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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Legal Specialist in Child Online Protection – Individual Consultant (regulatory framework and justice-sector capacity, technical support to MINICT)

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	Kigali, Rwanda — based at the Ministry of ICT and Innovation (MINICT) with approved missions within Rwanda
DURATION OF CONTRACT	11 months

Purpose of Assignment

The Ministry of ICT and Innovation (MINICT) is the Government of Rwanda's lead institution for Child Online Protection (COP) and for the safe and responsible use of digital technologies by children and young people. Children and young people in Rwanda are increasingly accessing social media platforms, online gaming, messaging and video-sharing services and generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, and the associated risks — online grooming and sexual exploitation, cyberbullying, exposure to age-inappropriate content, excessive use, commercial profiling of minors and AI-generated abuse material — are evolving rapidly.

Under the Rwanda–UNICEF Programme of Cooperation 2025–2029, MINICT and UNICEF signed a 2026–2027 Multi-Year Work Plan on 27 August 2026 (1 July 2026 – 31 December 2027) comprising twelve activities under Child Protection Outputs 1.1 and 1.2 and Education Output 1.3, including a national child online protection regulatory framework with standards on age verification, Internet Service Provider (ISP) accountability and content moderation (Activity 1.2.2); capacity building of law enforcement, prosecutors and the judiciary on digital evidence and online crimes affecting children (1.2.4); high-level advocacy to cement Rwanda's regional leadership on child online safety (1.2.3); inter-Ministry coordination to implement the COP research recommendations (1.2.1); a national awareness campaign, training modules and a Child Online Protection Hackathon (1.1.2, 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.3.1). MINICT's accelerated implementation plan of 21 September 2026 requires all activities to start before 30 November 2026, with the regulatory framework drafted by February 2027, consulted by April 2027 and submitted for adoption by October 2027.

To deliver this Work Plan, MINICT has requested dedicated technical support with complementary profiles — child online protection, legal and ICT — to work as an integrated team under Activity 1.2.1. This deliverable-based consultancy provides the legal, policy and regulatory expertise: the analysis of the national legal framework against international and regional standards (the Convention on the Rights of the Child and General Comment No. 25, the African Union and ITU Child Online Protection guidelines, age-appropriate design codes, online-safety and duty-of-care legislation and emerging AI governance frameworks); the drafting and consultation of the regulatory framework; the training manuals and SOPs for justice actors; and the legal content of the advocacy, campaign and capacity-building activities.

Scope of Work

Objective: Provide time-bound legal, policy and regulatory expertise to MINICT and UNICEF so that Rwanda drafts, consults and submits for adoption a child online protection regulatory framework aligned with international and regional standards, that justice actors are equipped to investigate and prosecute online crimes against children, and that Rwanda's leadership on child online safety is reflected in regional and global forums.

The consultant will be based at MINICT, will work day-to-day with the MINICT Child Online Protection focal point and will report to the UNICEF Contract Manager. The consultancy will focus on the following areas:

1. Legal analysis and benchmarking (Activity 1.2.2): Analyse national laws, regulations and policies relevant to child online protection (children's rights, data protection and privacy, cybercrime, ICT and media laws), identify gaps and reform options, and benchmark them against international and regional instruments and good practice.

2. Regulatory framework drafting (Activity 1.2.2): Draft the national child online protection regulatory framework and its standards on age verification, ISP accountability and content moderation, together with guidelines and SOPs on content classification and age-rating, harmful-content reporting, takedown and referral, working with the ICT technical support on the technical standards.

3. Consultation and adoption (Activity 1.2.2): Lead the consultation process with key stakeholders, including NCDA, MIGEPROF, NCSA, RISA, RURA, the National Data Protection Office, MINIJUST and internet service providers and platforms; document comments and responses; and support Government through validation to submission for adoption.

