

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SERVICE CONTRACTING

Assignment	Reflecting on UNICEF MENA emergency preparedness investment in the context of COVID-19.
Location	(home-based)
Duration	(3 months)
Estimate number of working days	(45 days)

1. JUSTIFICATION/BACKGROUND

UNICEF is seeking to hire an individual consultant or institution with expertise in emergency preparedness and response. UNICEF in the MENA Region has been significantly investing in emergency preparedness over the past few years. Time and resources have been mobilised to support preparedness activities at country and regional level. While anecdotal evidence suggests that investment in preparedness has enabled faster and better responses, hard evidence and quantification of this is not readily available.

The objective of the study is to assess existing preparedness investments in terms of potential costs saved, response time gained and contribution to response quality. The study will help UNICEF in MENA building the evidence base for impact of humanitarian preparedness work, guide UNICEF in MENA in preparedness investment choices and could lay the groundwork to developing business cases and advocacy materials for emergency preparedness investments.

The Middle East and North Africa region is experiencing some of the most desperate situations in the world, with more than 32 million children in need of humanitarian assistance. In 2021, the region will account for one third of the very high severity crisis countries globally. Conflict remains the main driver of humanitarian needs in the region and is exacerbating the needs of children and women. The scale, severity and complexity of humanitarian needs in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen remain extensive after nine and five years of conflict, respectively. The deteriorating security situation in Libya and instability in Iraq, Sudan and the State of Palestine have exposed children, particularly girls, to inordinate violence. The humanitarian situation in the region is further compounded by growing gender inequality and gender-based violence. Humanitarian emergencies and extreme poverty are driving waves of internal and external displacement, with 5.8 million refugee children and 6.8 million internally displaced children in the region. Extreme poverty and violence push children to undertake dangerous journeys in pursuit of better educations and economic prospects. Sudan has one of the largest migrant populations in the subregion at over 1.2 million. Second to Sudan is Libya, with over 800,000 migrants. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has fueled civil unrest and accelerated economic deterioration in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia. The number of children living in monetary poverty is expected to grow by 7 million over the course of the year.

The Middle East and North Africa region is also confronting natural disasters, such as extreme flooding in Djibouti, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Sudan, as well as infectious disease outbreaks,

including cholera outbreaks in Yemen. Climate change is fueling the spread of disease and the scale and frequency of natural disasters. The situation is further aggravated by significant water scarcity.

As of 3 September 2020, 20 countries in the Middle East and North Africa have registered nearly 1.7 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 and over 45,000 associated deaths. The pandemic has generated a broad range of socio-economic impacts and is exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. The region is projected to experience negative economic growth of 5.7 per cent in 2020, with conflict-affected countries facing projections as high as 13 per cent. This economic downturn will push more people into poverty and increase the likelihood that children will succumb to negative household coping strategies such as child labour, early marriage and dropping out of school. Countries continue to struggle to ensure continuous learning for students, and are reporting disruptions to essential health and nutrition services. For example, immunization campaigns have slowed, putting nearly 15 million children at risk of missing life-saving vaccines. Measures restricting movement have increased the isolation of women and children in homes, thereby raising their risk of exposure to domestic and gender-based violence, and negatively impacting children's mental health.

Note that UNICEF has operational presence across 19 Countries in the MENA region, out of which 10 are considered "humanitarian" with specific humanitarian planning and funding appeals in place for 2021: Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, , State of Palestine, Sudan, Syria and Yemen; and the remaining with no regular humanitarian programmes in place but COVID specific activities falling under a regional humanitarian appeal: Algeria, Djibouti, Morocco, Oman and Tunisia. UNICEF is also present in the Gulf countries but do not implement any humanitarian or COVID programmes in Barhein, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia.

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The main purpose of the suggested methodological framework is to generate an accurate picture of emergency preparedness investments and its impact on emergency response in terms of potential costs saved, response time gained and contribution to response quality. The study will help UNICEF in MENA building the evidence base for impact of humanitarian preparedness work, guide UNICEF in MENA in preparedness investment choices and could lay the groundwork to developing business cases and advocacy materials for emergency preparedness investments.

The methodology will be a mix of desk review and interviews aiming at answering key overarching questions articulated around UNICEF minimum preparedness standards and its benchmarks.

- Have CO preparedness efforts paid off during the COVID response? What were the driving factors for potential gain or loss in response efficiency and effectiveness at the onset of the response?
- What key preparedness actions should be undertaken to improve CO and RO preparedness in the light of COVID-19 lessons?

The study will focus on preparedness activities that UNICEF has invested in the recent years through the Emergency Preparedness Platform, including but not limited to:

- MPS 1 – Emergency Management: effective emergency preparedness and response management mechanisms in place

- MPS 2 - Humanitarian Coordination: humanitarian coordination mechanisms, leadership and tools agreed with the government (as feasible) and the inter-agency for sectors/areas of responsibility (AoR) globally led by UNICEF
- MPS 3 - Staff Surge and Capacities: staff responsibilities, refocusing and surge needs identified and learning activities planned.
- MPS 4 – Supply and Logistics: Supply Plan and Supply & Logistics (S&L) Strategy developed based on the anticipated response and Standing Capacity
- MPS 6 – Implementing partners: potential implementing partners identified, and contingency programme documents/PCAs signed with key Civil Society Organization (CSO), including contingency lines in ongoing Programme Documents.
- The study will also explore correlation between preparedness investments and fundraising during an emergency response.

