TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANCY

UNICEF is seeking a highly qualified specialist with significant knowledge and experience in the area of EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (0 – 3 YEARS)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Technical assistance and knowledge management for supporting policy and advocacy in Early Childhood Development (0 – 3 years)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Bucharest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>11 months (June 2013 – April 2014)</td>
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<td>Start date</td>
<td>June 2013</td>
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<td>Reporting to</td>
<td>Child Protection Specialist</td>
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Background
As expressed in The Lisbon Strategy in 2000, Europe 2020, the 2012 Parenting Support Policy Brief, and the very recent 2013 Recommendation for Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage, the European Commission considers Early Child Development (ECD) and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) as a long-term investment for reducing poverty and social exclusion and increasing social and economic capital. The Better Health for Europe: Health 2020 Strategy, emphasizes the “life course” approach, aims to ensure that children are enabled to reach their full potential for health and development, and calls for an explicit focus on the needs of the most disadvantaged through inter-sectoral action.

UNICEF is working with countries of the CEECIS region, including Romania, to develop a family-friendly framework for young child wellbeing that helps countries address root causes through preventive efforts rather than addressing the symptoms of social disadvantage at a much higher level of effort. Through regional collaboration and dissemination of best practices, shared policy guidance, curricula and tools are being developed and adapted to strengthen home visiting services. In addition, operations and impact research is being implemented that will advance our knowledge on the most appropriate, effective, and efficient ways of supporting families for increased young child wellbeing.

In Romania, in the area of Early Childhood Development (ECD) progress has been made through the adoption of the law on crèches and the inclusion in the new education law of the age group 0 -3 and the development of the curriculum. Nonetheless, there is a significant lack of services for children 0 to 3, with only 3% of them covered by the 303 crèches available nationwide, most of them in urban areas. There is still a need to integrate services provided by health, social and education sectors in order to enhance access and improve ECD quality. According to a 2006 study, 48% of the parents of children 0-3 use physical punishment with their children and only 65% of parents of children aged 0-3 consider playing as very important for their children’s development. According to Ministry of Health statistics, the leading death causes for the age group 1-4 years are accidents. Parenting knowledge and abilities of families, especially of young and vulnerable ones to prevent accidents are limited.
Moreover, a 2011 study revealed that 40% of pregnant women do not benefit from the eight prenatal visits established by the Ministry of Health in 2004 for any women with a non-complicated pregnancy. Yearly, about 18% of pregnant women (i.e., 40,000) have only 1 to 3 prenatal care visits, while 5% are seen by a doctor for the first time when they gave birth. Over 9% of the children are premature or with low birth weight every year. The infant mortality rate showed remarkable progress in the past 15 years, falling from 21.7 per 1,000 infants in 1995 to 9.6 in 2011, but it remains double of the EU average. According to Ministry of Health data, the infant mortality rate is 60% higher in rural areas compared to urban areas. The under-five mortality rate in Romania is low by international standards, but it remains the highest in the EU at 13 deaths per 1,000 live births (2010). It is estimated that 40% of under-five deaths are of preventable causes.

In this context, the Programme of Cooperation between Government of Romania – UNICEF 2013–2017 includes as one of the major intermediate results: enhanced knowledge, attitudes, practices and services to promote holistic and equitable development in the early years (0–3 years). To promote appropriate child development, interventions can support families, educate parents, deliver integrated social services to children, build the capacity of providers and support services, and increase public awareness about young children’s needs. The approach proposed for the current Programme of Cooperation is to advocate for strategic, effective and cost-efficient policy design in order to enhance access and improve quality with a focus on continuum of services and building the human capital. Communication for development will be employed to raise the awareness and build solidarity at local level through enlarged and innovative partnerships.

**Purpose**

Under the guidance and supervision of the Child Protection Specialist, the ECD consultant will ensure technical assistance for the implementation of the ECD component of the Rolling Work Plan 2013–2014, assisting in knowledge management for policy development and implementation of integrated ECD services for children 0-3 with focus on most vulnerable, and promoting advocacy and partnerships for holistic ECD policy framework.

**Major duties and responsibilities**

1. **Knowledge generation for policy development and implementation of integrated ECD services for children 0-3 with focus on most vulnerable.** Ensure assistance for action research on modelling and/or best practices providing integrated ECD services and map national and regional ECD initiatives and identify models and best practices of integrated service provision.

2. **Knowledge management effectively promoted for ECD convergent policy framework.** Assist knowledge generation on ECD enabling environment (social norms and normative framework). Technical assistance and policy advice for development and revisions of policies and sectoral strategies targeting children 0-3.

