

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Technical support to local governments for planning and implementing expansion of early childhood education and care

CONTRACT MODALITY Individual Consultancy

DUTY STATION Sarajevo, Bosnia Hercegovina & remote

DURATION OF CONTRACT 22 months and 21 days

Purpose of Assignment

UNICEF supports four municipalities/cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Istocno Novo Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Laktasi, and Gradiska) to expand equitable access to quality ECEC as part of the Joint UN Programme *Accelerating Agenda 2030 through Governance and Sustainable Growth (SDG 2030 BiH)*. Building on similar work in two cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this consultancy will provide sustained technical support for local expansion planning and implementation.

The consultancy will support four municipalities/cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina of the Joint UN Programme to develop five-year Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) expansion plans and implement one locally contextualized, co-funded expansion initiative in each municipality/city. The consultant will facilitate planning and implementation with local administrations, in collaboration with education authorities and other relevant social-sector authorities.

Local expansion requires coordinated decisions on provision, financing, staffing, affordability and inclusion. UNICEF will provide its existing planning methodology, relevant examples from other cities and costing tools. The consultant will adapt and apply these resources to local circumstances, strengthen municipal ownership and help translate agreed priorities into practical projects and sustainable public financing.

The consultancy will further support implementation of innovative local-level initiatives (co-funded by the Joint UN Programme and the municipalities/cities) that contribute to increasing ECEC enrolment. These may include development of models of subsidies for families, partnerships with private providers or other measures to improve public financing for children and expand ECEC access. Options will be selected jointly according to local needs and feasibility, with specialist financing and PPP advice provided through UNICEF's PPP expert.

Scope of Work

Under the direct supervision of the Education Officer, under the guidance of the Education Specialist and in close collaboration with the PPP expert, the consultant is responsible for the following scope of work:

Inception and local coordination: Agree the workplan with UNICEF and municipalities/cities, review the available methodology and tools, and facilitate the establishment of a working group and focal points in each locality. Maintain regular contact, organise technical meetings and follow up on agreed actions, engaging relevant education and social-sector authorities.

Development of five year ECEC expansion plans: Support the four local working groups to assess existing provision and expansion needs and develop costed five-year expansion plans using UNICEF's methodology. Facilitate consultation and validation, revise the plans and provide technical support through the formal adoption process.

Design of co-funded expansion initiatives: Support each city/municipality to develop one feasible initiative (small-scale project in each location) aligned with its expansion plan to be implemented in partnership with UNICEF, including a programme document, budget, co-financing arrangements and implementation schedule. Drawing on specialist PPP and financing advice, the projects can include public-private partnerships, expansion of public infrastructure (i.e. refurbishing), improving subsidy designs for families, or any other actions which contribute to increasing ECEC enrolment.

Support to launch and implementation: Provide technical and operational support to launch and implement the four agreed initiatives. Follow up on the implementation of four small-scale projects, including expenditure tracking, monitoring of activities and results, support municipal reporting and help resolve implementation constraints in coordination with UNICEF. This further includes collaboration with the PPP expert to support municipalities/cities in advancing their PPP agendas.

Monitoring and final reporting: Document progress, lessons and outstanding actions; review the sustainability of financing and service arrangements; and prepare recommendations for continued implementation of the five-year plans. Finalise outputs following UNICEF review.

Local engagement, plans and project documentation will be in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. Inception, progress and final reports to UNICEF will be in English.

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable
Inception and coordination	Deliverable 1 – Approved inception report with workplan, brief needs assessment for each location, working group membership and meeting and consultation schedule.	28 February 2027
Preparation of draft ECEC expansion plans	Deliverable 2 – Four draft five-year plans covering provision and demand, underserved groups, options, capital and recurrent costs, staffing, financing, responsibilities, timeline and monitoring.	30 July 2027
Support provided for adoption of the plans	Deliverable 3 – Four validated final plans, documented submission for adoption and the report on the adoption status and follow-ups if needed.	30 December 2027
Project design and launch support	Deliverable 4 – Four project packages with budgets, agreed co-funding, and implementation schedules and	15 February 2028

	documented technical support to launch the four initiatives.	
Implementation support first phase	Deliverable 5 – Consolidated progress report for all four projects; action and expenditure tracking, cash-transfer documentation follow-up, municipal reporting support and constraints requiring decisions.	30 May 2028
Implementation support second phase	Deliverable 6 – Updated progress report covering four projects; verified available results, financing and implementation issues; recommendations and agreed corrective actions.	30 September 2028
Final synthesis and handover	Deliverable 7 – Final report with recommendations for further support and scale-up.	30 October 2028

Payment Schedule:

Payment will be made on submission and acceptance of deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment in case the deliverables submitted are not up to the required standard or in case of delays in submitting the deliverables on the part of the consultant.

Important Notes

- Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract will not be considered “staff members” under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF’s policies and procedures and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants and Individual Contractors. Consultants and individual contractors are responsible for determining their tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.
- Contracts are conditional upon the selected candidate's willingness to comply with any current or future vaccination requirements that may be established by UNICEF, where applicable. Failure to comply with applicable vaccination requirements, where required and without an approved medical exemption by UNICEF, may result in the withdrawal of the consultancy offer or termination of the contract in accordance with the General Terms and Conditions of Contract.
- UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants with disabilities. This may include, for example, accessible software, travel assistance for missions or personal attendants. We encourage you to disclose your disability during your application in case you need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and afterwards in your assignment.

**QUALIFICATIONS / SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCE/ COMPETENCIES
(CORE/TECHNICAL/FUNCTIONAL) / LANGUAGE SKILLS REQUIRED FOR THE ASSIGNMENT**

- Minimum requirements:

Education: Bachelors in Economics, public finance, public policy, public administration or another relevant discipline.

Years of Experience/ Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required*:

Work Experience:

At least 4 years of relevant professional experience in in local policy or development planning, public financing and support to municipal project implementation;

Experience supporting project implementation, budget monitoring and reporting, preferably involving grants or transfers to public authorities.

Language Requirements:

Fluency in English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian

Knowledge/Expertise/Skills:

Knowledge of local government institutions and public budgeting processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Ability to coordinate diverse public-sector counterparts, organise consultations and provide practical technical guidance;

Ability to implement local-level projects, including funds utilization monitoring and implementation quality assurance;

Strong ICT skills, including the use of MS Office;

Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;

Strong facilitation skills and ability to work independently and proactively;

Excellent professional writing skills.

Desirables:

Prior work experience with UNICEF or other UN organization is an asset