

## Institutional/Corporate Contract

### Terms of Reference (TOR)

#### Summary

<b>Title</b>	A review of the status of the Implementation of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy, Standards and Regulations in four (4) countries/territories - Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Montserrat.
<b>Purpose</b>	The assignment is to support the Ministries of Education in Anguilla , Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Montserrat to review the status of the implementation of the ECD Policy , Standards and Regulations ; to support the Government to develop ECD Standards and Regulations where necessary ; to update the Policy documents to reflect new and emerging priorities in the ECD sector where relevant and to develop a costed integrated implementation plan in collaboration with the line Ministries of Health and Social Development.
<b>Location</b>	Home-based / Remote
<b>Duration</b>	16 September 2021 – 28 February 2022 – Six (6) Months
<b>Start Date</b>	16 September 2021
<b>Reporting to</b>	Early Childhood Development Specialist

#### Background

There is increasing evidence that participation in high quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes has significant impact on a child's holistic development, strengthens capacity to be successful across the life cycle, and is a key contributor to the achievement of sustainable development. The scientific research focusing on early brain development confirms that the quality of the experiences within the first 1,000 days of a child's life is particularly critical because it is within this period that the brain develops most rapidly, with vital changes occurring in all domains - language and communication, social skills and emotional control, recognition and understanding of symbols in the environment and the development of attitudes and aptitudes to learning and living<sup>1</sup>. It is understood that the brain of a young child needs multiple experiences to develop and the imperative for ECD emphasizes a collaborative approach to early childhood development which includes critical inputs from the sectors of Health, Education and Child Protection/ Social Development sectors to support the development of boys and girls, 0-8 years old.

The UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Area (ECA) Office works closely with 12 countries and territories<sup>2</sup> in the Eastern Caribbean Area to help governments fulfil their commitments to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) so that every child can survive, thrive and develop to reach his or her full potential. UNICEF ECA works with all governments and other partners to ensure that all girls and boys (0-8 years) especially the most disadvantaged, *which includes children living in poverty, children with developmental delays and disabilities, children impacted by migration or natural hazards and emergencies etc.* have every opportunity to improve their educational and developmental outcomes by

<sup>1</sup> Developing potential in the first 5 years for children in developing countries Lancet 2007; 369:60-70

<sup>2</sup> Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat, Grenada, St Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, and the Turks & Caicos Islands.

accessing equitable, safe and inclusive experiences across the lifecycle, including in emergencies. Emphasis is being placed on the provision of equitable and inclusive early childhood programmes and services especially for the most vulnerable girls and boys; promotion of integrated ECD in safe and interactive environments for all children ; reducing and preventing violence and adverse experiences in homes , ECD Centres/ Schools and in community spaces ; strengthening the institutional capacity for planning, monitoring and management of data ; supporting disaster risk reduction to reduce the impact of climate change on children.

### **Anguilla**

*The Early Childhood Sector in Anguilla continues to be privately driven by private operators and religious denominations. There are 17 registered daycare centres, 3 playschools and 9 preschools. The total enrolment in these centres is approximately 450 children. These centres provide a wide a range of services to children birth to five (0-5) years. The supervision and coordination of this sector is with the Ministry of Health and Social Development. The Department of Social Development has responsibility for the daycare centres and playschools but there is no budget to support programming. The Department of Education monitors preschools and provides subsidies, grants and curriculum support.*

*In 2012, a survey of the quality of care being provided by the sector was carried out. It revealed that there was need for improvements in the quality of the service provided across the sector. **Later that year the Early Childhood Policy and Early Childhood Standards were developed. These were approved in 2014.***

*There have been several initiatives to improve the quality of stimulation and interactions in the settings. Daycare centres and playschools were provided with age appropriate resources through the KITE programme and care providers participated in several training sessions to improve their knowledge and understanding of the importance of early stimulation. Preschools continue to receive subventions and grants and the teachers participated in several training initiatives including: Active Participatory Learning, Care for Child Development, Engaging Children in Literacy Rich activities. Teachers participate in ongoing professional development training. Several preschool teachers obtained the Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education.*

