Terms of Reference

Institutional contract to leverage human centered design approaches to support children and families affected by the Ukraine Crisis in Poland

**Request for Proposals**

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| Location | Poland/remote | |
| Duration | From: 01.06.2025 | To: 31.12.2025 |

# 1. Background

As of the end of December 2024, nearly 6 million refugees have fled Ukraine, with approximately 990,000 seeking refuge in Poland. Nearly 40% of the refugees are children, possibly the underserved group, facing unique and often overlooked challenges. The immense stress from displacement on parents compounded by various circumstances may lead to a lack of attunement to their children's specific needs, resulting in gaps in support and attention. To better understand and address the perceptions, insights and decision-driving factors and experience in accessing essential services of refugee children and adolescents from Ukraine as well as their peers in host community, the UNICEF Refugee Response Office in Poland is employing human centered approaches to uncover and overcome behavioural barriers to provide feedback and access to essential services.

# 2. Rationale for a human centered design

The Social and Behaviour Change team within the UNICEF Refugee Response Office in Poland aims to create a **child-friendly feedback mechanism toolbox** tailored to the specific needs of children in Poland with a particular focus on safeguarding and wellbeing of refugee children from Ukraine. This project will ensure that feedback and complaint mechanisms are not only accessible and responsive to children’s needs, focusing on essential services such as education, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and child protection, but also safe and confidential prioritizing child safeguarding concerns including the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). By placing children at the center of this process, the aim of this toolkit is to empower them to freely voice their concerns and share experience, ensuring that their safety, dignity, and rights are upheld at all times across all services provided.

# 3. Objectives

The objective is to use **human-centered design (HCD)** approaches to assess and enhance existing information, feedback, and complaint mechanisms among UNICEF’s implementing partners in Poland, with a focus on **creating child-friendly feedback systems toolbox** that prioritize safety and protection. These proposed solutions will aim to address the specific needs of refugee children and adolescents from Ukraine, ensuring they have access to essential services and that services are responsive to their needs. The project aims not only to identify and address gaps in current feedback mechanisms, but also enhance integration of effective, child-sensitive feedback tools into service providers’ operations, creating trustworthy and adaptable systems with robust child protection measures in the unique context of both refugee and host community children.

1. **Assess and identify gaps in existing feedback mechanisms**: Engage with refugee children in a manner that ensures their safety and confidentiality, evaluate the usage, effectiveness, accessibility, and responsiveness of current feedback and complaint mechanisms (focus on programmes supported by UNICEF). The findings of this assessment will inform improvements required to ensure that children’s perspectives are meaningfully incorporated into service provision in areas such as education, child protection, health, and MHPSS.
2. **Develop and pilot a feedback toolkit**: Design a comprehensive toolkit for gathering and responding to children's feedback, which will be tested in selected municipalities to ensure its effectiveness in safely capturing and addressing children’s concerns.
3. **Scale up and multiply the tools**: Develop scalable feedback mechanisms and tools specifically designed with child safeguarding measures applicable across different service environments. These tools can later be extended and adapted to **Polish children in host communities**, ensuring that all children, regardless of their nationality and background, have a safe and supportive platform to speak about their needs and share experiences while guaranteeing their protection throughout the feedback process.
4. **Expected Outcomes and Prototypes:** The project will yield actionable recommendations for service improvement, cost-effective rapid prototypes, and a refined toolkit adaptable across different communities. Ultimately, the pilot phase will be monitored and evaluated to provide insights that enable further scaling up of the tools and ensuring an inclusive, protective feedback system for children in both refugee and host communities.

# 4. Human-Centered Design and Accountability

This human-centered approach ensures that **children’s voices** shape the relevance of the services they receive, in alignment with **Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)**. Refugee children are active participants in decisions affecting their lives, and this approach empowers them to co-create solutions and be agents of positive change.

Importantly, while the project initially targets **Ukrainian refugee children**, the tools developed can be adapted and applied to **Polish children in host communities**. By recognizing that children across both groups face similar challenges and deserve the same rights to protection and participation, the project aims to foster inclusivity and cohesion, creating scalable feedback mechanisms that benefit all children. This includes developing feedback mechanisms that incorporate clear reporting pathways for any safeguarding concerns voiced by children, ensuring all feedback is treated confidentially and acted upon responsibly.

Furthermore, this HCD approach will not only address immediate needs but also provide a foundation for a safe, inclusive, child-friendly feedback system to evolve and serve a broader community, ultimately enhancing the support and services provided to all children. This approach intends not only to respond to current challenges but also adapt to future needs, fostering a protective and empowering environment for every child.

