &amp; Key Personnel</td>
<td>Range and depth of individual/organization experience with similar projects</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>Previous experience of work in ECARO region</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samples of previous work</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key personnel: relevant experience and qualifications of the proposed team for the assignment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>Description of methodology/timeline</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Methodology and Approach</td>
<td>Description of approach to ensure quality of services, absence of conflict of interest and respect of ethical standards</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>