unicef | for every child

TERMS OF REFERENCE

TITLE – Consultant, Cost Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness of Child Protection Case Management in humanitarian settings

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	**Amman, Jordan, remote**
DURATION OF CONTRACT	6 months

Purpose of Assignment

Child protection case management is one of the most widely implemented child protection interventions in humanitarian and displacement contexts.
Through identification, assessment, referral, follow-up, and case closure processes, CPCM aims to address the needs of children facing protection vulnerabilities and risks, including unaccompanied and separated children, survivors of violence, children at risk of exploitation, and other vulnerable groups.
While significant investments are made annually in case management programming, evidence on the resources required to deliver quality services and the value generated by those investments remains limited.
Existing analyses indicate that costs can vary considerably across operational contexts due to differences in staffing structures, caseloads, programme scale, local costs, and service delivery models.
Personnel costs are consistently identified as the largest cost component, while programme scale and cost-sharing arrangements can significantly influence overall efficiency.
As humanitarian and development actors seek to maximize impact with finite resources, there is a growing need for evidence on the cost efficiency and cost effectiveness of CPCM services.
Such evidence can support strategic decisions related to workforce planning, programme design, localization, scale-up, quality assurance, and donor investment.
The purpose of this consultancy is to generate evidence on the cost efficiency and cost effectiveness of child protection case management (CPCM) services in selected country contexts, in order to inform workforce planning, programme design, localization, scale-up, quality assurance and donor investment.

• Generate evidence on the cost efficiency and cost effectiveness of child protection case management (CPCM) services in selected country contexts.
• Determine the full costs of delivering CPCM services and calculate unit costs, including cost per child served and cost per case closed, per context.
• Identify the principal cost drivers and examine how caseloads, staffing structures, scale, operational context and type of implementing entity (government, local community-based organization, INGO) affect costs and efficiency.
• Assess the relationship between programme investments and CPCM outcomes, and develop recommendations to improve value for money while maintaining scale and service quality.

Individual support to the most vulnerable children using a case management approach and preventing and responding to child separation are at the heart of UNICEF Child Protection in Humanitarian Action mandate as per the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the organization's Core Commitments for Children (CCCs)1, the Strategic Plan for 2025-20302, and the new Child Protection Strategy for 2022-20303.
These are also interagency priorities as defined under the Child Protection Minimum Standards4 (CPMS) by the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (Alliance for CPHA).

Scope of Work

Key research questions

• The consultant will answer the following questions on cost and efficiency:

o What is the total cost of delivering CPCM services (all components of case management, including staff, training, supervision, transportation, information management systems, etc.)?
o What is the average cost per child served and per case closed, per context?
o How do costs vary depending on who is delivering case management services (e.g., INGO staff, government social workers or local community-based organizations)?
o How and why do costs vary across different operational contexts, including how they vary over time following a humanitarian crisis?
o What are the main cost drivers and opportunities for efficiency gains?
o Which programme models provide the greatest value for money?
o How can programmes balance efficiency, quality, and scale?

Methodology

• The consultant will employ a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative cost analysis with qualitative inquiry, including:

o Identification of 7-8 contexts representative of the range of situations encountered, through key actors (UNICEF CPHA team, Senior Advisors, GPC/CP, ACPHA).
o Review of programme documentation, financial records, budgets, reports, and case management data.
o Review pf the existing standard budget for case management developed on the basis of global guidelines.
o Activity-based costing to estimate direct and indirect costs of CPCM service delivery.
o Analysis of outputs and outcomes, including children served and cases closed.
o Key informant interviews with programme managers, caseworkers, supervisors, inter-agency coordinators, IM personnel, finance staff, government counterparts, and partners.
o Comparative analysis across countries, delivery models, and operational settings, accounting for the difference in local price and salary levels so that results are comparable across contexts.
o Sensitivity modelling to assess the impact of alternative staffing structures, caseloads, and capacity-strengthening investments.

Use of findings

• The study will generate practical evidence to support:

o More efficient allocation of child protection resources.
o Improved workforce and caseload planning.
o Better understanding of the relationship between programme investments and outcomes for children.
o Development of cost benchmarks for CPCM services across contexts.
o Evidence-informed advocacy with governments and donors on investments in child protection programming.

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable
Inception phase: desk review, initial consultations with key actors (UNICEF CPHA team, Senior Advisors, GPC/CP AoR, Alliance for CPHA) and selection of 7-8 contexts	Inception report outlining methodology and analytical framework, including proposed contexts and data collection tools, submitted to supervisor	1 December 2026– 8 days
Data collection and activity-based costing in selected contexts, including review of financial and programme records and key informant interviews	Cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness dataset for participating programmes submitted to UNICEF	15 February 2027– 20 days
Comparative analysis across countries, delivery models and operational settings, and sensitivity modelling	Draft research report presenting findings, unit costs, benchmarks and recommendations submitted for review	2 April 2027– 15 days
Finalization of the research report incorporating feedback from UNICEF and key actors	Comprehensive final research report presenting findings, benchmarks, and recommendations finalized and shared with supervisor	16 April 2027 – 8 days
Development of an advocacy product for donors and decision-makers	Policy and advocacy brief highlighting key evidence for donors and decision-makers finalized and shared with supervisor	30 April 2027 – 5 days

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 university degree (Master's or higher) in Economics, Public Policy, Social Sciences, Public Health or a related field.

Work Experience

- At least 8 years of experience in costing, economic evaluation or value-for-money analysis of humanitarian social protection or social service programmes

Skills

- Demonstrated experience with activity-based costing, cost- efficiency and cost-effectiveness analysis, including sensitivity modelling.
- Good technical understanding of child protection case management in humanitarian and displacement contexts.

- Experience conducting mixed-methods, multi-country research, including key informant interviews and analysis of financial and programme data.
- Proven experience working with a range of stakeholders, including UN agencies, governments, INGOs and local organizations.
- Strong analytical and writing skills, with a track record of producing research reports and policy brief for donors and decision-makers.

Language Requirements

- Fluency in English (written and spoken) is required.
- Working knowledge of French, Arabic or Spanish is an asset.

Desirables

- Previous costing work on child protection, case management or social service workforce programmes.

Technical proposal requirement :

- A short technical proposal (max. 3 pages) outlining the proposed costing methodology, approach to comparing costs across contexts and workplan, plus one example of previous costing or value-for-money work.