*The sector continues to be challenged because of the lack of financial resources to adequately equip the centres with sufficient age appropriate resources. Additionally, low salaries do not attract highly qualified individuals.*

*The COVID-19 pandemic caused the physical closure of schools on two occasions. This meant that centres had to explore other ways of engaging the children during the lock down period. When the clear was given and centres could reopen some parents decided to keep their children at home. This resulted in a reduction of fees and some centres had difficulty paying their staff.*

### **Antigua and Barbuda**

*The Early Childhood Education sector is comprised of approximately 80 early childhood centres. There are currently three (3) government centres in operation and plans are in place for a fourth to come on stream in September 2021. The other 77 are privately operated, by church boards or individuals.*

*The Early Childhood Development Unit operates within the Ministry of Education Sports and Creative Industries and is responsible for ensuring all centres engage in age-appropriate early stimulation for all children under five years old. The Unit also supervises the opening of new centres and is also involved in developing training courses in the early childhood sector. The Early Childhood Standards (2008) has been revised and submitted to the Antigua and Barbuda Bureau of Standards for further processing. A key challenge worth noting is the extreme difficulties in enforcing best practices within the sector. It is however anticipated that the once the legal issues surrounding the formal adoption of the revised standards have been addressed, this problem will be rectified.*

*The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on the ECD Sector. Teaching and learning was challenged due to a lack of reliable internet services and the unavailability of devices for both teachers and students made reaching students difficult. There were over 90 preschools operating before the pandemic. Mandatory closure of all education institutions resulted in several centres remaining closed as they were unable to meet operating expenses resulting in job loss for many. Very few early childhood practitioners received any form of financial support during this period and several were not re-employed as the number of children returning to centres was reduced as many parents were unemployed.*

### **Dominica**

*The Early Childhood Development Sector in the Commonwealth of Dominica has seen growth in the last decade with amendments made in 2002 to the Education Act II of 1997 ensuring that legislation met international standards and that the age for Early Childhood Education (ECE) ranged from zero to five years. The amendment guaranteed that the development and education of children birth to three was given attention. Regulations (S.R.O. No. 39) governing the operations of Early Childhood were also adopted in 2003. A multi-sectoral council on ECE with the mandate to serve in an advisory and functional capacity was also established by S.R.O. No. 14 of 2005. To date there is a draft Early Childhood policy.*

*In September 2012, Government took the decision to implement Universal Access to Early Childhood Development. In the first instance, focus was given to increasing access for children of preschool age, three to five years. As a result, access was made available within government owned primary schools and have adopted and adapted the HighScope Preschool Curriculum.*

*In October 2016, the Government of Dominica approved the establishment of an Early Childhood Development Unit within the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development commencing July 1, 2016 to include the positions of a Coordinator and two Assistant Education Officers, one with responsibilities for quality early experiences and the other to lead programming in quality early education.*

*At the end of the academic year 2019 to 2020, there were seventy (70) preschools and thirteen (13) daycare facilities registered with the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Planning, Vocational Training and National Excellence with a total of one thousand, five hundred and fifty-four (1554) children. Twenty-four (24) of the preschools are accommodated in government owned primary schools. Preschool Development Committees assist with the supervision and sustainability of these preschools.*

### **Montserrat**

*Montserrat's vision for young people is that all must achieve high standards, especially in literacy, numeracy, SECD and ICT capability. Therefore, the Early Childhood Sector seeks to facilitate this transition to primary school through the delivery of developmentally appropriate content and activities that facilitate the social, emotional, physical and intellectual development of children zero to five years old, in preparation for higher levels of schooling.*

*On Montserrat, there are six (6) government-owned centres – three from one (1) year old to three (3) years old and three from three (3) years to five (5) years as the cutoff point is March 31. There are also three (3) private centres which cater for children from three (3) months to five (5) years. Currently, these centres are not registered but should be by the next academic year as one's registration has expired, and another needed to ensure that necessary requirements were sorted.*

*At the end of the academic year 2020 to 2021, there were 173 children who attended one of the nine facilities. Forty-two (42) of these children will transition to one of the primary schools on island.*

Regionally, OECS Ministers of Government have agreed to the harmonisation of services for development and education with commitments to (1) create fair and equitable access to inclusive education and development opportunities for all citizens, and (2) create environments which are conducive to lifelong learning by developing, adopting and implementing policies, standards and programmes which are based on human rights values such as universality, participation, non-discrimination, protection and equity.

