unicef | for every child

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Senior Climate Policy Consultant

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	Bangkok, Thailand (remote)
DURATION OF CONTRACT	11.5 months

Purpose of Assignment

Climate change is undermining children's rights and the resilience of the systems and services on which they depend. Addressing these impacts requires national climate policies and implementation arrangements that recognise children's distinct needs, are informed by robust evidence, and translate commitments into practical measures and investment priorities.

UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2026–2029 and Sustainability and Climate Action Plan provide a framework for supporting child-responsive climate action. UNICEF contributes through technical assistance to governments and Country Offices, the generation and application of evidence, and engagement with international climate-policy processes. These areas are mutually reinforcing: country experience identifies policy and evidence gaps, research informs practical responses, and intergovernmental outcomes can strengthen the enabling conditions for national implementation and support.

In 2027, UNICEF requires specialised senior technical advice to advance selected country and global climate-policy outcomes. Priorities include strengthening child-responsive national climate policies and responses to climate-related loss and damage, supporting thought leadership and research collaboration, and applying evidence to inform government and partner engagement. Targeted technical assistance to the Eastern and Southern Africa regional office, UNICEF Ethiopia and COP32 Presidency counterparts, in coordination with the Climate COE Nairobi satellite office, provides an opportunity to link country priorities and technical support needs with international policy opportunities.

The purpose of this consultancy is to provide a defined package of senior technical advisory support under two areas: technical assistance to Country Offices and government counterparts; and contributions to thought leadership, research partnerships and high-level climate-policy engagement. The consultant will provide technical analysis, review and synthesis for agreed products and assignments, drawing together relevant evidence and expertise across adaptation, national climate policies, loss and damage, and child-focused intergovernmental priorities.

Working under the supervisor's guidance and in collaboration with relevant technical specialists, the consultant will contribute to selected engagements with governments, COP Presidency counterparts and partners. Contributions will focus on developing policy options and recommendations, connecting technical assistance to agreed policy outcomes, and supporting the uptake of evidence.

Scope of Work

The consultant will provide specialised technical advice, substantive inputs and technical review under two connected areas of work: thought leadership and high-level policy engagement, and technical assistance and country application.

1. Thought leadership and high-level policy engagement

Support the development and application of evidence on child-responsive climate action.
Contribute to selected research and policy products, including joint UNICEF–UCL research collaboration, and the UNICEF Adaptation Return on Investment study. Provide substantive inputs and technical review to strengthen policy relevance, interpretation of findings and recommendations for national and global responses.
Support development and policy application of the joint Climate and Education CoE loss-and-damage study.
Provide technical inputs and review to strengthen the study's policy framing, interpretation of findings and recommendations. Support the translation of findings into practical options for participating countries and selected global policy processes, drawing on relevant climate-policy expertise and partner contributions.
Support defined research partnerships and institutional cooperation.
Provide technical inputs to UCL and UNFCCC MoUs and guide implementation of agreed activities, and strengthen collaboration with the IPCC. Support selected partner engagements and review of agreed products that address evidence gaps, strengthen research and facilitate policy uptake and country application.
Support high-level engagement to advance agreed climate-policy outcomes.
Provide guidance, technical inputs and review for, and participate in, selected strategic engagements with COP Presidency counterparts, government UNFCCC delegations, the Group of Friends for Children and Climate Action, research institutions, foundations and other partners. Contribute policy options and recommendations that connect UNICEF's evidence and technical support offer to agreed government and partner priorities. For selected SB66 and COP32 outcomes, synthesise technical contributions across adaptation, loss and damage, education and empowerment and child-critical sectors. Review proposed recommendations for coherence and practical application, and identify opportunities to connect country technical assistance, thought leadership and partner engagement in support of these outcomes.

