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TERMS OF REFERENCE

A Million Balls Initiative: Project Development Consultant

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	Global Programme Division, Director's office, NYHQ & remote with travel
DURATION OF CONTRACT	11 months

Purpose of Assignment

The African Union (AU) and UNICEF are exploring a joint sports-for-development initiative linked to the 2027 African Games in Egypt and the broader ambitions of AU Agenda 2063. The proposed "A Million Balls" initiative aims to expand equitable access to regular, safe and inclusive sport and physical activity for children, particularly through schools, youth clubs and underserved communities. The African Games provide a high-profile opportunity to launch the initiative publicly, demonstrate the programme model and mobilize sustained continental support.

The immediate objective is to design, resource and prepare a joint AU–UNICEF launch event at the 2027 African Games that introduces A Million Balls as a practical sports-for-development programme. The launch should present a credible first phase of equipment provision, school and community participation, country-level delivery pathways and an ambition to scale towards one million balls. The existing concept envisages an initial 250,000–300,000 balls, subject to feasibility, funding and partner agreement. Sports personalities and advocacy will amplify the launch, but the centerpiece will be a concrete, inclusive programme for children, with commitments and an implementation pathway beyond the Games.

This time-bound consultancy will lead the technical preparation and coordination needed to make the proposed African Games launch feasible and ready for institutional decision. It will refine the programme design, establish an actionable funding and partner pipeline, develop a launch concept and run-of-show with the relevant teams, and prepare a costed operational plan for a credible first phase.

Scope of Work

Under the supervision of the Senior Policy Advisor, and working closely with relevant UNICEF teams at headquarters, regional and country levels, including the AU/UNECA Office, the consultant will provide coordination, research and planning support for the Million Balls initiative and preparations for its proposed launch at the 2027 African Games. The assignment will cover five areas:

1. **Programme development:** Support the review and refinement of the programme concept, including objectives, target groups, potential participating countries, distribution through schools and communities, and expected results. Assist in preparing programme documents and materials for the proposed launch.
2. **Partnerships and resource mobilization:** Support the identification and mapping of potential corporate sponsors, philanthropists, sports organizations and other partners, particularly in Africa. Prepare background information, partnership briefs and funding proposals, and assist with partner engagement and follow-up.
3. **Budget and financing:** Support the preparation of indicative budgets for the launch event and initial programme activities, compile information on funding opportunities and maintain a tracker of potential partner contributions and commitments.
4. **Programme planning:** Gather information and support consultations with relevant UNICEF teams and partners on options for sourcing, branding and distributing sports equipment. Assist with identifying

potential participating countries and schools, and preparing an initial implementation plan, including possible activities to be showcased at the launch.

5. **African Games launch preparations:** Provide coordination and logistical planning support for the proposed launch event, including preparation of agendas, briefing materials, participant lists, communications inputs and event planning documents. Support follow-up with the African Union and other partners through established UNICEF channels, track preparations and document outcomes and next steps.

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	**Delivery deadline and input days**
Programme development and project planning	• Revised Million Balls concept note, including programme objectives, proposed activities and expected results. • Detailed project workplan with milestones, responsibilities and deadlines leading to the African Games launch. • Initial stakeholder consultations, action tracker and monthly progress update.	30 December 2026 13 days
Programme design and coordination	• Draft programme framework covering country participation, school and community-based activities and equipment requirements. • Summary of consultations with relevant UNICEF teams and partners, including agreed follow-up actions. • Updated project workplan, action tracker and monthly progress report.	15 January 2027 13 days
Programme implementation and launch planning	• Draft programme implementation plan covering proposed countries, equipment needs, distribution arrangements and responsibilities. • Draft African Games launch concept, including proposed activities and programme elements. • Stakeholder coordination, updated project tracker and monthly progress report.	31 Jan 2027 13 days
Programme costing and resource mobilization support	• Indicative programme and launch budgets, including equipment, distribution and event costs. • Draft materials to support discussions with potential funding and implementing partners. • Coordination of partner consultations, follow-up on agreed actions and monthly progress report.	28 Feb 2027 13 days
Country-level programme planning	• Consolidated inputs from UNICEF country offices and relevant partners on programme activities, equipment needs and implementation arrangements.	31 Mar 2027 13 days

	• Updated implementation plan reflecting country-level consultations. • Stakeholder coordination, updated action tracker and monthly progress report.	
Operational planning and launch preparations	• Draft operational plan covering equipment sourcing, branding, distribution and proposed launch activities. • Updated African Games launch plan, including event format, programme activities, participants and logistical requirements. • Stakeholder coordination, follow-up on outstanding actions and monthly progress report.	30 Apr 2027 13 days
Programme coordination and implementation preparations	• Updated programme workplan reflecting progress on country participation, equipment arrangements and partner discussions. • Briefing materials and programme presentations for UNICEF leadership, the AU and other stakeholders. • Coordination of programme and launch preparations, updated project tracker and monthly progress report.	31 May 2027 13 days
Programme and launch readiness	• Consolidated programme implementation package, including proposed country activities, equipment requirements, budgets, responsibilities and timelines. • Updated launch plan and checklist of outstanding arrangements. • Coordination of stakeholder inputs, follow-up on key milestones and monthly progress report.	30 Jun 2027 13 days
Finalization of programme and launch arrangements	• Updated first-phase programme rollout plan, reflecting progress and outstanding requirements. • Draft launch agenda, run-of-show, briefing notes and supporting materials. • Coordination of launch preparations, updated action tracker and monthly progress report.	31 Jul 2027 13 days
Final launch preparations and coordination	• Consolidated launch preparation package, including event programme, participant arrangements, equipment demonstration or handover plans and logistical requirements. • Launch readiness checklist with outstanding actions, responsibilities and deadlines. • Stakeholder coordination, follow-up on outstanding actions and monthly progress report.	31 Aug 2027 13 days

African Games – Launch support and programme follow-up	• Project management and coordination support for the approved Million Balls launch at the African Games. • Launch summary documenting activities, participation, announcements and commitments. • Updated programme implementation and follow-up plan, including responsibilities, next steps and outstanding actions.	30 Sep 2027 13 days
Travel	Five-day mission to Addis Ababa to engage with African Union (AU) counterparts, including bilateral meetings and consultations to strengthen collaboration, align priorities, and agree on concrete next steps for joint engagement.	August 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.
- The selected candidate is solely responsible for ensuring that the health insurance (and visa if applicable) 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.

QUALIFICATIONS / SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCE/ COMPETENCIES (CORE/TECHNICAL/FUNCTIONAL) / LANGUAGE SKILLS REQUIRED FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

Minimum requirements:

- **Education:** Advanced university degree in international development, business administration, economics,

international relations, sports management, public policy or related field. A first university degree with additional relevant experience may be accepted in lieu of an advanced degree, subject to UNICEF rules.

- **Work Experience:** At least five years of relevant experience in African private-sector partnerships, business development, multi-country project design or programme coordination.

  - Demonstrated experience engaging multiple stakeholders and producing high-quality concept notes, propositions and implementation plans.

- **Skills:** Strong stakeholder engagement and negotiation support; excellent writing, research, analytical and project-management skills; ability to work across institutions and countries.
- **Language Requirements:** Fluency in written and spoken English required; French and/or Arabic desirable
- **Desirables:** Experience with UNICEF, the African Union, sports-for-development initiatives, sports federations, education systems, supply-chain planning or philanthropic networks in priority African markets