

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR INSTITUTIONAL CONTRACTORS

PART I		
Purpose of Assignment	uSupport e-mental health platform for adolescents and young adults	
Location of Assignment	Poland	
Start date	From: 15 July 2024	To: 14 July 2025
Reporting to:	Chief of Education, UNICEF Refugee Response Office in Poland	

Background

Research shows that half of all mental disorders begin by the age of 14, and three-quarters by the mid-20s. Early intervention for mental health is hence a critical component of overall well-being. Recognizing and addressing mental health concerns in young people’s lives can prevent the escalation of problems that can subsequently lead to more severe and costly consequences and treatments. This saves healthcare resources and enhances the overall well-being and productivity of the population.¹

Nearly one in five deaths among 15 to 19-year-olds in the EU is caused by intentional self-harm, second only to road traffic incidents.² In 2021, Poland was ranked among the highest in Europe in terms of suicides committed by children and adolescents. A 2021 survey of children and adolescents commissioned by the Children's Rights Ombudsman found that about 15 per cent of students in Poland require intervention related to their mental functioning.³

There is a critical need to enhance accessibility to multi-layered MHPSS (Mental Health and Psychosocial Support) services for diverse community members. Poland hosts the second highest numbers of Ukrainian refugees, with almost 1 million registered in the country as of October 2023. More than 20 per cent of the responders of the 2023 Multi-Sector Needs Assessment for Ukrainian refugees indicated a degree of psychosocial distress.⁴

There is ample evidence that online MHPSS support⁵ is an effective and safe modality of care that can have equivalent results to in-person support. For young people online modality is often the preferred option as it allows anonymous, confidential and timely access to quality evidence-based information, tools, and services, creating connections to peer communities.

Proposed UNICEF solution

¹ Kessler et al. (2007) *Age of onset of mental disorders: a review of recent literature*. Current Opinion in Psychiatry.

² <https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/en/press-releases/unicef-bulgaria-1-5-deaths-among-adolescents-caused-intentional-self-harm>

³ Wojtowicz-Szefler et al. (2023) *The mental condition of Polish adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine*. <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1257384/full>

⁴ <https://microdata.unhcr.org/index.php/catalog/1029>

⁵ For example: Harith et al. (2022) *Effectiveness of digital mental health interventions for university students: an umbrella review*. Peer J.

uSupport, developed by UNICEF, is a multi-language platform and framework designed to help governments deliver on their national mental health strategy by providing online on-demand e-mental health support and services for adolescents and young adults aged (16-24).

uSupport, is an innovative digital approach to address the growing need for mental health and psychosocial support for young people, including Ukrainians. It provides audio-, video- or texting consultation options with trained and certified mental health professionals and is designed to minimise stigma around mental health while maintaining privacy, confidentiality, and security for all its users. uSupport also provides evidence-based information, content, and tools to build resilience and coping skills for young people and their caregivers by going to where young people are – online. The underlying technology behind the platform is leading-edge, open source and cloud based. The payment system is based on credit card payments and coupons and uses Stripe software.

uSupport approach is expected to lead to a paradigm shift in terms of finding new approaches for addressing the service-access gaps and new ways for how adolescents receive psychosocial support for the most common and prevalent behavioral and development problems covering key areas of emotional health and well-being, conduct and hyperactivity disorders, and compromised peer and family relations.

Purpose, Objectives & Expected Results

Purpose

UNICEF seeks to identify a qualified partner in Poland to carry out the uSupport pilot phase, roll-out and launch, and manage ongoing uSupport operations.

Objectives

The specific objectives of this assignment include two areas of activity, namely:

- Phase 1: Setting up the environment for the uSupport pilot,
- Phase 2: roll-out and launch and managing ongoing uSupport operations.

In Phase 1, the supplier will be responsible for translating content, recruiting Polish-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking therapists/psychologists, as well as checking their credentials and preparing relevant training materials. Furthermore, supplier will run the onboarding of recruited therapists/psychologists and test the uSupport platform with the focus group in at least two municipalities in Poland. All tasks will be performed in close cooperation with UNICEF and are further detailed in this ToR.

In Phase 2, the supplier will be responsible for creating an effective process for acquiring and training new therapists/psychologists as required as well as for establishing processes for the future operation of the platform, including performance assessments and further enhancements. The supplier will also gather and reflect on feedback, collect key learnings and report on conclusions and recommendations.

Expected results

- Scaling up and increasing coverage of the existing mental health infrastructure by enabling MHPSS providers to support more adolescents and young people including from Ukraine, sooner and reducing waiting times.
- Allowing remote access to MHPSS services by Ukrainian psychologists and therapists to Ukrainian refugees.
- Fostering self-management of mental health needs by adolescents and young people and peer-support.

- Alleviating the burden on the primary, secondary and emergency health services by providing online support for adolescents and young adults with mild to moderate Mental Health conditions.
- Improving access to MHPSS to young people living in remote and rural areas.

