

TERMS OF REFERENCE

National Consultant to Develop a Monitoring Framework on the Status of Children in Contact with the Justice System in Serbia

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	Belgrade, Serbia & home based, remote work
DURATION OF CONTRACT	5 months

Purpose of Assignment

Recognizing that access to justice is a fundamental human right and an essential prerequisite for the realization and protection of all other rights, UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, and with the support of the European Union, is implementing the three-year project Promoting Children's Access to Justice in the Republic of Serbia. The overall aim of the Project is to ensure that all children in Serbia have equitable access to a child-friendly justice system.

The Project places particular emphasis on strengthening the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Justice to lead, coordinate, monitor and advance the justice for children agenda in line with international and European standards. It supports the establishment and institutionalisation of a dedicated Unit in charge of justice for children (Unit) within the Ministry of Justice, whose functions will include coordination of justice for children policies, intersectoral cooperation, data collection, monitoring and reporting, and the use of evidence to inform policy development and implementation.

Under Output 4.2 of the Project, UNICEF will support the Ministry of Justice/Unit in developing and institutionalising a comprehensive monitoring framework on the status of children in contact with the justice system. The framework will establish a systematic basis for collecting, consolidating, analysing and reporting data concerning children in contact with the justice system and for assessing the extent to which their rights are respected in law, policy and practice.

The monitoring framework will cover, at minimum, the principal groups of children who come in contact with the justice system: children in conflict with the law, child victims and witnesses of criminal offences, children in civil proceedings and children accessing or requiring free legal aid, while allowing for its future extension to other areas in which children come into contact with the justice system. Particular attention will be paid to children in vulnerable situations and to appropriate disaggregation of data, including by age, sex, disability, geographical location and other relevant characteristics, subject to data availability and data protection legislation requirements.

The purpose of the consultancy is to support the Ministry of Justice and UNICEF in developing a practical, rights-based and institutionally sustainable monitoring framework on the status of children in contact with the justice system that can be adopted and routinely applied by the Ministry of Justice. The framework should enable regular collection, consolidation and analysis of relevant data and support evidence-based policy development and monitoring of the implementation of children's rights within the justice system.

Scope of Work

Under the supervision of the UNICEF Child Protection Section and in close cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, the consultant will develop a comprehensive monitoring framework on the status of children in contact with the

justice system.

The assignment will include the following interrelated tasks:

1. **Conduct an inception and desk review** of relevant national legal, policy and institutional frameworks, existing administrative and statistical data systems, national monitoring and reporting mechanisms, previous research and assessments and international and European standards and monitoring frameworks concerning justice for children.
2. **Map existing indicators, data sources, data holders, data collection and reporting mechanisms as well as data gaps** relevant to children in contact with the justice system. This should include data generated by the Ministry of Justice, including the Directorate for Execution of Penal Sanctions, courts, public prosecutors' offices, High Judicial Council, Ministry of Interior, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Republic Institute for Social Protection, centres for social welfare and child justice institutions within the social welfare system, the free legal aid system, service providers and other relevant institutions. The mapping should identify available data and disaggregation, frequency of collection, institutional responsibility, comparability, duplication, and significant gaps. In particular, it should identify data required for the proposed monitoring framework that are currently unavailable or insufficiently collected and provide an initial assessment of what changes would be required from relevant institutions to generate them on a regular basis.
3. **Consult relevant national stakeholders** to assess existing data collection practices, information needs and realistic arrangements for regular collection, exchange, consolidation and analysis of data and to build preliminary agreement on institutional responsibilities for generating and reporting the data required by the framework. Consultations should involve the Ministry of Justice and other relevant justice, social welfare, interior and statistical institutions, as well as relevant independent institutions, academia and civil society organisations, if needed. Consultations should include a structured questionnaire addressed to relevant data holders, followed by a joint consultation meeting to verify the mapping, discuss identified data gaps and agree on what improvements may be needed in existing data collection practices, instruments and reporting arrangements, including, if needed, legislative or regulatory changes.
4. **Develop the monitoring framework**, including key monitoring areas and questions, quantitative and qualitative indicators, definitions, data sources, required disaggregation, frequency of collection and responsible institutions. The framework should also address data quality and validation, unavailable or incomplete data, confidentiality, privacy, and protection of children's personal data. The framework should monitor more than the number of children/cases. Instead, to the extent that reliable data can be obtained, it should monitor the quality and outcomes of children's interaction with the justice system and realization of their rights. Relevant domains should include access to justice and legal assistance, diversion and alternatives to detention/institutional sanctions, relevant procedural safeguards, participation and the right to be heard, protection from secondary victimisation, individual assessment and procedural accommodations for children with disabilities, access to information and support, duration/timeliness of proceedings, reintegration and non-discrimination, with particular attention given to vulnerable groups. For indicators for which data are currently unavailable, incomplete or insufficiently disaggregated, the framework should specify what additional data need to be collected, by which institution, through which existing or proposed data collection mechanism, and what changes to existing practices, instruments or reporting arrangements would be required.
5. **Develop practical monitoring and reporting tools**, including an indicator matrix, data collection templates and reporting templates and a proposed structure for the annual report on the status of children in contact with the justice system. The consultant should test the feasibility of the proposed framework against available data and identify indicators that can be used immediately and those requiring improvements to existing data collection or new data sources. Also, the consultant should develop an annual reporting model that distinguishes between the first annual report based on currently available data and the progressively expanded reporting model to be used once the improvements in data collection are introduced.
6. **Facilitate validation meeting with relevant institutions to review and seek agreement on the proposed**

framework, institutional responsibilities, data flows and recommended improvements, and revise the framework based on the agreements reached.