4. Platform-engagement framework (Activity 1.2.1): Develop a platform-engagement framework setting out child-safety expectations and reporting requirements for social media, AI and other online service providers operating in Rwanda, including transparency reporting, minimum-age enforcement, privacy-by-default settings for minors and protection against AI-generated child sexual abuse material.

5. Justice-sector capacity building (Activity 1.2.4): Develop, with MINIJUST, RIB, NPPA, the judiciary/ILPD and NCDA, the training manuals and SOPs on digital evidence and online crimes affecting children (boys, girls and children with disabilities), including the lawful and ethical handling of evidence, personal data and harmful content involving children (lawful access, retention, chain of custody and data-protection compliance), and deliver or co-facilitate the training of law enforcement, prosecutors and judicial officers.

6. Advocacy and policy products (Activity 1.2.3): Prepare policy notes, position papers, talking points and advocacy products for the Minister and senior officials on emerging issues such as minimum-age and age-assurance requirements for social media, AI and children, and platform accountability; document Rwanda's child online protection model; and support MINICT's engagement in regional and global processes.

7. Legal content for awareness, training and the Hackathon (Activities 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 1.3.1, 1.1.5): Provide the legal content of the national awareness campaign (children's rights online, reporting obligations and channels, platform responsibilities) and of the training modules for teachers, social workers and community-based child protection actors (legal framework, mandatory reporting, data protection); and define the legal and regulatory parameters for solutions developed at the Child Online Protection Hackathon (data protection, privacy by design, age-appropriate design).

8. Coordination and reporting (Activity 1.2.1): Track the implementation of the legal, policy and regulatory recommendations of the COP research; support inter-institutional coordination with MINIJUST, RIB, NPPA, the judiciary, RURA, NCSA, RISA and the National Data Protection Office; document the inter-institutional coordination arrangements; and contribute to the joint deliverables and periodic progress reports of the integrated technical team to MINICT and UNICEF.

This consultancy is a legal and policy advisory role focused on analysis, drafting, consultation and capacity development. The consultant will not provide direct services to children, undertake case management, interview children, or have unsupervised interpersonal contact with children. The consultant will not collect, store or process personally identifiable information of children or handle individual cases; training activities

under this assignment will be conducted with government counterparts and justice-sector institutions, and any case or item of harmful content involving an identifiable child encountered during the assignment will be referred immediately through the authorised channels.

Work Assignments Overview	**Deliverables/Outputs**	**Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable**
Inception and joint work plan	Accepted inception package comprising desk review of the COP research, the Work Plan and relevant national and international instruments; stakeholder and institutional map; consultation and validation schedule; consultancy deliverable workplan; and the joint work plan of the integrated technical team agreed with the MINICT focal point.	29 December 2026
Legal gap analysis and benchmarking report	Accepted analysis of national laws, regulations and policies relevant to child online protection, benchmarked against the CRC and General Comment No. 25, the AU and ITU COP guidelines, age-appropriate design codes, online-safety legislation and emerging AI governance frameworks, with identified gaps and reform options validated by MINICT. It will include an institutional mandate and enforcement map, specific AI-governance gaps affecting children, and a prioritised reform matrix that identifies the legal instrument, responsible institution, urgency, feasibility and proposed action.	28 February 2027
Draft national child online protection regulatory framework	Accepted initial draft regulatory framework with standards on age verification, ISP accountability and content moderation, and accompanying guidelines and SOPs on content classification and age-rating, harmful-content reporting, takedown and referral. The initial draft will incorporate the ICT age-rating framework due by 31 January 2027 and the ICT technical standards due by 15 February 2027. The draft will include clear institutional roles, oversight, complaints and remedies, compliance indicators, review provisions, safeguards for AI systems affecting children,	31 March 2027