Description of the Assignment

- Phase I – Setting up the environment for the uSupport pilot, roll-out and launch
 - Set-up coordination mechanism with all the relevant actors in the country (including governmental institutions, UNICEF, professional associations, etc.),
 - Provide translation of the content including adaptation as needed,
 - Ensure alignment with the country data protection and safeguarding requirements, legal analysis of Terms of Use and other documents for compliance with Polish law,
 - Finalize the provided set of documents, SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), and referral pathways in line with national policies,
 - Together with UNICEF Poland Refugee Response Office (RRO) set-up a youth group,
 - Jointly with the youth focus groups, coordinate platform testing with the adolescents/young adults and a pilot group of 6-10 (3-5 per municipality) psychologists and therapists,
 - Develop payment plans, schedule for the psychologists' and therapists' payments, and the refund process,
 - Set up and test a Stripe account (connected to the internal uSupport system) where funds will be received from credit card payments for further disbursement to the psychologists' and therapists' accounts,
- Phase II – Manage ongoing uSupport operations
 - In cooperation with UNICEF continue identification, vetting, selection, identity verification, onboarding, training, and supervision of the therapists and psychologists who will be registered on the platform,
 - Regularly produce new content and work with project manager and other stakeholders to approve it,
 - Work closely with youth to engage adolescents and young people in formulating (inform, influence and advise) the topics covered in the articles, Questions and Answers, etc., and to collect feedback and suggestions,
 - Verify sessions and pay psychologists and therapists using local banking system on agreed schedule and provide reports to UNICEF RRO in Poland,
 - Identify and engage with potential private sector partners to ensure sustainability of the platform (through coupons functionality), including but not limited to the development of a list of potential private sector partners with contact details that could be engaged in uSupport
 - Handle users' feedback (youth, parents, psychologists and therapists) and manage any potential complaints through a mechanism to be agreed on with UNICEF,
 - Work jointly with UNICEF Poland RRO to prepare and implement targeted communication and marketing strategy, including the development of key context-specific messaging highlighting uSupport's value proposition and determine most efficient communication channels.
 - Work jointly with UNICEF Poland RRO to prepare the launch event.

Deliverables, timelines and payment schedule

Deliverables	Timeline	Schedule of Payment
1. Inception Report highlighting the methodology of the project implementation, key tasks, risk mitigation strategies, quality assurance measures, detailed action plan, matrix of team members. etc. is in place and approved by UNICEF.	Deliverable by 31 July 2024.	Payment upon acceptance of Deliverable 3 - (5% of the contract value).
2. Setup and development phase are completed. Content is translated and the first set of psychologists and therapists to run a pilot is recruited and onboarded. Training materials, terms of use and other relevant documents are prepared. Communication and marketing strategy is in place.	Deliverable by 15 November 2024.	Payment upon acceptance of Deliverable 3 - (10% of the contract value).
3. uSupport is tested with in two selected municipalities. Feedback is collected and analysed. Launch plan and timeline are in place.	Deliverable by 15 December 2024.	Payment upon acceptance of Deliverable 3 - (10% of the contract value).
4. Roll-out plan prepared and agreed with UNICEF. Necessary legal documents for operation of the application prepared (e.g. Terms of Use).	Deliverable by 28 February 2025.	Payment upon acceptance of Deliverable 4 - (30% of the contract value).
5. Full roll-out. Psychologists and therapists are onboarded. Communication and marketing strategy is being implemented. uSupport launched after launch event. Monitoring and reporting procedures in place.	Deliverable by 15 June 2025.	Payment upon acceptance of Deliverable 5 - (45% of the contract value).

Qualifications

(1) Overall requirements of the consultancy company/institution (please provide two examples for each subsection)

- a. The consultancy company/institution should have experience and references in projects related to counselling, psychological care or psychiatry and be able to provide insights into the specifics of MHPSS interventions.
- b. The institution is expected to have extensive experience in project management to ensure that project is delivered on time, within budget, and with the desired outcomes.
- c. The institution is expected to have experience of working with Ukrainian refugees, preferentially in the mental health sphere.

- d. The institution should preferably have experience of working in a culturally diverse context. Companies' cross-cultural competence to ensure interventions appropriate and respectful.
- e. The institution should possess collaborative skills evidenced by a track record of multi-stakeholder projects including projects conducted together with public institutions.
- f. The institution is expected to have monitoring and evaluation experience to assess the effectiveness of uSupport intervention. This includes data collection, analysis, presentation and reporting.
- g. Company should have experience in managing funding and resources effectively to maximize impact.

(2) Composition of the team and requirements of team members

Team Leader/Project Manager: Responsible for overseeing all aspects of the project, including planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as for budget management, timeline adherence, and overall project success.

MHPSS Expert: Responsible for technical aspects of the project, overseeing the work of therapists/psychologists and controlling the quality of articles on mental wellbeing that will be posted on the platform.

Finance and Administration Specialist: Responsible for administrative aspects of the implementation including payment system and the payments for therapists/psychologists.

Duty Station

Poland-based with approximately 10 fieldwork/travel (which are subject to approval of UNICEF) may be required. The supplier is required to provide strong rationale and plan with adequate details in technical proposal for fieldwork and/or travel.