Geographical scope: the study should ensure diversity in CO operating contexts (development vs humanitarian), CO emergency response capacity and experience.

Timeframe: the study will look at preparedness investments made prior to the COVID-19 crisis onset (before March 2020) and impact over the first weeks into the response (different timelines depending on the countries) as well as potential preparedness plans modifications in the course of 2020.

Complementarity and alignment: the study should align with other ongoing evaluation processes notably the real time assessment and the iterative action reviews.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

To deliver on this assignment the contractor will be expected to:

- Conduct a qualitative review Country Offices levels of preparedness at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis including alignment with the UNICEF Minimum Preparedness Standards (MPS) and Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) and how did it impact positively or negatively the COVID-19 response onset, notably around:
 - Efficiency: potential time and cost savings
 - Effectiveness of the emergency response: target reach
 - Enhanced ability to leverage donor funds for the response
- Generate lessons and best practices regarding emergency preparedness during the COVID-19 crisis in MENA Region
- Identify regional trends in preparedness strengths and weaknesses and issue recommendations to inform future preparedness investments in MENA and directly feed into the RO preparedness plan revision, in particular:
 - emergency processes (e.g. standard operating procedures...)
 - staff skills/capacities (e.g. training of staff/partners...)
 - contingency agreements (e.g. LTAs and regional partnership...)
 - supplies and equipment (e.g. supply/equipment pre-positioning...)

4. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Expected Deliverables are specified below:

- A Final report including
 - Key lessons learnt on emergency preparedness at the onset of COVID-19 crisis in MENA region
 - Identification of patterns/trends in preparedness strengths/weaknesses according to the country risk level
 - Analysis on how preparedness efforts impacted on the response and what were the driving factors
 - Key preparedness actions to improve CO and RO preparedness in the context of COVID-19
 - Recommendations on longer term preparedness investments
- Organise and facilitate in a regional discussion on regional preparedness
 - Present the findings of the study (power point presentation)
 - Facilitate a discussion on critical investments to make for the Regional Office (short summary of discussions)

5. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The contractor will report to small Steering Committee when relevant and work closely with its members ensuring that they are informed at all times. All technical and administrative decisions related to the development of the final study will be reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee.

The consultancy is expected to be based on the following tasks:

- An inception meeting (face-to-face or virtual) with UNICEF to discuss and streamline expectations, processes, timetables, etc;
- Production of an inception report which explains how the assignment will be delivered and outlines the processes and scope for meeting the four deliverables;
- Production of draft outlines of the study
- Submission to UNICEF of the final study
- A regional meeting with UNICEF RO and COs to present findings of the study and discussion on best way forward for UNICEF in MENA
- A final meeting (face-to-face or virtual) to conclude the consultancy and draw lessons learnt.

6. LOCATION AND DURATION

The location of the contract is home-based with no missions expected to be undertaken as part of the assignment. The consultancy is expected to require up to 45 working days covering all four objectives and working over a period of no more than six months. A provisional start date for the consultancy is **March 2021** and the completion date would be no later than **April 2021**. The consultancy is expected to rely on remote working arrangements, with limited travel required. It is expected that the consultancy will involve limited travel and that consultation meetings will be held using video or audio conferencing, and most communication will be through email.

7. OFFICIAL TRAVEL INVOLVED

Expected missions to be undertaken – **no specific missions foreseen**

8. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The contractor will regularly report to the Steering Committee¹ established by UNICEF. The Humanitarian Section at UNICEF MENARO will be responsible for managing the contract. Overall supervision of the contract will fall on the Regional Emergency Advisor together with the Emergency Specialist at UNICEF MENARO.

9. FREQUENCY OF PERFORMANCE REVIEWS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR EVALUATION OF RESULTS

The contractor will submit regular reports as per identified deliverables. Performance reviews will be undertaken upon submission of each deliverable. All reports and deliverables should be submitted electronically in Word, Excel and most relevant statistical software as applicable.

10. DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE OR EXPERIENCE

The consultancy is planned to be conducted by an institution or by a registered consultancy group/firm being well-established and highly qualified, experienced institution, which has experience and expertise in emergency preparedness and response, organizational assessments and studies

The contractor shall be able to provide one lead technical expert meeting the following requirements:

- a. Advanced degree in a relevant topic
 - b. Proven expertise in emergency preparedness and response;
 - c. At least eight years of post-graduate professional experience in areas related to humanitarian work
 - d. Previous working experience in emergency preparedness and response with UNICEF is desirable
 - e. Strong analytical, communication and writing skills;
 - f. Proven organizational and coordination skills;
 - g. Excellent command of English, with other UN languages desirable;
 - h. Able to work effectively through email, phone, and other means of remote communications.
- The contractor to be selected for the proposed assignment should have:
 - Demonstrated expertise in emergency preparedness and response.