# 5. Expected Deliverables and Timetable

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective and Activity** | **Deliverable** | **Timeframe** | **Payment % of Contract** |
| **Understand current context, needs and available resources.**  1) Conduct inception meetings with key stakeholders to gather initial insights and set the framework for the human centered research.  2) Conduct desk review of best practice from other relevant emergencies to inform the approach and identify effective strategies.  3) Hold meetings and interviews with various UNICEF sections and key stakeholders (min 5 partners) to gather insights on the needs of refugee and host community children, assess and identifying gaps and collaboration opportunities to inform the design of effective, child-friendly feedback mechanisms.  4) Map available information resources, feedback and complaint mechanisms to identify areas for enhancement in order to increase their usage and ensure they meet the needs of refugee and host community children | Inception report to summarize initial recommendations and workplan. | 4 weeks after contract start | 15% |
| **Design and implement a HCD process to gather insights on prioritized behaviours and the context in which they occur**  Conduct a rapid human-centered research through consultations with beneficiaries and front-line workers, in-person at various service provision points and information resources including assessing existing feedback and complaint mechanisms to evaluate user journey, identify barriers, understand needs and measure effectiveness through satisfaction rating. | Prioritized behaviours, populations based on insights gathered. | 8 weeks after contract start | 15% |
| **Ensure stakeholders understand, advocate for and participate in this HCD research.**  Facilitate up to 3 capacity building workshops to introduce the human centered design approach and share research outcomes with various stakeholders, and develop a list of practical recommendations. | Presentation of proposed approach and synthesis of Inception report outcomes. | 6 weeks after contract start | 15% |
| **Test and refine insights and prototypes onsite with priority populations**  Organize three (3) one-day workshops to co-create solutions aimed at improving the system and developing prototypes for behaviours related to key areas and services, including engagement of children. | Insights report around the beneficiaries feedback. | 10 weeks after contract start | 15% |
| **Develop prototypes to gather information on proposed solutions**  Create up to five (5) prototype designs based on ideas shared during co-design workshops and background research (provided in Polish and Ukrainian, both online and offline tools). Prototypes may include solutions related to:  - How, which and when feedback should be collected from children  - The design and accessibility of services for children  - Data analysis | Pack with prototype designs focused on information, navigation and dissemination including  Method to prompt the collection of feedback and complains at the different sites  Navigation and dissemination of information  Accessibility of essential services | 12 weeks after contract start | 15% |
| **Testing of prototyped interventions in terms of usability, satisfaction and uptake of services (with at least 3-5 UNICEF partners) and updating it according to the results of piloting.** | Refined prototype designs responding to behavioural challenges | 14 weeks after contract start | 15% |
| **Prepare a report with recommendations**, which will include practical guidance on how to design a child-friendly feedback mechanism, promote it among children, and implement a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to assess the effectiveness of the toolbox. The report should include the final FCM toolbox.  **Select 1-3 partner organizations** and **coordinate the initial implementation** of the model with them. Provide ongoing **support and mentoring** to ensure successful adoption and integration of the feedback mechanism.  **Conduct a closing online workshop** to present the solutions, share implementation insights, and discuss next steps for scaling and sustainability. | Step by step guide on information flow for replication  2 hours webinar  One external facing documentation product (report) on prototyping process, learnings and/or results | 18 weeks after contract start | 10% |

6. Estimated Cost of Institutional Consultancy and Payment Conditions

The financial proposal should include a breakdown of the budget per activity according to the different main deliverables. Payments will be processed per the payment conditions aligned with deliverables specified in the ToR, upon satisfactory completion of the work assignment as assessed by the UNICEF Refugee Response Team in Poland.

7.Qualification requirements

To complete this assignment, UNICEF is looking for an supplier/vendor that provides a team of experts with the following profile:

For institutions:

* Expertise in developing and implementing human centered design interventions.
* At least 5 years of professional experience in managing similar consultancies.
* Demonstrated ability to produce high-quality results in a timely manner.

For team members:

* For a team leader, at least eight years of professional work experience relevant to human centered design.
* The composition of the team should include Ukrainian and Polish speaking team members.
* Previous experience working in Eastern Europe and/or emergency context is required.
* Proven familiarity and experience working with the UN (ideally with UNICEF) is preferred.

8. Application

The consortiums including Ukrainian and Polish institutions are strongly appreciated.

Interested supplier/vendor should send:

* Company portfolio that demonstrates the range of services and experience the company offers. The description should include at least three most compelling cases showcasing the company’s expertise in the service categories the company is applying for.
* Description of the availability of human resources – describe the structure of the proposed personnel/team with CVs.
* The methodology used to provide the services, including an approach to quality assurance, urgent services, delays in timelines, correction of mistakes and mitigation of risk in these areas.
* Applicant should include at least three (3) client references, along with a brief description of the services provided.
* The Financial Proposal shall be prepared using the company’s preferred format. It shall list all major cost components associated with the services and a detailed breakdown of such costs.

9. Evaluation

The evaluation methodology is based on the highest combined score (based on 70% technical offer and 30% price weight distribution). Only the proposals that will receive minimum technical score (70% of 70 points =49 points) will be considered for financial evaluation. The evaluation will be done based on the following matrix.

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| ITEM | TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA | MAX OBTAINABLE POINTS |
| 1 | **Overall Response**  Completeness of response  Overall concord between TOR, needs and proposal | **10**  5  5 |
| 1.1 |
| 1.2 |
| 2 | **Company and Key Personnel**   * Portfolio of previous similar work * Key personnel: relevant experience and qualifications of the proposed team for the assignment, fluent in Ukrainian/English/Polish * Experience of working with government and international institutions, including the UN in the region is an asset | **30**  15  10  5 |
| 2.1 |
| 2.2 |
| 2.3 |
|  |
| 3 | **Proposed Methodology and Approach**   * Project management, monitoring and quality assurance process in line with UNICEF standards * Innovative, rapid and cost-effective approach | **30**  15  15 |
| 3.1 |
| 3.2 |
| **TOTAL TECHNICAL SCORE** | | **70** |
| **TOTAL FINANCIAL SCORE** | | **30** |
| **SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL & FINANCIAL SCORE** | | **100** |