The purpose of this consultancy is to support the government in Anguilla , Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Montserrat to review the status of the implementation of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy , Standards and Regulations ; to support the Government to develop ECD Standards and Regulations where necessary ; to update the Policy documents to reflect new and emerging priorities in the ECD sector where relevant and to develop a costed integrated implementation plan in collaboration with the line Ministries of Health and Social Development. The consulting team will be expected to design and implement an appropriate consultative process for the review and updating of the related documents and for the development of the integrated costed implementation plan to support the implementation of Policy initiatives.

## Specific Tasks

Under the Supervision of the UNICEF Early Childhood Development (ECD) Specialist the Consulting team will:

- Complete a desk review of key documents from the Education, Health and Social Development/Child Protection sectors which were developed in relation to the implementation of identified ECD policy initiatives.
- Conduct Consultations with Key Stakeholders from Health, Education and Child Protection / Social Development – *Policy Makers, Senior Management, Health Care Officers, Educators, Social Development Officers, ECD Practitioners, Parents/ Guardians*:
  - To ascertain the extent to which there has been successful implementation of the policy initiatives articulated in the ECD Policy document.
  - To determine the extent to which there has been consistent and sustained implementation of the early childhood Standards and Regulations in both the Private and Public Sector.
  - To identify barriers and bottlenecks to progress in the implementation of ECD Policy Initiatives; ECD Standards and Regulations in the Public and Private Sector.
- Through consultations identify new and emerging priorities in the updates to the policy documents inclusive of:
  - The role of ECD in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
  - Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Safe School Policies in ECD including climate change adaptation.
  - Systemization of early identification and early intervention for children with Developmental delays and disabilities .
  - Prevention and reduction of violence and adverse experiences against children.
  - Supporting active outdoor play for overall learning and development
  - Supporting infant and young child feeding and healthy nutrition in ECD
  - Sustainable Investments in ECD.
- Supporting Government to develop ECD Standards and/ Regulations where none exists.

"Review national budgets and expenditures, over the last 5 years, to assess the efficiency of Government spending trends in the early childhood development (ECD) sector.

- Describe total ECD spending trends (including real changes) and comment on the priority of ECD spending vis-à-vis the national budget and against targets in the Education, Health, Social Development and Child Protection sectors.
- Summarize and compare expenditure in the above-mentioned sectors in relation to administrative, programmatic, and capital costs.
- Identify and describe any major variations between the approved budget and actual expenditure in the ECD sector, analyze trends in under-spending and insufficient budgetary allocations. Compare gaps in ECD budgetary efficiencies to those in other key sectors that matter most to children."
- Utilize available early childhood data to support the development of a costed integrated implementation plan projecting the implementation of the ECD Policy initiatives, Standards and Regulations - up to two (2) years.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to convene an intersectoral consultation to establish consensus on the revisions to ECD policy, Standards and Regulations and the inputs into the costed integrated implementation plan.
- Drafting relevant discussion papers, power point presentations etc. for presentation to UNICEF and National Stakeholders.
- Finalize the revisions to the ECD policy, Standards and Regulations and costed integrated implementation plan.
- Submit the revised documents to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education as Lead Ministry.

