

## UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)

### CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOIs)

#### STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS

#### A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF UNICEF'S STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

**Date of the EOI:** 28 October 2016  
**Closing Date of the EOI:** 19 November 2016  
**Email EOI to:** evalofficeapplications@unicef.org

### 1 PURPOSE OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

UNICEF's Evaluation Office (EO) is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from qualified institutions (consultancy firms, universities, etc.) for the provision of services to complete an independent global thematic evaluation of UNICEF's strategies and programme performance with regard to strengthening child protection systems.

### 2 BACKGROUND

Child protection as a field of work within UNICEF has a long tradition, dating back to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, and cemented through the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990. This area of work relates primarily to children's right to be protected from violence, exploitation and abuse. Historically, child protection efforts have focused on at-risk populations such as street children or single issues such as child trafficking or child labour.

The Child Protection Strategy, adopted by UNICEF's Executive Board in 2008, for the first time explicitly stressed the "development of appropriate child protection systems" as one of two key strategic objectives in this area of work. It introduced the following definition: "Child protection systems comprise the set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors – especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice – to support prevention and response to protection-related risks. These systems are part of social protection and extend beyond it. At the level of prevention, their aim includes supporting and strengthening families to reduce social exclusion, and to lower the risk of separation, violence and exploitation" (CP Strategy 2008, para. 12).

In principle, child protection systems seek to address the full spectrum of risk factors in the lives of all children and their families. They are a core foundation for building a protective environment to offset the multiple, and often interconnected, vulnerabilities faced by children. Almost without exception, countries globally have some form of legislation in place which includes child protection provisions. However, they often fall short of international standards established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other international treaties. Depending on the country context, child protection systems may cut across part of the social welfare, education, health, and security sectors. Also, other elements of CP systems – human resources, finances, standards, governance, monitoring and services – are often less developed and integrated.

UNICEF's current Strategic Plan (2014-2017) further underscores the systems approach as one of the two key pillars of child protection work to be undertaken by the organization. To achieve Outcome 6 "Improved

and equitable prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children”, UNICEF programming thus focuses on “strengthening of child protection systems and support for social change for improved protection of children. A theory of change has been devised to visualise the programme-impact pathways and staff capacity building initiatives have taken place to make sure the systems approach is well understood.

Although UNICEF’s investment in strengthening child protection systems varies by region and year, it is clear that substantive financial and human resources have been devoted in recent years. Expenditure for CP systems strengthening work under the current SP period was US\$54 million in 2014 and US\$67.5 million in 2015. The majority of expenditure is allocated to (a) supporting work on laws and standards, national planning and budgeting as part of the enabling environment, and to (b) capacity building and service delivery to strengthen the supply side of the results framework.

Despite the long evolution of UNICEF’s thinking and investments, no comprehensive evaluation has been undertaken to assess UNICEF’s strategies and programme performance – including the leadership and advocacy roles – with regard to strengthening child protection systems. This evaluation comes at a time when there is considerable momentum to address child protection issues and when UNICEF is preparing its next strategic plan for the period 2018-2021. It is now widely recognized that well-functioning child protection systems are central to UNICEF’s mandate as an organization guided by the CRC and play a major role in support of the 2030 Agenda. The priorities to be achieved under three Sustainable Development Goals directly depend on success in strengthening CP systems. The evidence generated from the evaluation will thus feed directly into (a) the implementation of the new strategic plan and (b) the further boosting of national as well international partnerships to strengthen child protection systems.

### **3 OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION**

- Assess the appropriateness of UNICEF’s corporate strategies and strategic plan results/targets for strengthening national child protection systems.
- Examine the relevance and appropriateness of child protection system strengthening approaches that have been applied in various regions taking account of the range of country contexts (including middle income countries, fragile states) where UNICEF operates.
- Assess the performance of UNICEF country programmes -- using the evaluation criteria of effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability -- in strengthening national and decentralized child protection systems in selected contexts.
- Assess UNICEF’s leadership, guidance and technical support at all levels of the organization as well as the adequacy of UNICEF staffing/institutional capacity to respond to the lead role the organization is expected to play for developing and strengthening national child protection systems.
- Provide forward looking lessons, conclusions and recommendations for strengthening UNICEF’s leadership and advocacy, organizational policies and strategies, country programme response and partnerships for strengthening child protection systems.

### **4 SCOPE OF WORK**

The evaluation will assess UNICEF’s contributions to child protection systems strengthening at global, regional and country-levels.

