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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Senior Research and Evaluation Consultant

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	New Delhi India & Office based (With Possible travel)
DURATION OF CONTRACT	6 Months

Purpose of Assignment

The purpose of this consultancy is to provide senior technical and evaluation-management support to UNICEF India for a portfolio of approximately four to five evaluations over six months. The consultant will draft or review defined evaluation outputs, participate in evaluation management meetings and calls linked to those outputs, provide quality assurance for selected research and studies, and support evidence use and organizational learning.

Background and rationale Evidence is central to UNICEF's work in India and to advancing equity and results for children. In response to growing expectations from Government and other partners, UNICEF India established the Evidence for Children Section, guided by the India Country Office Evidence Strategy (2021) and the Change Strategy on Evidence, Data and Knowledge Management under the 2023-2027 Country Programme. The Evidence Section comprises a Chief of Evidence, a Research and Evaluation Specialist, a Statistics and Monitoring Specialist and a Knowledge Management Specialist, supported by officers and consultants. Additional senior consultancy capacity is required for six months to maintain continuity and quality across a high-volume evaluation portfolio during a temporary period of change. The consultant will support board-approved costed evaluations and thematic donor-funded evaluations, while safeguarding the independence, impartiality and transparency required for evaluation work. The consultant will also provide selected methodological and ethical quality assurance for priority research and studies. Objectives • Ensure that evaluation terms of reference, inception reports, pilot reports, field completion reports, draft presentations and draft final reports are prepared or reviewed to a high technical standard. • Provide senior technical advice and structured evaluation-management support through relevant meetings, calls, decision notes and follow-up actions. • Coordinate and consolidate quality-review inputs from programme teams, Evaluation Reference Groups, external reviewers, the Regional Office and other stakeholders, as applicable. • Support proportionate technical and ethical quality assurance for selected UNICEF-commissioned research and studies. • Enable timely dissemination, use and follow-up of evaluation findings and strengthen practical evaluation capacity in the office

Scope of Work

. **Evaluation design, deliverable review and management**

• Draft or review evaluation terms of reference, evaluation questions, scope, methodology, governance and deliverable schedules.

• Review inception reports, including evaluation matrices, theories of change, sampling strategies, data-collection tools, analysis plans, ethics arrangements and workplans.

• Review pilot reports and field completion reports, including implementation issues, data quality,

deviations from approved protocols, mitigation actions and readiness for analysis.

• Review draft presentations and draft final reports for methodological rigour, triangulation, equity and gender analysis, validity of findings, conclusions and recommendations, and clarity for intended users.

• Prepare consolidated written comments and review matrices, track resolution of material comments and advise the supervisor on readiness to approve deliverables.

• Attend and contribute to inception, technical review, pilot, fieldwork, emerging-findings, validation and management meetings/calls required to manage the assigned evaluations. Meeting participation is part of the associated deliverable and is not a stand-alone time-based output.

• Coordinate and communicate effectively with senior colleagues, including Section Chiefs and CFOs on the progress of evaluations, support and actions needed and resolving any problems that may require escalation

• Maintain a portfolio tracker recording milestones, review status, decisions, risks, actions and responsible parties

Priority evaluation portfolio: evaluation of UNICEF technical assistance to strengthening equitable primary health care systems; formative evaluation of UNICEF India public-private sector engagement; evaluation of the Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin; and the mixed-methods impact evaluation of the Positive Masculinity, Wellbeing and Empowerment Intervention for Adolescents in West Bengal. One additional thematic evaluation may be included, subject to workload and agreed adjustments to the deliverable plan. 2. Research, evidence use and capacity strengthening • Provide documented technical, methodological and ethical review of priority research or studies identified during the consultancy.

• Support peer review and consolidate feedback for commissioning teams, the supervisor, the Country Management Team and other relevant stakeholders.

• Prepare or review concise evidence-use products, presentations or management materials linked to the assigned evaluations.

• Design and facilitate at least one practical learning session or clinic on an identified evaluation or research-quality need.

• Complete a final handover covering the status of each evaluation, outstanding decisions, risks, next steps and location of key records.

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Work Assignments Overview	**Deliverables/Outputs**	**Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable**
Portfolio initiation	**Deliverable 1** Handover notes and developing a document library of existing materials needed for all the evaluations to be managed/tracked for the duration of the consultancy assignment	4 December 2026
Primary Health Care evaluation	**Deliverable 2** 1. Detailed review of the inception report, including theory of change, evaluation matrix, methodology, sampling, tools, ethics, analysis plan and workplan; consolidated review matrix and recommendation on approval.	31 December 2026
	Deliverable 3 2. Review and finalize the inception presentation for the Evaluation Review Group (ERG) and coordinate the ERG meeting, including circulating minutes and ensuring ERG feedback is incorporated into the finalized Inception Report	31 January 2027
	Deliverable 4 3. Review of draft literature review, with written recommendations for improvements	31 January 2027

	Deliverable 5 4. Review of pilot report and revised data-collection tools, with written recommendations on tool performance, sampling implementation, field protocols and readiness for full data collection.	28 February 2027
	Deliverable 6 5. Review of final inception report, with final recommendation to approve the inception report and move forward to data collection phase	28 February 2027
	Deliverable 7 6. Weekly meeting minutes and action points from field - work progress calls	30 April 2027
	Deliverable 8 7. Review of field completion or emerging -findings report, including data quality, achieved sample, deviations from the approved design, limitations and readiness for analysis	31 May 2027
Public -Private Sector Engagement evaluation	**Deliverable 9** 8. Review of pilot report or early data -collection package, including revised tools, implementation experience, access constraints, data quality and proposed adjustments.	11 December 2026