	and a sequenced implementation plan.	
Platform-engagement framework	Accepted platform-engagement framework setting out child-safety expectations and reporting requirements for social media, AI and other online service providers operating in Rwanda (transparency reporting, minimum-age enforcement, privacy-by-default for minors, protection against AI-generated child sexual abuse material), with a documented engagement session with ISPs and platforms. The framework will include a proposed coordination mechanism with the Rwanda AI Agency for AI-enabled services and generative AI risks.	31 May 2027
Stakeholder consultation and validation of the regulatory framework	Accepted consultation package: documented consultations with NCDA, MIGEPROF, NCSA, RISA, RURA, the National Data Protection Office, MINIJUST, ISPs and platforms; consolidated comments-and-response matrix; validated draft framework and submission note for Government adoption.	30 July 2027
Justice-sector training manuals, SOPs and trainings	Accepted training manuals and SOPs on digital evidence and online crimes affecting children developed with MINIJUST, RIB, NPPA, the judiciary/ILPD and NCDA, including lawful and ethical handling of evidence, personal data and harmful content; agreed training sessions delivered or co-facilitated; participant records; pre/post assessment analysis; and training report.	30 September 2027
Legal content and advocacy products	Accepted package of legal content for the national awareness campaign and the teacher/social-worker training modules; legal and regulatory parameters for Hackathon solutions; and at least three policy notes, position papers or talking points for the Minister and senior officials on minimum-age and age-assurance requirements, AI and	31 October 2027

	children, and platform accountability.	
Final results and handover	Accepted handover package: consolidated results report; tracker of the legal, policy and regulatory recommendations of the COP research with status; documented inter-institutional coordination arrangements; adoption roadmap for the regulatory framework; deliverable/evidence index; organised handover files. The final package will include a sustainability and capacity-transfer plan, a dashboard of agreed results and outstanding actions, and a concise set of priority advocacy asks for UNICEF and MINICT.	30 November 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.

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

Education:

- BA university degree in Law (LL.B.) or an equivalent legal qualification is required. A postgraduate degree or specialisation in ICT law, cyber law, data protection and privacy, human rights or children's rights, a certificate or training in ICT, cybersecurity or online safety, or a Postgraduate Diploma in Child Justice is an advantage.

Work Experience:

- At least five years of progressively responsible professional legal or policy experience, of which at least two years relate to children's rights or child protection and at least one year relates to ICT, telecommunications, data protection, cybercrime or digital policy.

Language Requirements:

- Fluency in English (verbal and written) required.
- Fluency in Kinyarwanda (verbal and written) required.
- Knowledge of French is an asset

Knowledge/Expertise/Skills:

- Demonstrated knowledge of national and international legal frameworks on children's rights, online safety, data protection, cybercrime and, preferably, emerging AI governance. Knowledge of child-rights impact assessment, safety-by-design, AI risk governance and regulatory implementation is required.
- Strong legal analysis, drafting and interpretation skills, with experience drafting laws, regulations, guidelines, standard operating procedures, policy notes or legal opinions.
- Ability to apply children's-rights and data-protection principles to digital and AI-related issues, and sufficient understanding of how online platforms function to translate legal requirements into practical regulatory measures.
- Familiarity with UNICEF Child Safeguarding Policy, UN policies and practices on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).
- Ability to work in a fast-paced environment, to meet deadlines, and to take initiative to troubleshoot and solve problems before they arise.

Desirables:

- Experience engaging with regulators, law-enforcement or prosecution authorities, or with online platforms and technology companies on
- compliance matters.
- Knowledge of content regulation, age-rating, content classification or platform governance, and of Rwanda's child protection and digital ecosystem.
- Experience developing training manuals, SOPs or curricula for justice-sector actors, and facilitating training of law enforcement, prosecutors or judicial officers.

- Experience preparing policy notes, position papers and advocacy products for senior government officials and supporting engagement in regional or international processes.
- Strong analytical, research, coordination, communication and report-writing skills, and the ability to work independently and within a multidisciplinary team.

Technical proposal:

- A concise proposal describing the candidate's understanding of the assignment, methodology, deliverable workplan, consultation approach and risk management.