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TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS

Consultancy Title: Country Programme Planning (CPP) Process Review and Lessons Learned Consultant – for the review of the 2026 CPP processes, aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2026–2029	Funding Code (Grant and WBS): NON-GRANT BMD 2220/A0/13/004/001/006	Name of the requesting business area & Section: Strategic Planning and Analytics Unit / Office of Strategy and Evidence - Innocenti	Duty Station Florence, Italy
Number of Consultants Required (To be filled only if multiple consultants are needed): Click here			
Purpose of Activity/Assignment <i>(Consultants may be engaged only when the assignment is of a temporary nature; based on payment for services or work with defined deliverables and outputs that are specific and measurable, to be performed and completed within a specified period of time. Consultants must not be engaged to perform staff functions or other functions that are not based on defined deliverables or outputs):</i> The Country Programme Planning (CPP) process provides an opportunity for UNICEF Country Offices to critically reflect on the country context, identify strategic priorities, make choices about where UNICEF can contribute most effectively, and translate these choices into coherent country programmes. The process involves a series of analytical and strategic steps, including evidence review, strategic reflection, prioritization, Strategic Moment of Reflection (SMR), engagement with government and other partners, and the development of theories of change and results. While considerable time and resources are invested in these processes, there is a need to better understand the quality and strategic value of the work undertaken before the CPD is drafted. In particular, there is an opportunity to examine whether CPP activities and products generate substantive strategic choices, whether these choices are carried through successive stages of programme planning, and how consistently the new UNICEF Strategic Plan 2026–2029 informs the process. The purpose of this consultancy is to undertake a post-facto, document-based review of a sample of 8 CPP processes undertaken in 2026 under the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2026–2029, with a view to identifying lessons that can strengthen the design and implementation of future CPP cohorts. The review will examine the strategic thinking evidenced through the CPP process and the quality, relevance and coherence of the documents it generates. It will go beyond checking whether prescribed steps were followed and explore whether these steps served their intended strategic purpose, what enabled or constrained substantive reflection and decision-making, and how effectively the conclusions from one stage informed subsequent stages of planning including the timing dimensions and where further efficiencies could be made. Particular attention will be paid to how the new Strategic Plan's emphasis on focus, scale and impact, and differentiation is reflected in the analysis, deliberations and choices documented throughout the CPP process, rather than simply in references to the Strategic Plan in programme documents. The consultancy will generate practical, evidence-based recommendations for improving CPP guidance, the support provided to Country Offices by Regional Offices and Headquarters, and the documentation of the planning process. It will also identify promising practices that could inform and be shared with subsequent cohorts. The exercise is intended primarily as an organizational learning exercise. It is not a formal evaluation, compliance audit or assessment of Country Office or Regional Office performance, nor is it a review of the quality of the final CPD as a standalone document.			

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Scope of Work:

The consultant will undertake the following tasks:

2.1. Develop a focused analytical framework

Review relevant CPP guidance, existing assessment tools and criteria, and available work on operationalizing the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2026–2029, including relevant inputs from the Global Programme Division, as made available by UNICEF.

On this basis, develop a practical analytical framework for examining the strategic quality and coherence of CPP processes. The framework will build on existing material, adapting it as necessary to the objectives of this review and avoiding the creation of a parallel or unnecessarily complex set of indicators.

The framework will set out the key review questions, dimensions of analysis, and documentary evidence to be examined. It should distinguish between evidence that a strategic step took place, evidence of the substantive value it generated, and evidence that its conclusions informed subsequent decisions.

2.2. Select and review a sample of CPP processes undertaken in 2026

In consultation with OSE and the relevant Regional Offices, identify a purposive sample of approximately **8 CPP processes undertaken in 2026 that applied the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2026–2029** for retrospective analysis.

The sample should provide reasonable diversity in regional and country contexts, including relevant differences in country typologies, while taking account of the availability of core CPP documentation. The selection will be agreed with OSE and the relevant Regional Offices.

For each selected case, review the key documents and other materials generated through the CPP process, as available. These may include evidence syntheses and situation analysis inputs, SMR outputs, prioritization materials, records of strategic reflection and consultations, theories of change, results-related products, and other documents capturing strategic decisions and their rationale.

The review will focus on documents generated through the CPP process rather than on the final CPD document itself. Supplementary consultations may be used selectively to clarify the context or interpretation of documentary evidence.

