

Terms of Reference Institutional Service Consultancy To Develop Content and Capacity for the Open Digital Library for Vietnamese Children Programme

Summary

Title	Develop Content and Capacity for the Open Digital Library for Vietnamese children
Purpose	To provide access to free, open-source, high-quality, digital early grade reading books in Vietnamese, “underserved” Ethnic Minority languages and sign languages and Mathematical games in Vietnamese.
Location	Viet Nam
Duration	18 months
Tentative Start Date	October 1, 2023

Background

Major progress has been made towards increasing pre-school and primary school enrolment rates in Viet Nam. Still, many children and adolescents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, struggle with foundational skills or are lacking other literacy skills including vocabulary, spelling, and comprehension. One reason for this is that many do not have access to quality, early grade reading resources in a language they understand. Data shows that the gap in foundational reading skills between the richest and poorest quintiles is 13 percentage points. Additionally, children from the richest quintile have a much higher rate of foundational numeracy skills (85%) compared to children from the poorest quintile (55%). This disparity is further evident across different ethnic groups, with a 50-percentage point gap in foundational learning skills between the highest-performing ethnic groups (Kinh and Hoa) and the lowest-performing group (Mong).¹

From the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 6 (MICS6), only 26.2 percent of children aged 0-59 months lived in households where at least three children’s books were present. The proportion of children with 10 or more books declines to just 13.0 percent. The three regions with very low percentages of children living in households with 10 or more books for children were the Central Highlands (6.0 per cent), Northern Midlands and Mountainous area (7.3 per cent) and Mekong River Delta (6.6 per cent).

Additionally, despite the government’s efforts to create an inclusive education system and learning environment, children with disabilities still have limited access to schools and inclusive learning resources. There is persistent stigma and discrimination against children with disabilities largely due to a lack of understanding or misunderstanding within society about the abilities of these children.

UNICEF Viet Nam, therefore, have collaborated with the Global Digital Library (GDL) and the Vietnamese Institution of Educational Sciences (VNIES) to provide access to free, high quality, digital early grade reading books and reading resources in Vietnamese, 8 “underserved” Ethnic Minority languages: Bahnar, Cham, Ede, Jrai, Khmer, Mong, Mnong, Thai; and sign language. We have adapted and localized the platform and contributed more than 1400 new digital resources to the current library of GDL (with 6000+

¹ Source: Viet Nam Education Fact Sheets 2022 - MICS - EAGLE - Analyses for learning and equity using Viet Nam SDGCW Survey Data.

books in 72 languages). Among these are ten newly created books with positively portray children from various ethnic groups and children with disabilities.

The platform is open and free to everyone, and the aim is to reach children and their caregivers and other users including the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), Departments of Education and Training (DOETs), school managers, teachers, international and national non-governmental organizations, local publishers, digital distributors, public libraries, content providers.

Upon successful completion of the first phase, UNICEF Viet Nam wishes to continue to develop, enrich, and promote the resource in the second phase of the project and provide the MOET with inputs and recommendations for scale

Objectives and deliverables

Overall objectives:

1. Provide training to teachers in preschool and primary schools in integrating the digital resources from the Global Digital Library into daily teaching activities.
2. Provide access to free, open source, high-quality, digital early grade reading books in Vietnamese, 8 “underserved” Ethnic Minority languages, sign languages and Mathematical Games in Vietnamese.
3. Promote reading resources to caregivers and cultivate reading habits from an early age.
4. Improve the android application to make sure it can work offline and accessible to all children.
5. Evaluate and document the process, challenges, lesson learnt and recommendations for scale up.

Key activities:

1. **Develop a teacher capacity building program for integrating the digital books and games into the curriculum effectively and implement the trainings with 600 teachers in Soc Trang, Lao Cai, Dien Bien, Gia Lai, An Giang and Kon Tum.**
 - Develop one training program and manual for teachers in preschool, primary school and bilingual education programs.
 - Conduct 20 training sessions with pre and post assessments.
2. **Enrich the current resources**
 - Translate 500 early Mathematical Games to Vietnamese.
 - Organize children’s book contest to select 20 illustrated stories for early readers. (Contest modality and guidelines, quality assurance of selected books etc. to be specified and agreed upon prior to implementation.)
 - Create 40 new books with illustrations in different themes covering the main content in preschool and primary curriculum. (Themes and content to be finalized prior to production.)
 - Translate 60 selected books above into English, 8 Ethnic Minority languages: Bahnar, Cham, Ede, Jrai, Khmer, Mong, Mngong, Thai
 - Record audio for the 60 new books in Vietnamese and 8 Ethnic Minority languages.
 - Develop sign language videos for the 60 books.
3. **Promoting parents’ engagement in building good reading habits for children in Soc Trang, Lao Cai, Dien Bien, Gia Lai, An Giang and Kon Tum.**
 - Organize book festivals in 20 preschools and primary schools or public libraries, community centres in 6 provinces. The structure and content of the festivals to be specified and agreed upon prior to implementation and results reported.