## Methodology

- **The Consulting team will propose the methodology and instruments which will be used in the collection, compilation and analysis of data and information. Methodology should include the following:**
- Complete a desk review of key documents from the Education, Health and Social Development/Child Protection sectors which were developed in relation to the implementation of identified ECD policy initiatives.
- Identify key persons from the sectors and groups for interviews and focus group discussions.
- Conduct stakeholder consultations (interviews, focus groups) with key people at national level across the Health, Education and Child Protection/Social Development Sectors to ascertain progress, barriers and bottlenecks to implementation.
- Lead Stakeholder engagement sessions.
- Collate and analyze information and prepare an analytical report of the findings for the four countries.
- Draft the revisions to the documents where as relevant based on research findings – ECD Policy, Standards and Regulations for each country.
- Support the development of ECD Standards and Regulations if none exists.
- Support the development of a Costed Integrated Implementation Plan for each country.

- The Consulting team will liaise with the Lifelong Learning team and Monitoring and Evaluation team.
- The Consulting team will be reporting directly to the Early Childhood Development Specialist.
- The Consultancy will be conducted virtually.

### Expected Deliverables

- The Consulting team will deliver a comprehensive Inception Report three (3) Weeks after signing of the Contract.
- Preparation of a clear and concise proposal on the approach for the review and updating of the ECD Policy, Standards and Regulations' documents.
- Planning and Leading intersectoral stakeholder consultations as part of the review to revise/update the ECD Policy, Standards and Regulations.
- Collation of information gathered in the stakeholder consultations.
- Relevant graphs, tables and infographics should be included.
- Drafting the revisions / updates to the ECD Policy Document, Standards and Regulations and costed integrated Implementation Plan.
- Drafting Standards and regulations where none exists.
- Drafting relevant discussion papers, power point presentations etc. for presentation to UNICEF and National Stakeholders.
- Leading the presentations to Technical Personnel, Policy Makers and Senior Managers.
- A print ready and digital version of the revised ECD Policy, Standards and Regulations should be prepared.
- Costed integrated implementation plan.
- Preparation of final documents for submission to the Ministry of Education and UNICEF.

### Reporting

- The Consulting team will :
  - Deliver an Inception Report three (3) Weeks after signing Contract.
  - Deliver monthly technical reports.
  - Meet with the Contract Supervisor and the Education Manager bi-weekly.
  - Deliver a draft Analytical Report for the four countries.
  - Deliver a Final Analytical Report (Print Version / Digital Version) and Power Point Presentations to support information sharing.
  - Deliver a revised/ updated ECD Policy Document, Standards and Regulation documents for each country.
  - Deliver a costed integrated implementation plan.

### Milestones

Inception Report
Monthly Technical Reports
Interim Analytical Report for the four countries

National Stakeholder Consultations – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of Analytical Report Findings for each country</li> <li>• Presentation of draft revised ECD Policy; Standards and Regulations for each country</li> <li>• Presentation of draft costed integrated implementation Plan</li> </ul>
Final Analytical Report for the four countries.
Final revised / updated ECD Policy; Standards and Regulations for each country
Development of Standards and Regulations where none exists
Power Point Presentations – for each country
Costed Integrated Implementation Plan

## Payment Schedule

Stage	% of payment due
Inception Report	10%
Interim Analytical Report of the findings from the review of the implementation of the ECD Policy, Standards and regulations in the 4 countries	20%
Revised /updated ECD Policy, Standards, Regulations	30%
Final Analytical Report & Costed Implementation Plan	30%
Final revised / updated ECD Policy, Standards, Regulations	10%

## Expected background and Experience

- The Consulting team is expected to have research capacity and high level analytical and synthesis skills, with knowledge and practical experience in analyzing available data/information to make recommendations for effective and sustainable interventions.
- Previous experience in conducting research and/or evaluation in the ECD sector .
- Demonstrate knowledge , skills and experience in conducting budget analysis ; analyzing budget allocations and expenditures in the ECD Sector; identifying trends and variations in allocations and spending.
- The Team should demonstrate personal and professional ethics and integrity, and basic skills in human rights and gender equity analysis.
- Experience in Policy Development and the development of implementation systems and processes at the national/ regional / international level.
- Familiarity with the Caribbean Community and understanding of the political, cultural and socio-economic conditions in OECS countries.
- Experience and good knowledge of systematic issues in ECD in the Caribbean.
- Ability to apply knowledge of the CRC, Human Rights informed approaches, Sustainable Development Goals in ECD etc.
- Demonstrated excellence in written English, superior verbal and interpersonal communications skills.