Duration

- Starting period: 15 July 2024
- Foreseen finishing period: 14 July 2025

Cost of the Consultancy

The contracted supplier will be paid in PLN per the submitted and approved financial proposal. The bidders are required to use the financial proposal template to provide a detailed financial proposal that contains costs of conducting the tasks defined in the ToR.

Reporting Requirements

Monthly progress reports required. Reporting system is in place.

- Ensure timely reporting to UNICEF Poland RRO on the project updates, bottlenecks and lessons learnt and contribute to cross-country experience exchange.
- Ensure timely monitoring and reporting to UNICEF Poland RRO, including early identification of issues for attention/troubleshooting.

Performance Indicators

The successful contractor's performance will be evaluated against the following criteria: timeliness, responsibility, initiative, communication, and quality of the services delivered.

Evaluation process and methods

Award criteria: Cumulative Analysis.

The evaluation and award criteria that will be used for this ToR is Cumulative Analysis evaluation (point system with weight attribution). The weighting ratio between the technical and financial proposals will be 70:30. The respective importance between technical and financial scores will be weighted as 70% and 30%.

- Weightage for Technical Proposal = 70%
- Weightage for Financial Proposal = 30%
- Total Score = 100%

An offer is considered technically acceptable (and therefore eligible for opening of financial offers) when it obtains 49 Points out of 70 for the technical evaluation. The final selection of the contractor will be based on a combination of the technical and financial proposals with a weighting of 70% for the technical proposal and 30% for the financial proposal. In the case of cumulative analysis, the proposals scoring below 70% of the available technical points will be considered non-compliant and will be rejected and not considered further (e.g., in the case of 70:30, the passing score is 49 points).

Bidders are expected to submit to UNICEF the following documents:

- (1) Technical proposal (maximum 20 pages, Times New Roman, font 12, single space, not including annexes).

The minimum content for the technical proposal is:

- a. Main objectives
- b. Methodology outlining a tentative research matrix responding to the key research questions
- c. Tentative schedule
- d. List of similar project conducted/led by proposed core team members for this assignment
- e. Two similar reports (hardcopy or electronic copy) conducted by the company, preferably by proposed core members (team leader, expert researchers, expert on MHPSS) for this assignment
- f. CVs of core team members (maximum four pages per team member)

The Technical Proposal should address all aspects and criteria outlined in the Terms of Reference and Request for Proposal (Please see technical evaluation criteria in details)

ITEM	TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA	MAX OBTAINABLE POINTS
1	Overall Response	15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Response e.g. the understanding of the assignment by the proposer and the alignment of the proposal submitted with the ToR 	5
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completeness of response 	5
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall concord between TOR/needs and proposal 	
2	Company and Key Personnel	20
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range and depth of organizational experience with similar projects run in Poland or in Europe 	5
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant experience and qualifications of the proposed team for the assignment (attach CVs), 	5
2.3		5

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated available pool of certified Polish and Ukrainian therapists and psychologists, • Experience of working with Ukrainian refugees in the mental health sphere 	5
3	Proposed Methodology and Approach	35
3.1	• Work plan and Gantt chart showing detailed plan of project implementation,	10
3.2	• Project management, monitoring and quality assurance procedures in place,	5
3.3	• Strategy of including child safeguarding policies to project implementation strategy,	5
3.4	• Demonstrating experience of managing payment systems,	10
3.5	• Demonstrated experience of designing and implementing marketing and communication campaigns.	5
TOTAL TECHNICAL SCORE		70
TOTAL FINANCIAL SCORE		30
SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL & FINANCIAL SCORE		100

Minimum technical score: 70% of 70 points = 49 points

FINANCIAL EVALUATION (30 points)

Only those financial proposals for bidders which have been technically accepted according to the above criteria will be opened. The Financial proposal will be weighted based on the clarity and appropriateness.

The price should be broken down for each component of the proposed work. The total amount of points allocated for the price component is 30. The maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest price proposal that is opened and compared among those invited firms/institutions which obtain the threshold points in the evaluation of the technical component. All other price proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price; e.g.:

$$\text{Score for price proposal X} = \frac{\text{Max. Score for price proposal} * \text{Price of lowest priced proposal}}{\text{Price of proposal X}}$$

The Contract shall be awarded to a bidder obtaining the highest combined technical and financial scores. Proposals not complying with the terms and conditions contained in this ToR, including the provision of all required information, may result in the Proposal being deemed non-responsive and therefore not considered further.

UNICEF will hold a pre-bid meeting. Interested bidders are advised to check the UNGM website regularly for updates on the tender process

Administrative issues

- Whenever possible, the bidder should be requested to provide an all-inclusive cost in the financial proposal. Bidder should be reminded to factor in all cost implications for the required service / assignment
- When travel is expected as part of the assignment, it shall be clearly specified (e.g. location, duration, number of journeys ...etc.) in the TOR. Bidder shall be required to include the estimate cost of travel in the financial proposal. It is essential to clarify in the TOR 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)
- Unexpected travels shall also be treated as above.
- Resources and facilities to be provided by UNICEF; e.g. access to printer, office space...etc.

Project Management

- The assignment will be overseen by uSupport Project Manager (Education Section) at UNICEF Refugee Response Office in Poland

Any other Information