In addition to the profile of the institution, the team to deliver the service should have the following profile and qualification:

If the project is conducted by an international firm, the team leader will ensure that a national expert (Fluent Arabic speaker) is included in the team.

¹ Steering Committee Members: TBC

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 - Proven expertise in emergency preparedness and response;
 - At least eight years of post-graduate professional experience in areas related to humanitarian work
 - Strong analytical, communication and writing skills;
 - Proven organizational and coordination skills;
 - Excellent command of English, with other UN languages desirable;
 - Able to work effectively through email, phone, and other means of remote communications.

11. PROPOSED PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Select proposed methodology Upon deliverables

UNICEF will only make milestone payments based on achievement of specific deliverables as listed on the table below.

Deliverables	Time allocated	Payment
<u>Deliverable 1:</u> Production of the inception report	7 working days	10%
<u>Deliverable 2</u> Draft final report	25 working days	30%
<u>Deliverable 3</u> Final report	10 working days	50%
<u>Deliverable 4</u> Regional meeting facilitation	3 working days	10%
Total	45 working days	100%

12. STRUCTURE AND EVALUATION PROCESS OF THE PROPOSAL

(items to be included in proposal/response, such as workplan, timeline, methodology, samples, budget, etc.)

Each proposal will be assessed first on its technical merits (including by reference to legal requirements) and subsequently on its price. In making the final decision, UNICEF considers both technical and financial aspects. The Evaluation Team first reviews the technical aspect of the offer followed by the review of the financial offer of the technically compliant vendors. The proposal obtaining the overall highest score after adding the scores for the technical and financial proposals is the proposal that offers best value for money and will be recommended for award of the contract.

Example: The Technical Proposal should include but not limited to the following:

- *Detailed understanding of UNICEF requirements*
- *Detailed Methodology/Approach to project demonstrating how you meet or exceed UNICEF requirements for this assignment*
- *Proposed timeline and milestones*
- *Project dependencies and assumptions*
- *Expertise of Company detailing general and specific experience with similar assignments in the past (x) years. Bidders are requested to back up their submissions by providing:*
 - *Evidence in the form of job completion certificate, contracts and/or references.*
 - *Three case studies containing the following information:*
 - *Name of Client*
 - *Title of the Project*
 - *Year and duration of the project*
 - *Scope of the Projects/Requirements*
 - *Proposed Solutions and Outcome*
 - *Team members on each of the project and their specific roles*
 - *Project timelines (start and end date year, and any other information necessary)*
 - *Reference /Contact person details*
- *Details of the Proposed Team for the assignment including the following information:*
 - *Title/Designation of each team member on the project*
 - *Educational qualifications and professional experiences*
 - *Past experience in working on similar project and assignment – List all similar projects they worked on and their roles on the project.*
- *Project implementation and work plan showing the detailed sequence and timeline for each activity and man days of the of each proposed team as necessary*
- *Quality assurance mechanism and risk mitigation measures put in place*
- *Interviews, if necessary, indicating for which experts/position*

Financial Proposal

Bidders are expected to submit a lump sum financial proposal to complete the entire assignment based on the terms of reference. The financial proposal should include an estimate of travel costs. However, the final travel component will be agreed based on the effective work calendar. Travel costs will be pre-approved and reimbursed by UNICEF as per the UNICEF rules and regulations for travel for consultants/non-staff.

Bidder shall be required to include the estimate cost of travel in the financial proposal. Please note that i) travel cost shall be calculated based on economy class travel, regardless of the length of travel and ii) costs for accommodation, meals and incidentals shall not exceed

applicable daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, as promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). Details can be found at <http://icsc.un.org>.

13. UNICEF RECOURSE IN CASE OF UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment and consolidated output until the contractor provide satisfactory quality output as reviewed by the project manager / supervisor. In case of unsatisfactory performance, the payment will be withheld until quality deliverables are submitted and subsequently, the contract will be terminated in accordance with the General terms and conditions stated in the tender document if the contractor fails to deliver.

14. CONDITIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- The contractor will work on its own computer(s) and use its/his/her own office resources and materials in the execution of this assignment. **The contractor's fee shall therefore be inclusive of all office administrative costs**
- Granting access to UNICEF ICT resources for consultants/non-staff is considered as 'exception,' and therefore shall only be granted upon authorization by the head of the office on justification/need basis. This includes creation of a UNICEF email address, as well as access to ICT equipment such as laptops and mobile devices.
- All persons engaged under a UNICEF service contract, either directly through an individual contract, or indirectly through an institutional contract, shall be subject to the UN Supplier Code of Conduct: <https://www.ungm.org/Public/CodeOfConduct>
- Please also see UNICEF's Standard Terms and Conditions attached.