2. Technical assistance and country application
Support the identification of priorities and preparation of the 2027 climate policy workplan.
Drawing on agreed institutional priorities and contributions from relevant technical workstreams, prepare a consolidated, deliverable-based workplan for the supervisor's review. The workplan will identify priority outcomes, country-support commitments, evidence products, partner contributions, key engagement milestones and responsibilities.
Provide targeted technical assistance on cross-cutting country policy priorities.
Support selected Country Offices and government counterparts to address defined challenges in child-responsive climate-policy formulation and implementation, particularly where advice across technical workstreams is required. Provide technical review and recommendations linking national and sectoral policies with child-responsive adaptation, loss and damage, and education and empowerment measures.
Support scoping and capacity building mission for Nairobi and Ethiopia offices.
Undertake a mission to identify priority technical-assistance needs and strengthen the capacity of relevant UNICEF offices and counterparts. The Nairobi component will assess opportunities to connect country demand, regional experience and CoE technical support. The Ethiopia component will support the Country Office and COP32 Presidency counterparts to identify practical opportunities for child-responsive national action and international policy outcomes.
Support country application of evidence and learning.
Support translation of agreed research and policy findings into practical recommendations for selected Country Offices and government counterparts. Contribute technical advice and capacity building to inform national and sectoral planning, and consolidate lessons from these assignments to strengthen subsequent country support and global policy recommendations.

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable
Support the development and application of evidence on child-responsive climate action.	1. Provide written contributions and technical review to 3 key UNICEF-led or co-led research outputs, including policy implications, methodology and application of findings through national responses and international mechanisms.	15 December 2027 - 22 days

	Support dissemination through substantive preparation and participation in 1 roundtable/event with key stakeholders.	
	2. Provide technical guidance and review of UNICEF's adaptation return-on-investment study, including methodology, identification of expert reviewers, 2 expert consultations, and review of draft outputs and final report. Support dissemination through technical inputs to materials/briefings for the COP32 Presidency, African Group and key partners.	15 December 2027 - 24 days
Guide and support development and policy application of the joint Climate and Education CoE loss-and-damage study.	3. Provide technical inputs to policy framing and intended applications, and 1 consolidated policy-focused review of the analytical framework.	30 April 2027 - 5 days
	4. Provide technical inputs and review of the joint flagship report and accompanying policy brief, focusing on recommendations and implications for child-responsive climate action. Support 1 joint learning and dissemination activity for country offices and technical review of 1 communications product.	15 December 2027 - 10 days
	5. Prepare 1 stakeholder and policy uptake plan, identifying relevant government counterparts, research institutions and partners; consultation opportunities; and entry points through national climate policies relevant global processes. Support up to 4 targeted stakeholder consultations capacity-building sessions or products, such as government briefings, presentations or submissions, to support uptake.	30 November 2027 - 10 days
Support research partnerships and institutional cooperation.	6. Provide technical inputs to preparation and participation in up to 3 partner consultations to advance specific 2027 activities under UCL and UNFCCC MoUs and associated workplans, and/or IPCC engagement. Produce 1 readout of action points and follow up.	15 December 2027 - 6 days
	7. Provide technical inputs and review of 3 research/policy-focused funding proposals	15 December 2027 - 10 days
Support high-level engagement to advance agreed climate-policy outcomes.	8. Provide substantive guidance and technical review of 2 UNICEF policy briefs, for SB66 and COP32, drawing on evidence and thematic contributions to strengthen policy recommendations, consistency across workstreams and links to country technical assistance. Include 1 consolidated review of each draft and 1 review of the revised document.	31 May 2027 31 October 2027 - 12 days
	9. Provide strategic guidance and technical review for 4 priority Presidency, government, Group of Friends and/or partner engagements, covering objectives, policy recommendations and briefing content. Support delivery and review outcome	15 December 2027 - 15 days

