The UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT
Title: Partnerships Manager (AI & Technology) LEVEL: P4

BACKGROUND

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. To save their lives. To defend their rights. To help them fulfil their potential.

Across 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, every day, to build a better world for everyone.

And we never give up.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is already reshaping childhood, development and the global economy. The choices being made now by technology companies, governments, investors and philanthropists will determine whether AI deepens inequality or becomes a powerful accelerator of progress for children and the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNICEF has a unique mandate and moment to ensure that children are visible, protected and empowered in the decisions now being made about AI. UNICEF's AI Strategy 2025–2030: AI for every child positions AI as an accelerator for results for children while safeguarding their rights, with a focus on programme impact, operational readiness and child rights advocacy on AI.

The opportunity is not simply to mobilise resources for AI projects; it is to mobilise AI for children. To lead externally, UNICEF must show up as one coherent partner to AI companies, foundations, philanthropists and investors, translating its child rights mandate and programme expertise into ambitious partnerships that generate income, influence, public goods, responsible innovation and measurable outcomes for children.

The Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division (PFP), through the AI Partnership Circle within the wider UNICEF AI Hub architecture, will play a critical role in shaping a unified private sector partnership proposition, building a global opportunity pipeline, and converting partner interest into strategic partnerships that maximise income and influence for children.

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

Working under the supervision of the Deputy Director, PSFP, and working closely with the Strategic Business Manager, and AI Partnership Circle, the Partnership Manager (AI & Technology) will lead the development and delivery of a new partnership approach to AI companies, AI philanthropists and foundations. The role will position UNICEF as a global partnership leader for children and AI by building a coherent external proposition, cultivating high-value opportunities, and converting engagement into income, influence, technical expertise, advocacy and responsible innovation commitments for children.

MAIN TASKS AND DELIVERABLES

1. Lead UNICEF's global private sector partnership proposition for children and AI.

- Develop and maintain a clear, compelling UNICEF partnership narrative for AI companies, foundations, philanthropists and investors, grounded in child rights, safety, access, responsible innovation and measurable outcomes for children.

- Translate UNICEF's AI Strategy 2025–2030 and wider programme, advocacy and safeguarding priorities into investable partnership opportunities that go beyond traditional philanthropy.
- Define clear partner asks across funding, flexible multi-year capital, technology expertise, data and evidence, public goods, advocacy, safeguards and industry influence.
- Ensure UNICEF's external engagement with AI actors is coherent, ambitious and aligned with organisational safeguards, reputational risk considerations and child-centred AI principles.

2. Oversee a high-value global AI partnership pipeline.

- Map, prioritise and cultivate AI companies, AI-native philanthropists, foundations, investors and adjacent technology partners with the potential to generate significant income, expertise and influence for children.
- Work with National Committees, Country Offices, Regional Offices and headquarters divisions to coordinate prospect intelligence, relationship ownership, partner approaches and opportunity development.
- Lead or support priority cultivation, solicitation and stewardship strategies that move AI partners from interest to concrete commitments, including funding, technical collaboration, advocacy and convening power.

3. Lead coordination of UNICEF's AI Partnership Circle to align internal teams and external partner engagement.

- Coordinate across PFP, GPD, Innovation, Data, ICTD, Legal, Child Protection, Communications, Public Partnerships, Regional Offices, Country Offices and National Committees towards ensure a joined-up approach to AI partnership engagement, identifying and escalating challenges where necessary
- Establish practical ways of working, decision points, partner engagement protocols and internal guidance to reduce duplication, manage risk and enable UNICEF to move at speed in a fast-changing AI ecosystem.
- Contribute to senior-level briefings, decision papers, partner materials and leadership conversations that position UNICEF as the preferred partner for responsible child-centred AI engagement.

4. Mobilise influence, visibility and convening power around children and AI.

- Design and support UNICEF-led convening moments where industry, governments, philanthropy, civil society, experts and young people align around children and AI.
- Work with communications and advocacy colleagues to make child rights, child safety and equitable access visible in AI governance, standards and market-shaping conversations.
- Identify opportunities for partners to use their platforms, expertise and leadership to advance a responsible, inclusive and child-centred AI agenda.

NB: The above duties are indicative and may evolve as UNICEF's AI partnership ambition, the AI Hub architecture and external market opportunities develop.

QUALIFICATIONS AND SPECIALISED KNOWLEDGE/EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

- An advanced university degree in business administration, international development, public policy, technology, communications, fundraising or another relevant field is required. A first-level university degree in a relevant field combined with two (2) additional qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of an advanced university degree.
- A minimum of eight (8) years of relevant professional work experience in private sector fundraising, strategic partnerships, business development, philanthropy, technology partnerships or related fields is required.

- Demonstrated experience developing and securing high-value partnerships with companies, foundations, philanthropists or investors is required, preferably including six- to seven-figure partnerships or equivalent strategic commitments.
- Demonstrated experience and strong understanding of the technology sector, artificial intelligence ecosystem, responsible AI, digital transformation, or the intersection of technology and social impact, is an asset.
- Experience translating complex technical, policy or programme priorities into compelling partnership propositions, investment cases and senior-level materials is required.
- Demonstrated ability to coordinate across complex organisations, align multiple stakeholders and manage reputational, safeguarding and ethical considerations in external partnerships is required.
- Excellent relationship management, negotiation, communication, analytical and project management skills are required.
- Experience working with AI companies, technology companies, venture philanthropy, innovation ecosystems or digital public goods is a strong asset.
- UN/UNICEF experience, including familiarity with National Committees, Country Offices and global partnership processes, is an asset.

Language requirements:

- Fluency in English is required. Knowledge of another official UN language (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, or Spanish) or a local language is an asset.

COMPETENCIES

UNICEF's Core Values of Care, Respect, Integrity, Trust, Accountability and Sustainability (CRITAS) underpin everything we do and how we do it. Get acquainted with Our Values Charter: UNICEF Values

The UNICEF competencies required for this post are...

- Demonstrates Self Awareness and Ethical Awareness (1)
- Works Collaboratively with Others (1)
- Builds and Maintains Partnerships (1)
- Innovates and Embraces Change (1)
- Thinks and Acts Strategically (1)
- Drives to Achieve Impactful Results (1)
- Manages Ambiguity and Complexity (1)

During the recruitment process, candidates are assessed against the competency framework. Familiarise yourself with our competency framework and its different levels: competency framework here.

ESTIMATED DURATION OF THE CONTRACT AND PROPOSAL

9 months (tentatively from 1 Dec 2026 until 31 Aug 2027)

REPORTING TO

Deputy Director, PSFP, with close coordination with the AI Partnership Circle and the UNICEF AI Hub architecture.

WORKPLACE

Rome