3. **Contribute to communication, mobilization and strengthen partnerships for a comprehensive ECD convergent policy framework** including national advocacy in partnership with local and county authorities, regional events and initiatives, networks building and sharing experience.

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1 Children living in marginalized communities, in economically vulnerable and deprived areas, children from ethnic minorities especially Roma, from families living in or at-risk of poverty or at-risk of dysfunction, children with disabilities.
involving relevant stakeholders. Assist process of resource mobilisation and leveraging for development and implementation of the ECD policy framework. Collaborates with partners, colleagues and experts to ensure development of effective communication strategies to support the development of a national dialogue on ECD and communication for development efforts to reduce tolerance of and acts of violence against children.

4. Rolling Work Plan component delivery, monitoring, evaluation and reporting carried out efficiently, rigorously and transparently in compliance with the established guidelines and procedures.

**Expected results and deliverables:**
The consultancy is proposed for an initial period of 11 months and includes the following expected results:

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<th>Area</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Period/dead line</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge generation for policy development and implementation of integrated ECD services for children 0-3 with focus on most vulnerable</td>
<td>a. Mapping best practices providing integrated ECD services</td>
<td>September – December 2013</td>
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<td>b. Mapping of national and regional ECD initiatives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c. Study on knowledge, attitudes and practices on parenting (0-6) designed in partnership with major stakeholders and implemented</td>
<td>July 2013 – April 2014</td>
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<td>d. Review of policies and sectoral strategies targeting children 0-3 including (i.e. Strategy on infant and young child feeding, Strategy for mother and child health, Parenting Strategy (0-3 years), National Strategy for Mental Health for Children and Adolescents (0-18) and outline recommendations and course of action for ECD convergent framework</td>
<td>July – December 2013</td>
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<td>2. Knowledge management effectively promoted for ECD convergent policy framework</td>
<td>e. Network of key partners build and effective for advocacy and support for the development and implementation of the ECD convergent framework</td>
<td>June – December 2013</td>
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<td>3. Contribute to mobilization and strengthen partnerships for a comprehensive ECD convergent policy framework</td>
<td>f. Plan for resource mobilization and leveraging for ECD component of the UNICEF Romania Programme developed and implementation initiated</td>
<td>January – February 2014</td>
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<td>g. Provide input to communication and communication for development strategies and plan of action drafted for supporting the national dialogue on ECD and efforts to reduce tolerance of and acts of violence against children (using the latest tools available (including social and online media).</td>
<td>January – April 2014</td>
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Background and Qualifications of the Consultant

- Advanced university degree in medical sciences, social sciences and other related fields
- At least 7 years of experience working in early childhood development and/or any related field of work, including interaction with various range of stakeholders involved in these areas
- Experience in advocacy for policy change or policy formulation
- Analytical and conceptual ability. Previous involvement in situation analysis, report writing and formulation of recommendations.
- Ability to work with professionals from various sectors including health, education and social protection, in a multidisciplinary team and establish harmonious and effective working relationships both within and outside the organization.
- Ability to make timely and quality judgments and decisions. Planning and monitoring skills; ability to organize work and projects.
- Previous experience with Romania County Office is an advantage
- Fluency in Romanian and English is required
- Computer skills, including internet navigation and various office applications
- Availability for short in-country travel missions
- Availability for intensive work during 11 months starting June 10, 2013.

General conditions: Procedures and Logistics

- Consultant will work under the direct supervision of the Programme Specialist. Decision-making is limited to methods of work and prioritizing project activities in accordance with established daily / weekly work-plan. Recommendations are made to supervisor on appropriate course of action regarding activities’ adjustments as a result of observations and conclusions from meetings with counterparts, site visits, reading specific documentation, etc. Supervisor will provide specific instructions for assignments and reviews work regularly for accuracy and soundness.
- This contract includes daily subsistence allowance when travelling to project sites and attending project meetings (situations when she/he is authorized to have access to UNICEF transport).
- Payments will be made monthly, based on activity report signed by supervisor.
- Note: consultant will sign health statement prior to taking the assignment and the designation form will be completed.

Interested candidates should submit their applications in English i.e. P11, Cover Letter, and Financial Offer, subject “ECD Consultant” by 3 June 2013, 17:00 to the following address: UNICEF Romania, 48A Bdul. Primaverii, sector 1, Bucuresti or by email at bucharest@unicef.org