- Work with the trained teachers to plan and implement activities to engage parents in building reading habits at home for children at the above 20 schools. The proposed plan to be specified and agreed upon prior to implementation and progress monitored.
- Produce 10,000 flash-card key rings with QR code linked directly to online books at the bookfairs.
- Promote the available resources in collaboration with UNICEF and GDL on social media, advocacy and collaboration with relevant departments of the MOET. Special attention to be given to reach caregivers and children from ethnic minority background as well as parents and children with hearing impairments. An advocacy plan to be designed and agreed upon prior to implementation.

4. Ensuring the accessibility of reading resources and the android application following the requirements in the Annex.

- Continue to test and improve the reading app to ensure they are accessible for all children including those with visual and audio impairments. Android application already available with open-source code via phase 1 of the project. UNICEF will provide the current source code of the application.
- Test and improve the android application to make sure they can work offline.

5. Develop and implement monitoring and assessment tools to monitor the progress and results.

- Create an assessment tool to gather baseline, midline, and end line data. The tool's purpose is to capture various aspects of the Open Digital Library for Children Programme, including the utilization and effectiveness of learning materials in the teaching and learning process, student reading habits, and parental engagement. The assessment tool should cover indicators related to teacher capacity, parental engagement, and students' reading habits development. It will be administered before, during (midline), and after (end line) the intervention to provide insights for potential approach revisions and to evaluate overall progress. Reports will be generated based on the assessment data.
- Develop a monitoring tool to effectively capture and track the ongoing progress of the programme. This will enable the systematic collection of data and provide valuable insights into the program's implementation. Key stakeholders identified and assigned specific roles and responsibilities in the monitoring process. The tool will facilitate regular monitoring and reporting of progress on a quarterly basis.
- Document the overall process, challenges, lessons learnt and recommendations for scale up.
- Submit final report for review 3 months prior to closure of the intervention.

6. Documentations of the software development process and resources

- Upload all media resources to Global Digital Library platform and GitHub. This includes images, videos, audio files and relevant assets. To ensure they are securely stored and easily accessible for contributors and users of the project.
- Create detailed document outlining the design of the application, dependencies and configurations necessary for successful builds of the application.
- Documentation of technical criteria for different media, providing guidelines for other contributors to the project. The aim is to provide a reference for contributors, ensuring that media assets adhere to the standards and requirements of the platform used for the project.

Justification

This activity requires high-level technical expertise and relevant experience in the fields of early grade reading development. It also requires strong expertise in EdTech. Given the nature of mixed competencies and expertise required, a local institution with local knowledge in the fields of interest is needed. As this consultancy requires different sets of skills, one consultant will not be able to carry out the expected deliverables within a short time frame. As such, institutional consultancy is required for this assignment.

The below timeline is tentative and subject to adjustments based on project requirements and progress.

No.	Tasks	Deliverables	Tentative dates
1	Inception report	1.1. Inception report outlining methodologies, deliverables, and work plan	1 October 2023 - 15 October 2023
		1.2. Technical document with current application design and areas for improvement	1 October 2023 - 15 October 2023
2	Develop teacher capacity building program	2.1. Training program and manual for teachers in using digital books and Mathematical Games	1 October 2023 -30 October 2023
		2.2. Implementation of training sessions with pre and post assessments	15 October 2023 - 31 January 2024
3	Develop monitoring and assessment tools	3.1. Assessment tool to capture usage and application of learning materials, student habits, and engagement	15 October 2023 – 15 November 2023
		3.2. Monitoring tool for ongoing progress with assigned roles and responsibilities	Pre (October 2023), Mid (July 2024) and Post (March 2025)
		3.3. Report documenting process, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations	31 January 2025
4	Enrich existing resources	4.1. Translation of 500 Mathematical Games to Vietnamese	1 December 2023 - 31 January 2024
		4.2. Organization of children's book contest to choose 20 illustrated stories	1 February 2024 - 1 July 2024
		4.3. Creation of 40 new books with illustrations covering preschool and primary curriculum	1 February 2024 - 1 January 2025
		4.4. Translation of 60 new books into English and 8 ethnic languages	1 February 2024 - 1 January 2025
		4.5. Recording audio for 60 new books in Vietnamese and ethnic languages	1 February 2024 - 1 January 2025