7. **Finalise the Monitoring Framework and provide practical guidance of its implementation**, including procedures for requesting, receiving, validating, consolidating and analysing data from relevant institutions, preparation of the annual report, recommendations for improvement of data collection by specific institutions, and the gradual institutionalisation and routine application of the framework by the Ministry of Justice.

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable
Work Assignment 1: Inception, desk review and methodology	Deliverable 1 – Inception Report (approx. 10-15 pages) setting out the methodology, detailed workplan, preliminary monitoring domains, stakeholders/data holders to be consulted, and brief desk review of relevant international and national frameworks and existing monitoring mechanisms	15 December 2026
Work Assignment 2: Mapping of existing monitoring/data systems and consultations	Deliverable 2 – Data and Monitoring Mapping Report , including inventory of existing indicators, data sources/data holders, data availability and disaggregation, reporting cycles and institutional responsibilities; gap analysis; findings from the stakeholder questionnaires and joint consultation meeting, including identified needs for improvement of data collection practices; and proposed data flows and institutional arrangements.	31 January 2027
Work Assignment 3: Development of monitoring framework	Deliverable 3 – Draft Monitoring Framework , comprising monitoring objectives and domains; indicator matrix with definitions, calculation methods, data sources, disaggregation, reporting frequency and responsible institutions; proposed data flows; data quality and validation arrangements; confidentiality/data protection safeguards; and classification of indicators according to immediate and progressive feasibility.	28 February 2027

Work Assignment 4: Development of operational tools and feasibility testing	Deliverable 4 – Monitoring Toolkit and Annual Reporting Package, including: - practical instructions and, where required, reporting templates for relevant institutions that produce data to compile and submit as required under the Monitoring Framework; - guidance for the Ministry of Justice/Unit on receiving, checking, validating, consolidating and analysing data submitted by different institutions; - proposed annual monitoring/reporting cycle, including responsibilities and indicative timelines; - annual report template/structure, including standard tables and proposed presentation of quantitative and qualitative findings; - a template and proposed content structure for the 2026 annual report, reflecting data that are currently available, together with clearly identified data gaps and recommendations for improving subsequent annual reporting; - feasibility assessment identifying indicators that can be reported immediately and indicators requiring improvements to existing data collection systems; and - specific recommendations to relevant institutions on the additional data that they should collect and the changes, including relevant legislative amendments, required to existing data collection and reporting practices.	31 March 2027
Work Assignment 5: Validation, institutional agreement and finalisation	Deliverable 5 – Final Monitoring Framework and Implementation Guidance, incorporating comments from UNICEF, Ministry of Justice and relevant stakeholders and including: - indicator framework and operational tools; - agreed/proposed institutional responsibilities and data flows;	30 April 2027

	- institution-specific recommendations for addressing identified data gaps and improving data collection, disaggregation statistical forms, reporting templates or other data collection mechanisms; - proposed phased implementation plan distinguishing actions that can be introduced immediately from those requiring legislative, methodological, IT and other changes; - final annual report template and guidance for its preparation by the Ministry of Justice/Unit. Validation meeting facilitated by the consultant with relevant institutions to present, review the proposed framework and revise it on the basis of the agreements reached.	
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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:
 - Advanced (masters) university degree in law, economics, statistics, public policy, public administration or another social science relevant to the assignment.
- Work Experience:
 - At least 7 years of relevant professional experience in justice, children’s rights, human rights, public policy, monitoring and evaluation, research, or related field.
 - At least 5 years of professional experience in justice for children, including work related to children in conflict with the law, child victims and witnesses of crime, access to justice, legal aid or child protection.
 - Demonstrated experience in monitoring research and/or data analysis, including development or use of indicators, monitoring frameworks, data collection tools, or institutional reporting mechanisms.
- Skills (optional):
 - Strong knowledge of Serbian justice for children and child protection systems and relevant

institutional mandates.

- Good knowledge of international and European children's rights and child-friendly justice standards.
 - Knowledge of quantitative and qualitative monitoring methodologies, indicator development, and analysis of administrative and statistical data.
 - Strong analytical, research, drawing and organizational skills, including the ability to facilitate consultations and work effectively with public institutions and other relevant stakeholders.
- Language Requirements:
 - Fluency in Serbian and English, both written and spoken
 - Desirables:
 - Previous experience working with or providing technical assistance to public institutions in Serbia, particularly in the justice, social welfare, child protection or statistical sectors
 - Experience in developing or analyzing monitoring systems concerning children, justice or other relevant areas.