At the country-level, it will focus on UNICEF’s work in middle income countries, least developed countries and fragile countries. While child protection systems strengthening is also ongoing in industrialized countries, these fall outside the scope of this evaluation due to UNICEF’s limited involvement in these

settings. The analysis will consider context-specific theories of change/programme logics to assess UNICEF's performance. As child protection system components might vary by national contexts and governance modalities, the evaluation will use a flexible/adaptive approach by considering functions that various parts of a child protection system are expected to perform and assess the extent to which various actors have been supported/empowered to perform their role. A key focus of the evaluation is thus to assess how effective UNICEF has been in contributing to both the establishment of and function of child protection system at the country level.

The evaluation will also examine performance at the regional level in selected regions (3-4) where considerable investments have been made in strengthening child protection systems. (The regions will be identified on the basis of a mapping exercise.) At the global/organizational level, the evaluation will examine the theory of change underlying the strategies, results and targets outlined in the strategic plan for strengthening child protection systems.

The evaluation will focus on the period from 2012 to 2016 with greater focus on the past three years (2014-2016). It will therefore focus largely on the targets and results of UNICEF's current Strategic Plan (2014-2017). The country-level assessment will consider the last three to five years of investments, depending on country/programme cycles and context.

## **5 PERIOD OF ASSIGNMENT AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

The evaluation is expected to commence in January 2017 and to be finalized in November 2017.

An Evaluation Advisory Group will be established in support of the evaluation. The evaluation team will report to a Senior Evaluation Officer in UNICEF's Evaluation Office.

## **6 EVALUATION APPROACH**

The evaluation will be staged in three phases: the Inception Phase, the Case Study Phase, and the Analysis and Reporting Phase.

During a comprehensive Inception Phase, in addition to exploring traditional scoping issues and developing an action plan for conducting the exercise, the evaluation team will develop the detailed evaluation methodology. (It is envisaged that the evaluation will use a mix of qualitative and quantitative data and analytical methods.) The team will also review existing Theories of Change, findings from child protection systems mapping exercises and recent country-level evaluations related to child protection systems strengthening.

In the Case Study Phase, the evaluation team will conduct country case studies based on a sample of countries where child protection systems strengthening is supported by UNICEF. It is envisaged that a sample of 20-25 case study countries will be identified using a set of selection criteria. From among this sample, a sub-sample of 6-8 countries will be selected for detailed data gathering and analysis as per the evaluation questions. These countries will also represent a mix of programme contexts and successful/less successful experiences and will involve field visits by the team for detailed data collection and analysis.

During the Analysis and Reporting Phase, the evaluation will employ a mixed-methods approach entailing triangulation of the most appropriate qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods in order to derive global level conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation team will, under the overall responsibility of the team leader, draft successive versions of the final Evaluation Report for review by UNICEF EO and

other stakeholders.

## 7 DESIRED TEAM COMPOSITION AND PROFILE

Qualified institutions (consultancy firms, universities, etc.) that have the capabilities to meet the following requirements, and are available for the evaluation period indicated, are invited to submit an EOI.

It is envisaged that the evaluation be carried out by a team of 5 to 6 consultants (team leader, 2-3 technical experts and 2 analysts). Team members should have complementary expertise in the areas of evaluation and child protection (or related fields). At least one of the evaluators must have a strong systems background (relating to systems with considerable human components). A possible division of labour is outlined below:

### A TEAM LEADER WITH THE FOLLOWING CREDENTIALS

- Strong team leadership and management track record and commitment to delivering timely and high-quality evaluation report;
- Extensive evaluation expertise (at least 10 years) of comprehensive scope with strong mixed-methods evaluation skills and flexibility in using non-traditional and innovative evaluation methods;
- Familiarity with UNICEF's programming, policy and advocacy work and experience in **evaluating social protection systems would be an asset**;
- Background in child protection issues including sound knowledge of system aspects; familiarity with other sectors, particularly health, education and social protection;
- Knowledge of the UN's human rights, gender equality and equity agendas and experience in applying these to evaluation;
- Good interpersonal and communication skills; ability to interact with various stakeholders and to concisely express ideas and concepts in written and oral form;
- Language proficiency: Fluency in English is mandatory; good command of French or Spanish is desirable.