- Ability to work both independently and collaboratively essential, with a clean record for timely delivery of high-quality products.
- Advanced proficiency in the use of Microsoft applications and related software including internet navigation, must own a laptop/equipment and be readily accessible via email.
- Proven track record in conducting research, sector reviews/evaluations, policy analysis etc.
- The institutional contractor must provide UNICEF with a Certificate of Incorporation/ documentation proving that they are a registered company or institution.

## Qualifications

An advanced level degree and a minimum of six (6) years of professional experience at the national, regional / international level in **any** of the following related fields - Education; Early Childhood Development; Social Development; Social Policy Development / Reform and Analysis; Planning; Monitoring and Evaluation.

## Evaluation Criteria

The technical evaluation will be considered in accordance with the following information:

### Technical Proposal: 70 points

#### **1) Overall Response (10 points):**

- a) Understanding of, and responsiveness to UNICEF requirements.
- b) Understanding of scope, objectives and completeness of response.
- c) Overall concord between UNICEF requirements and the proposal.

#### **2) Company and key personnel (20 points):**

- a) Team leader: Relevant experience, qualifications, and position with firm.
- b) Team members - Relevant experience, skills & competencies.
- c) Organization of the team and roles & responsibilities.
- d) Professional expertise, knowledge and experience with similar projects, contracts, clients and consulting assignments.
- e) Financial status.

#### **3) Proposed Methodology, Approach and System (40 points):**

- a) Quality of the proposed approach and methodology.
- b) Quality of proposed implementation plan, i.e how the bidder will undertake each task, and time-schedules.
- c) Risk assessment - recognition of the risks/peripheral problems and methods to prevent and manage risks/peripheral problems.

Note: The Financial Proposals will be opened only to the companies considered technically approved (range between 49 to 70 points).

### Financial Proposal (30 points)

The Financial Proposal will be opened and tabulated within the Technical Proposal and the final range will be provided.

## Conditions of Service

Prior to commencing the contract, the following conditions must be met:

A Corporate Entity will be required to submit samples of previous relevant work, a Certificate of Incorporation for the Company as well as a profile of the individual(s) who would be undertaking the assignment.

### Resource

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/outputs is incomplete, not delivered or for failure to meet deadlines. Performance indicators against which the satisfactory conclusion of this contract will be assessed include timeliness/quality of submission and responsiveness to UNICEF's feedback.

### Property Rights

UNICEF shall hold all property rights, such as copyright, patents and registered trademarks, on matter directly related to, or derived from, the work carried out through this contract with UNICEF.

### How to Apply

Qualified institutional/corporate contractors are requested to submit the following application package in English:

1. Cover Letter – highlight relevant experience and skills related to the assignment in no more than two pages.
2. Technical proposal, which clearly provides:
  - a. Design of service in accordance with the required Scope of Works and Deliverables and provision of risk analysis.
  - b. Team leader CV which includes relevant experience, skills and qualifications.
  - c. Team members' CVs which include relevant experience, skills and qualifications.
  - d. Background on the Service Provider, including professional expertise, knowledge and experience with similar projects, contracts, clients and consulting assignments.
  - e. A certificate of incorporation documentation providing legal registration as a company or institution.
3. Financial proposal – Please provide the monthly rate in US dollars required to undertake this assignment.

Prospective institutional or corporate contractors should apply to the email address [ecaprocurments@unicef.org](mailto:ecaprocurments@unicef.org) no later than **Tuesday September 07th, 2021 Eastern Standard Time**. Kindly ensure the subject line is denoted with the heading “**ECD Policy, Standards and Regulations in four (4) Countries**”.