2.3. Analyse the strategic quality and coherence of the CPP process

Apply the agreed framework to examine the following dimensions across the selected cases:

- **Quality of strategic reflection and decision-making.** Assess the extent to which the documented process moves beyond describing the country context or reaffirming existing priorities to generate meaningful strategic choices, including decisions about where UNICEF should focus its efforts and where a different approach may be warranted.
- **Evidence-informed prioritization.** Examine how evidence and analysis inform the identification of priorities, the rationale for strategic choices, and the relative emphasis placed on competing needs and opportunities. Where documented, consider whether the process makes clear what is prioritized, why, and what is correspondingly deprioritized.
- **Application of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2026–2029.** Analyse how considerations relating to focus, scale and impact, and differentiation are reflected in the planning process and its outputs. Examine whether these concepts inform substantive choices and programme design, rather than being treated primarily as statements of alignment. Use relevant existing criteria where available and applicable.
- **Continuity and coherence across CPP stages.** Trace, to the extent permitted by the available documentation, whether insights from evidence and analysis inform strategic reflection and prioritization, and whether the resulting choices are carried through to theories of change and results-related products. Identify where strategic intent is strengthened, diluted or lost as the process advances.
- **Responsiveness to country context.** Consider whether strategic choices reflect the specific context, opportunities and constraints of the country. Where useful, examine patterns across different country typologies, without treating any one approach as universally applicable or attempting to conduct a comprehensive country typology assessment.
- **The contribution of key planning interactions.** Examine what the documentation reveals about the contribution of SMRs, internal UNICEF strategic discussions, engagement with government and partners, and support from

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Regional Offices and Headquarters. The focus should be on the strategic value of these interactions and their contribution to decisions, rather than simply whether meetings or consultations took place.

- **Documentation and institutional learning.** Assess whether the main strategic conclusions, decisions and their rationale are sufficiently documented to make the planning process traceable and facilitate learning across cohorts. Identify recurring gaps in the availability, completeness or accessibility of key CPP products that constrain review and institutional learning.

These dimensions should be applied proportionately, focusing on evidence that is relevant and available in each case. Innovation and new ways of working should be considered where they are material to the strategic choices being examined, rather than treated as a separate assessment exercise.

2.4. Synthesize findings and identify implications for future CPP cohorts

Compare the selected cases to identify recurring strengths, weaknesses, enabling factors and gaps in the strategic thinking evidenced through the CPP process.

Distinguish between issues relating primarily to the application or clarity of guidance, the design or sequencing of CPP steps, the quality of strategic reflection and decision-making, the support provided to Country Offices, and the documentation of planning outputs.

Identify promising practices that could be adapted or shared across Country Offices and regions. Where relevant, consider whether particular findings vary by country context or typology.

Develop a concise set of actionable recommendations for OSE and relevant UNICEF counterparts on how to strengthen future CPP cohorts. Recommendations should prioritize feasible improvements to guidance, process design, support arrangements and documentation, based on the evidence available from the review.

The review will be retrospective. It will not provide ongoing support to Country Offices undertaking CPP, develop or deliver a training programme, or establish a CPP community of practice. These may be separate mechanisms through which the findings are subsequently used.

Child Safeguarding

Is this project/assignment considered as "[Elevated Risk Role](#)" from a child safeguarding perspective?

☐ YES	☒ NO
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Direct contact role

Is this project/assignment considered as "[Elevated Risk Role](#)" from a direct contract role perspective?

☐ YES	☒ NO
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If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:

Child data role

Is this project/assignment considered as "[Elevated Risk Role](#)" from a child data role perspective?

☐ YES	☒ NO
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If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information (e.g. name, national ID, location data, photos) of children:

More information is available in the [Child Safeguarding SharePoint](#) and [Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates](#)

Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan:

☒ YES	☐ NO
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If No, please justify:

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Click here

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Consultant Sourcing:
☐ National
 ☐ International
 ☒ Both

Note: Please select the option relevant to your consultancy assignment. If selected 'National', applications from international candidates will not be accepted and vice-versa.

Competitive Selection:
☒ **Advertisement**

Note: for open competitive selection process to publish consultancy on UNICEF TMS portal.

Two weeks is recommended as minimum for advertisement, however, hiring manager may adjust based on urgency/context while ensuring transparency and fairness. Please indicate below accordingly:

Advertisement duration in calendar days: 15

☐ **Roster**

By selecting this sourcing type, the signatory of this ToR certifies that the candidates listed below are sourced from a valid and approved roster established via a competitive and transparent process, and that the ToR falls within the scope of the roster. Listed candidates shall have a full TMS profile.