### TEAM MEMBERS (2-3 EVALUATION OR RESEARCH EXPERTS WITH THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND)

- Significant experience in evaluation and/or policy research with background in child protection or related areas such as social protection (at least 5 years relevant experience);
- Significant experience in applying systems thinking to evaluation and in evaluating systems with considerable human components (e.g. health, education, social protection);
- Experience in evaluating multi-sectoral programmes or initiatives;
- Experience in involving children (adolescents) as a target group in conducting an evaluation;
- Strong conceptualization, analytical and writing skills and ability to work effectively in a team;
- Hands-on experience in collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data;
- Knowledge of the UN's human rights, gender equality and equity agendas and application in evaluation;
- Commitment and willingness to work in a challenging environment and ability to produce quality work under limited guidance and supervision;
- Good communication and people skills; ability to communicate with various stakeholders and to express ideas and concepts concisely and clearly in written and oral form;
- Language proficiency: Fluency in English is mandatory; good command of French and or Spanish is desirable.

#### RESEARCH ASSISTANT (1)

- At least 3 years of progressively responsible experience in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis;
- Experience in supporting senior evaluators in ensuring use of consistent interview protocols, templates for recording and reporting on interviews, standard case study report formats and a comparative table of findings;
- Familiarity with child protection related issues an advantage.

#### DATA ANALYST (1)

- At least 3 years of experience in knowledge management for evaluation, information technology and data management, use of infographics in report preparation;
- Expertise in handling collaborate teamwork software, online surveys, document repositories, bibliography software and databases.
- Commitment to handling back-office support and logistics as needed.
- The team on the whole is expected to be balanced with respect to gender, origin (developed/developing countries) and linguistic capacity (English/French/Spanish must be covered). The evaluation team should demonstrate a firm grasp of the ethical issues associated with working with children and of the recognition that the safety and welfare of rights-holders is paramount.

### 8 SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Interested institutions are encouraged to complete and submit the attached EOI form. EOIs should be sent to [evalofficeapplications@unicef.org](mailto:evalofficeapplications@unicef.org), no later than **close of business on 19 November 2016**. Please quote “Comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF’s strategies and programme performance with regard to strengthening child protection systems” as the subject in your correspondence.

This EOI does not constitute a solicitation. We do not require bids or proposals at this stage; we merely seek your expression of interest in participating in the tender. A response to this Call for Expression of Interest does not automatically ensure that you will be selected to participate in the tender. Further details on the evaluation (draft Terms of Reference, ToR) can be sent to interested parties upon request. A final ToR will be provided to those vendors invited to submit a full proposal by way of a Request for Proposal (RFPS). Following the RFPS, short-listed institutions will be invited to participate in an interview.

UNICEF reserves the right to change or cancel requirements at any time during the EOI and/or solicitation process. UNICEF also reserves the right to require compliance with additional conditions as and when issuing the final tender document.

If you have any additional questions about this EOI, please email Krishna Belbase ([kbelbase@unicef.org](mailto:kbelbase@unicef.org)) and Tina Tordjman-Nebe ([ttordjmannebe@unicef.org](mailto:ttordjmannebe@unicef.org)). Emails only, please; calls will not be returned.

# UNICEF Evaluation Office – Expression of Interest Form

## STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF UNICEF'S STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Please fill-in the form (up to 10 pages total) and submit to [evalofficeapplications@unicef.org](mailto:evalofficeapplications@unicef.org)

Full Name of Institution:

Type of Entity:

User Salutation:  Dr.  Ms.  Mr.

First Name:

Last Name:

Job Title/Role in Entity:

Mobile Phone Number:  (please include country & city code)

Fax Number:  (please include country & city code)

Contact E-mail Address:

Mailing Address:

City:

State:

Postal Code:

Country:

Address of Internet Website:

Alternate Contact Person:

**The submission should include answers to the following questions:**

**1. Describe in no more than two pages the organisational and financial profile of your institution, including**

- **Its organisational structure, including any associates, partner firms, etc. and the numbers of years it has been in the consultancy business;**
- **Its most relevant past experience(s) in relation to the proposed consultancy.**

**2. Lay out in no more than one page your motivation to be considered for this consultancy and why you think your institution is well-qualified.**

**3. Summarise the profile of the proposed evaluation team using no more than a page for the team leader and half a page per team member. Please attach the curriculum vitae of the team leader and members.**

The duration of the assignment will be from January 2017 to November 2017. It is foreseen that the team leader and the team members will devote half to two thirds of their time to the evaluation. Involvement is likely to fluctuate over time and between team members.

**4. Confirmation that your institution:**

- **Has no on-going litigation with the UN;**
- **Is not currently removed/invalidated or suspended by the United Nations or UN system organisations;**
- **Shall declare if it currently employs or anticipates employing any person(s) who was/were employed by the UN.**

The presence of a possible conflict of interest (e.g., having worked for or partnered directly with UNICEF on strategy, design or implementation of child protection systems strengthening) will automatically disqualify prospective candidates from consideration.