		4.6. Development of sign language videos for 60 books	1 February 2024 - 1 January 2025
5	Promote parents' engagement	5.1. Organization of book festivals in 20 preschools and primary schools	December 2023 in Soc Trang 1 February 2024 - 31 January 2025 in other provinces
		5.2. Implementation of activities to engage parents in building reading habits at home	November 2023 to January 2024 in Soc Trang, Lao Cai 1 February 2024 - 31 January 2025 in Dien Bien, Gia Lai, An Giang
		5.3. Production of 10,000 flash-card key rings with QR codes	1 November 2023 - 1 July 2024
		5.4. Social media promotion, advocacy, and collaboration with relevant departments	1 February 2024 - 31 January 2025
6	Ensure accessibility of reading resources and android application following the requirements in the Annex.	6.1. Testing and improvement of reading app for accessibility and user-friendly features.	15 October 2023 - 31 January 2025
		6.2. Testing and improvement of android application for offline functionality	15 October 2023 - 1 March 2025
7	Documentation of software development process and resources	7.1. Upload of all media resources to GitHub	15 October 2023 - 1 March 2025
		7.2. Detailed document outlining the design of the application, dependencies and configurations necessary for successful builds of the application.	15 October 2023 - 1 March 2025
		7.3. Documentation of technical criteria and guidelines for contributors	15 October 2023 - 1 March 2025
Total: 18 months			October 2023 – March 2025

Management

The institution or service provider or contractor will be working under the supervision of Chief of Education Programme, UNICEF Viet Nam while day-to-day advice and management will be undertaken by the Digital Learning Officer, UNICEF Viet Nam. The UNICEF Education section will also provide facilitation of working with MOET, DOETs and other stakeholders.

Estimated budget

- Cost estimate: Lump sum contract including the budget for hiring development team, and all translation costs.
- This budget does not include the costs of the venue for conducting consultative workshops/meetings with related national and local stakeholders if deemed necessary. This will be organised on need bases by UNICEF and therefore covered directly by UNICEF.

Budget for travel and other cost if any will be made in lumpsum to the institution.

Payment schedules

The total contract value will be divided into four payments as follows:

- 1st Payment: **30%** of the total contract value will be made after receiving the deliverables of task #1 by **30 October 2023**.
- 2nd Payment: **40%** of the total contract value will be made after receiving the deliverables of tasks #2, #3.1, #4.1, #4.2, #5.1 (Soc Trang), #5.2 (Lao Cai & Soc Trang), #5.3 by **31 July 2024**.
- 3rd Payment: **20%** of the total contract value will be made after receiving the deliverables of the remaining tasks by **20 January 2025**.
- 4th Payment: The remaining **10%** of the total contract value will be made after receiving the handover of all documents, media resources, source code of the application and the final report by **31 March 2025**.

Time Period

The contract for this assignment will cover a period from 1 October, 2023 to 31 March, 2025.

Structure of the Technical Proposal

Institution interested are required to submit a detailed technical proposal including the following:

1. Credentials document outlining the expertise of the company, detailing general and specific experience with similar clients and/or assignments, including the samples (e.g. reports, materials, products) of past relevant works.
2. Details of the proposed team for the assignment including the following information:
 - Title/Designation of each team member on the project
 - Past experience in working on similar projects and assignments – List similar projects they worked on and their roles on the project.
 - The team needs to include different members who have background and working experience in the following key fields: education or other social studies, graphic design, arts, management, EdTech, ICT, etc.
 - A (sub) team of translators (in all described languages) and how they will be coordinated
3. Provide a summary of the approach which the agency would take to meet the specific objectives and deliverables outlined above.

- Submissions must be made in English.
- No price information should be contained in the technical proposal.
- Any submissions made outside of the allotted time frame or without adequate information will be automatically disqualified.

Evaluation process and methods

Weighted ratio between the technical and the price criteria: (80:20)

Such the proposed programme is new and not available in Viet Nam. Given the newness, complexity, and strong requirement of innovative and creativity of the assignment, the ratio between the technical and the financial proposal for this task is 80:20 respectively. Only those proposals that score 70% of technical points on the technical proposal will be shortlisted.

Each technical proposal will be assessed first on its technical merits and subsequently on its price. A maximum of 80 points is allocated to the technical component and 20 points for the price component, with a maximum possible total score of 100 points.

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. UNICEF will set up an evaluation panel composed of technical UNICEF staff.