In the table below, provide a list of candidates from the roster (who are meeting this ToR requirements) to seek financial proposal:

Name of Candidates	Email Address as per Roster
Click here	Click here
Click here	Click here
Click here	Click here
Click here	Click here
Click here	Click here
Click here	Click here to add text or click the + sign to add more rows

☐ **Single Source Selection: (Emergency – Director's approval)**

Note: As per UNICEF procedure on Consultants (Document Number: PROCEDURE/DHR/2022/007) effective 1 December 2022, Single Source Selection is only applicable to countries, regions and subject-matter areas that have been designated by the Executive Director as being in an "emergency situation", as stipulated in [CF/EXD/2010-005, Recruitment and Staffing in Emergency Situations, paragraph 1.3](#).

Single source may also be applied in other circumstances, in accordance with FRR 112.30 ([UNICEF Financial Regulations and Rules \(Annex to E ICEF 2011 AB L.8\)](#)), provided that a clear and justified rationale is documented in the NFR based on one of the applicable FRR conditions.

Additional document requirement:  [NFR Waiver of Competitive Bidding for Individual Contracts \(Consultants\).docx](#)

For Long-Term Agreements (LTA), this ToR template is not to be used. For LTA, please use the [Work Order](#) template.

Reasons why consultancy cannot be performed by staff:

Given the demanding workload and existing commitments of relevant staff, the assignment requires dedicated external support to be completed within the required timeframe without compromising the delivery of ongoing priorities and core responsibilities.

Contract Manager: Francesca Morandini	Start Date: <i>Ensure the start date accounts for the contracting process SLA</i> 30 November 2026	End Date: 23 February 2027, considering the Christmas break
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Work Assignment Overview	Deliverables/ Outputs (SMART)*	Delivery deadline		Planned Travel (For travel, please specify destination, number of days. This travel is for the applicants' financial proposal)
		Exact date to complete* the deliverable	Input days**	
Develop the methodology and analytical framework for the post-facto review, building on existing CPP guidance, assessment tools and relevant criteria for the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2026–2029.	1. Inception note and analytical framework: A concise methodology setting out the review questions, analytical dimensions, documentary requirements, proposed sample of 8 CPP processes undertaken in 2026 under the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2026–2029, and workplan, agreed with OSE.	04.12.2026	4	N/A
Conduct a structured documentary review of the agreed sample of CPP processes and analyse the strategic thinking and decisions evidenced throughout the process.	2. CPP document review and case analysis matrix: A completed evidence matrix covering all selected cases, with concise case notes documenting findings on strategic reflection, evidence-informed prioritization, application of the new Strategic Plan, coherence across CPP stages, responsiveness to country context and documentation of strategic decisions.	22.01.2027	24	
Synthesize findings across the reviewed cases, identifying common patterns, strengths, gaps, enabling factors and lessons for future CPP cohorts.	3. Draft synthesis report: A concise analytical report (max. 15 pages for the main document) presenting cross-case findings, illustrative good practices, key lessons and prioritized, actionable recommendations for strengthening CPP guidance, process design, support arrangements and documentation.	15.02.2027	9	

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Finalize the analysis and present the findings and recommendations to OSE, incorporating consolidated feedback from UNICEF.	4. Final report and findings presentation: A final synthesis report incorporating feedback, a concise presentation (max 15 slides) of key findings and recommendations, and the analytical framework and completed review matrix in editable formats for potential reuse in subsequent CPP reflection processes.	23.02. 2027	6	
Total estimated consultancy costs (Consultancy Fees + Travel Costs) For multiple consultants indicate the total estimated budget (total budget for 1 consultant * number of consultants = total)			43	

- Add more line to the table as needed
- Costs indicated are estimated. Final rate shall follow the “best value for money” principle, i.e., achieving the desired outcome at the lowest possible fee. Consultancy costs shall include lump sum travel and subsistence costs, as applicable.
- Payment of professional fees will be based on submission of agreed deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment in case the deliverables submitted are not of the required quality or in case of delays in submitting the deliverables on the part of the consultant.
- In case of unplanned travel, register it in a separate deliverable line and reserve funds for potential future travel needs. Such travel will be reimbursed based on a separate line item (to be shared with applicants for financial bidding.)
- Marked (*) information will be part of the financial proposal shared with the consultant.
- Marked (**) information will not be shared with the consultant.