	Deliverable 10 9. Weekly meeting minutes and action points from progress call	28 February 2026
	Deliverable 11 10. Review of field completion or emerging -findings report, including coverage of stakeholder groups, evidence gaps, limitations and readiness for analysis.	31 December 2026
	Deliverable 12 11. Review of draft findings presentation and draft final report, including the strength of evidence supporting findings, conclusions and recommendation	15 January 2027
	Deliverable 13 12. Coordinate the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) meeting, Review and finalize the draft findings presentation (ERG), circulate minutes and ensure ERG feedback is incorporated into the finalized Evaluation Report	31 January 2027
	Deliverable 14 13. Review final draft report, and prepare dissemination of findings with internal teams; prepare and seek approval for the Evaluation Management Response	28 February 2027
Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin evaluation	**Deliverable 15** 14. Detailed review of the selected team's inception report, including theory of	31 January 2027

	change, evaluation matrix, mixed -methods design, sampling, state or site selection, tools, ethics and workplan.	
	Deliverable 16 15. Coordinate the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) meeting, Review and finalize the inception presentation (ERG), circulate minutes and ensure ERG feedback is incorporated into the finalized Inception Report	31 January 2027
	Deliverable 17 16. Detailed review of the draft report on findings from secondary data analysis	28 February 2027
	Deliverable 18 17. Review of pilot report and revised data -collection package, with a documented recommendation on readiness for fieldwork.	31 March 2027
	Deliverable 19 18. Review of monthly field completion reports and emerging - findings report, including data quality, achieved sample, deviations from the approved design, limitations and readiness for analysis	31 March 2027 30 April 2027 31 May 2027
Evaluation	**Deliverable 20** 19. Detailed review of the inception report, including theory of change, evaluation matrix, methodology,	31 December 2026

	sampling, tools, ethics, analysis plan and workplan; consolidated review matrix and recommendation on approval	
	Deliverable 21 20. Review and finalize the inception presentation for the Evaluation Review Group (ERG) and coordinate the ERG meeting, including circulating minutes and ensuring ERG feedback is incorporated into the finalized Inception Report	31 January 2027
	Deliverable 22 21. Review of draft literature review, with written recommendations for improvements	31 January 2027
	Deliverable 23 22. Review of pilot report and revised data -collection tools, with written recommendations on tool performance, sampling implementation, field protocols and readiness for full data collection	28 February 2027
	Deliverable 24 23. Review of final inception report, with final assessment to approve the inception report and move forward to data collection phase	28 February 2027
	Deliverable 25 24. Review of field completion or emerging -findings report, including data quality, achieved sample, deviations from the approved design, limitations and readiness for	31 May 2027

	analysi	
Research and studies quality assurance	**Deliverable 26** 25. Documented technical, methodological and ethical reviews of **research or study product #1.** Each review will include annotated comments or a review matrix, identification of critical quality issues and a recommendation on next steps or approval**.**	31 January 2027
	Deliverable 27 26. Documented technical, methodological and ethical reviews of **research or study product #2**. Each review will include annotated comments or a review matrix, identification of critical quality issues and a recommendation on next steps or approval	28 February 2027
	Deliverable 28 27. Documented technical, methodological and ethical reviews of **research or study product #3**. Each review will include annotated comments or a review matrix, identification of critical quality issues and a recommendation on next steps or approval.	31 March 2027
	Deliverable 29 28. Documented technical, methodological and ethical reviews of **research or study product #4.** Each review will include annotated comments or a review matrix, identification of critical quality	

	issues and a recommendation on next steps or approval	
	Deliverable 30 29. Documented technical, methodological and ethical reviews of research or study product #5. Each review will include annotated comments or a review matrix, identification of critical quality issues and a recommendation on next steps or approval.	31 May 2027
Capacity strengthening	**Deliverable 31** 30. Design and delivery of one practical capacity-building workshop on an agreed research or evaluation topic, including agenda, presentation materials, practical exercises and a short workshop completion note**.**	30 April 2027
Portfolio completion	**Deliverable 32** 31. Final portfolio tracker and handover note covering the status of each evaluation and research review, completed outputs, outstanding decisions, risks, next steps and location of key records.	31 May 2027

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:** Masters Degree in evaluation, public health, social sciences, statistics, economics, development studies, planning or another relevant field. Formal postgraduate training in research or evaluation methods is highly desirable
- **Work Experience:** 7-10 years' of progressively responsible professional experience in evaluation and research, including substantial experience managing or quality-assuring complex evaluations in international development settings
- **Skills:**Demonstrated senior-level experience drafting or reviewing evaluation ToRs, inception reports, pilot or fieldwork reports, presentations and evaluation reports.

  Demonstrated expertise in theory-based evaluation, theories of change, quantitative, qualitative and mixedmethods designs, sampling, data quality, analysis and interpretation.

  Strong knowledge of evaluation ethics, independence, equity, gender and human-rights considerations, and the ability to translate quality standards into clear and practical review comments.

  Experience coordinating multi-stakeholder evaluation processes and facilitating technical meetings with programme teams, evaluation teams, government counterparts or reference groups.

  Experience in effectively engaging senior officials (within the UN and outside the UN e.g. government) on evaluation design, processes and uptake is essential

- **Language Requirements:** Excellent written and spoken English, strong analytical writing and presentation skills, sound judgement, and the ability to manage several concurrent review processes under tight deadlines.
- **Desirables:** Prior experience with UNICEF, the United Nations system or large international organizations is an asset. Knowledge of Hindi and/or other languages in India