	notes for implications and recommended follow-up. **Travel to Bonn, Germany, 1 trip, 6 days**	
	10. Support technical preparation and participation in up to 12 bilateral consultations with government delegations before/during SB66 and COP32, focused on priority child-responsive outcomes and technical assistance opportunities. Prepare 2 consolidated summary notes. **Travel to Addis Ababa, COP32, 1 trip, 9 days**	30 November 2027 - 12 days
	11. Contribute and consolidate inputs and review 2 summary readouts for SB66 and COP32 covering key policy developments and relevance for UNICEF.	15 December 2027 - 6 days
Support preparation of the Climate & Environment Global Practice's 2027 climate policy workplan.	12. Prepare 1 consolidated, deliverable-based climate policy 2027 workplan, drawing on relevant workstream inputs and identifying priority outcomes, technical products, country-support commitments, engagement milestones and key partners. Incorporate consolidated feedback.	15 February 2027 - 7 days
Provide targeted technical assistance on agreed country policy priorities.	13. Provide senior technical assistance on 4 defined country assignments covering policy formulation and translation opportunities across national climate policies, loss and damage, UNFCCC engagement and/or youth engagement in decision-making, drawing together thematic expertise where required. Produce 1 follow-up report per assignment.	15 December 2027 - 29 days
Support scoping and capacity building for UNICEF Nairobi and Ethiopia offices.	14. Deliver 1 scoping and capacity-building assignment, comprising a technical assistance needs assessment, tailored materials, 1 substantive technical session in each location; stakeholder meetings and one consolidated mission report with recommendations and next steps. **Travel to Nairobi, Kenya, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 1 combined trip, 7 days.**	31 March 2027 - 15 days
	15. Deliver 1 follow-up technical assistance assignment for UNICEF Ethiopia and COP32 Presidency counterparts, comprising updated technical recommendations, and 1 summary note setting out next steps. **Travel to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1 trip, 6 days.**	30 September 2027 - 9 days
Support country application of evidence and learning.	16. Support translation of research, policy findings and good practices into practical recommendations for Country Offices and government counterparts through technical inputs and review of 2 guidance notes/briefs.	15 December 2027 - 8 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:
    - Master's Degree in International relations, international development, public policy, human rights, climate or environmental science, climate or environmental policy, social sciences, sustainability or equivalent areas.
- Work Experience:
    - Minimum 15 years' relevant work experience
    - Demonstrated experience providing technical inputs and review to research, policy briefs and guidance, and translating evidence into practical policy recommendations.
    - Experience supporting research partnerships, expert consultations and the uptake of findings through national and international policy processes.
    - Experience supporting cross-sectoral research and policy analysis on climate impacts on children, including education, and translating findings into recommendations for national climate and sectoral policies
    - Experience providing targeted technical assistance and capacity building to country offices and government counterparts.
    - Experience preparing briefing documents, talking points and presentations for senior officials.
    - Extensive experience advising governments and partners on integrating children's rights and needs into NDCs, NAPs and sectoral policies.
    - Direct experience engaging in UNFCCC processes and intergovernmental climate negotiations, including substantive engagement with government delegations and COP Presidency counterparts.

- Language requirement:
    - Fluency in English, with excellent analytical writing and oral communication skills.
- Skills:
    - In-depth child rights expertise and understanding of climate impacts on children and essential services.
    - Understanding of the links between climate change, education and children's wellbeing, including economic and non-economic losses, and their implications for climate-policy responses.
    - Strong knowledge of international climate-policy frameworks and institutions, including the Paris Agreement, UNFCCC processes, adaptation and loss and damage.
    - Ability to synthesise evidence and technical contributions across sectors into coherent policy recommendations.
    - Strong analytical skills, including the ability to assess research methodologies, interpret findings and provide substantive technical review.
    - Ability to communicate complex policy issues clearly and engage effectively with government officials, researchers and partners.
    - Ability to work collaboratively across disciplines, institutions and cultural contexts

Desirables:

- Working knowledge of another official UN language.
- Experience working with UNICEF or another UN organisation.
- Experience addressing economic and non-economic loss and damage affecting children.
- Experience supporting research on adaptation investment, costs and benefits, or financing for child-critical services.