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Minimum Qualifications required*: ☐ Bachelors ☒ Masters ☐ PhD ☐ Other Enter Disciplines: An advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent) in International Development, Development Studies, Public Policy, Public Administration, Economics, Development Economics, Social Sciences, Political Science, Sociology, International Relations, Strategic Planning, Programme Planning and Management, or another discipline directly relevant to country programme planning, strategic analysis and development programming. Specialization or demonstrated academic training in results-based management, public policy analysis, development planning, programme design, theories of change, or the analysis of development results is an asset. *Minimum requirements to consider candidates for competitive process.	Years of Experience/ Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required*: Work Experience: At least 10 years of progressively responsible professional experience in strategic planning, country programme development, results-based management or programme design and analysis, preferably within UNICEF or the UN system. Language Requirements: Fluency in English, with excellent written and oral communication skills. Knowledge/Expertise/Skills: Demonstrated experience in reviewing and analysing country programme planning processes and related documentation, including strategic analysis, prioritization, theories of change and results frameworks. Experience in conducting comparative or cross-country reviews, identifying patterns and good practices, and translating analytical findings into practical recommendations to strengthen planning processes and organizational learning is required. Demonstrated expertise in strategic planning and results-based management, with strong analytical skills and the ability to review complex planning documents, assess the quality and coherence of strategic decision-making, synthesize evidence across country contexts, and develop practical, actionable recommendations is required. Desirables: Experience with UNICEF Country Programme Planning (CPP) processes, familiarity with the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2026–2029 and its strategic priorities, and prior experience conducting organizational learning reviews or developing analytical frameworks for programme planning. *Listed requirements will be used for technical evaluation in the competitive process.
Evaluation Criteria (This will be used for the Selection Report (for clarification see Guidance))	
A) Technical Evaluation (e.g. 75 points) Technical Evaluation Criteria: Understanding of the assignment and its objectives (10 points): Demonstrated understanding of the purpose and scope of the review, the 2026 Country Programme Planning processes, and their alignment with UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2026–2029.	B) Financial Proposal (e.g. of 25 points)

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2. Proposed methodology and analytical approach (20 points): Quality, feasibility and rigour of the proposed documentary review methodology, including the approach to selecting and analysing a sample of CPP processes, assessing strategic coherence and identifying common strengths, gaps and lessons learned. 3. Relevant technical expertise and experience (20 points): Demonstrated expertise in strategic planning, results-based management, programme design and review, including experience analysing complex planning documents and assessing the quality, coherence and strategic focus of country-level planning processes. 4. Quality and relevance of proposed deliverables (15 points): Extent to which the proposed outputs are relevant, evidence-based and actionable, with a clear approach to synthesising findings across the selected CPP processes and formulating practical recommendations to strengthen future planning processes. 5. Workplan, consultation and quality assurance (10 points): Feasibility of the proposed workplan within the available timeframe, clarity of milestones and deliverables, and adequacy of arrangements for consultation with relevant UNICEF stakeholders, validation of findings and quality assurance. Click here Click here Click here Click here Qualifying score in technical evaluation is 55 out of 75 points. Technical proposal requirement (if applicable): Applicants are required to submit a concise technical proposal outlining their understanding of the assignment, proposed methodology for reviewing UNICEF's Country Programme Planning (CPP) processes, analytical framework, and approach to assessing strategic quality, identifying cross-cutting findings and lessons learned, and formulating actionable recommendations. The proposal should also include a brief workplan indicating key activities, deliverables and estimated level of effort.	
Working arrangement: ☒ Remote ☐ Office Based	UNICEF email address required: ☒ YES ☐ NO

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Prepared by (Contract manager):

Signature: Francesca Morandini

Name: Francesca Morandini

Designation: Manager, Country Programme

Approved by (as per the requesting Office's Table of Authority):

 Cairan
O'Toole

 Digitally signed by
Cairan O'Toole
Date: 2026.10.22
09:28:41 +02'00'

Signature: Cairan O'Toole

Name: Cairan O'Toole

Designation: Chief, SPA

Text to be added to all ToRs:

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.

The selected candidate is solely responsible for ensuring that the visa (applicable) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected candidates are subject to confirmation of fully vaccinated status against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) with a World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed vaccine, which must be met prior to taking up the assignment. It does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, programme delivery locations or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts.

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.