In making the final decision, UNICEF considers both technical and financial aspects. The evaluation panel first reviews the technical aspect of the offer, followed by the review of the financial offer of the technically compliant vendors.

The proposals will be evaluated against the following two elements:

a) Technical Proposal

Criteria		Points
1	Company Information	5
1.1	Legal Structure (Registration and taxes)	
1.2	5 to 10 years of expertise and experiences	
1.4	Financial capacities (Statement on consolidated sales and revenue)	
2	Technical Expertise	30
2.1	Experience in integrating digital products in the pedagogy for preschool and primary curriculums, mother tongue based bilingual education and training teachers	
2.2	Present/prior experience working with high profile customers or projects (name of clients and/or project engagements)	
2.3	Technical services (Equipment, studio facilities, outsourcing suppliers)	
3	Personnel	30
3.1	Management position and technical competences (CV)	
3.2	Number of key staff assigned to the project management	
4	Innovative and Creative portfolio	15

4.1	Samples of innovative work in educational contexts	
4.2	Samples with demonstrated experience in book design and library design and implementation	
	Total	80

b) Financial Proposal

The Financial Proposal should be broken down for each component of the proposed work. Please make sure to have separate line items in price proposal for the following:

- Strategy and planning
- Creative Conception
- Oral and written Translation (English – Vietnamese and Bahnar, Cham, Ede, Jrai, Khmer, Mong, Mnong and Thai + sign language, including recording)
- Designing and development process and options
- Finalization and uploading of the products.
- Social Media campaign

Mandatories

- All prices/rates quoted must be exclusive of all taxes as UNICEF is a tax-exempt organization.
- Financial Proposals must be submitted separately to Technical Proposals Prices/rates must be submitted in Vietnam Dong (VND).
- Financial Proposals must be submitted separately to Technical Proposals
- The total amount of points allocated for the price component is 20. (The maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest price proposal of the technically qualified proposals).
- UNICEF will award the contract to the vendor whose response is of high quality and meets the specific objectives.

ANNEX: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION OF THE ANDROID APPLICATION

To ensure that an Android app is accessible for children with visual impairments and hearing impairments, the following technical requirements should be considered:

- **Screen Reader Compatibility:** Ensure compatibility with Android screen reader accessibility services, such as TalkBack, text-to-speech in Vietnamese (TTS) by implementing proper accessibility labels, roles, and navigation structures. Screen readers provide audio descriptions of on-screen elements, enabling visually impaired users to navigate the app effectively.
- **High Contrast and Color Accessibility:** Ensure that the app's user interface (UI) design uses high contrast colors and provides color alternatives for individuals with visual impairments. This includes using clear color contrasts between text and background, avoiding color combinations that can cause confusion or discomfort, and providing customizable color options.
- **Large Text and Scalable Fonts:** Allow users to adjust the font size and ensure that all app text, including menus, buttons, and content, can be easily resized without affecting the app's functionality or layout. This helps visually impaired users read the app's content more comfortably.
- **Alternative Text for Images:** Provide alternative text (alt text) descriptions for images/graphics within the app. This allows screen readers to describe images to visually impaired users, providing them with a contextual understanding of visual content.
- **Closed Captioning and Subtitles:** provide closed captioning or subtitles for videos to make sure they are accessible for children with hearing impairments. This ensures that all users can access and understand the content regardless of their hearing abilities.
- **Sound Feedback:** Implement audio cues for interactive elements to provide feedback to visually impaired users when they interact with buttons, menus, or other touch-sensitive elements within the app.
- **Accessibility Settings and Preferences:** where possible include accessibility settings within the app, allowing users to customize various accessibility features based on their specific needs. This may include options to adjust screen brightness, color schemes, font sizes, speech rate, and other accessibility-related settings.
- **User Testing and Feedback:** Conduct thorough testing with users who have visual impairments and hearing impairments to gather feedback and ensure the app's accessibility features meet their needs. Incorporate user feedback to continuously improve and refine the app's accessibility.

To ensure that the Android application can work offline and in remote areas with limited connectivity, the following technical requirements should be considered:

- **Offline Storage:** a subset or all books (if possible) are available and stored in local database, allowing users to access books even without internet connection
- **Download Capability:** download function available for books not yet available in local storage.
- **Content synchronization:** available mechanism in syncing and downloading content with the server when an internet connection is available.

- Offline navigation: the design of the app, search functionality, user interface that support seamless browsing and reading of books without requiring an internet connection.
- Efficient Resource Management: optimize resource usage, such as memory and storage to ensure smooth performance of the app when operating in offline mode.