

UNICEF Moldova

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Specialist in Public Health (full time, including 12 hours per week office based)

Duration: 11 months

Location: Chişinău

Background

In 2013, UNICEF Moldova initiated its current Country Programme with the Government of Moldova. As part of this programme, UNICEF Moldova supports government in reducing disparities in young children health.

Progress has been made in the right to survival, with a reported decrease in infant mortality rates from 11 per 1,000 live births in 2011 to 9.7 in 2014, with no significant disparities for boys and girls. A similar trend is in place for under-five mortality,* indicating that Moldova has met its MDG targets. However, IMR are still much higher than the average for average for the European region (4.3 per 1,000 in 2011). Negative trends persist in the areas of nutrition and young child feeding, micronutrient deficiencies such as anemia, are prevalent and breastfeeding rates have declined. Between 2005 and 2012 early breastfeeding declined by five percentage points and exclusive breastfeeding by nine percentage points. Micronutrient deficiencies contribute to a stunting rate of six percent for children under age five. Children from the poorest quintile are nearly four times more affected by stunting than children from the richest quintile.

Also, the vaccination rate is low, only 89% of children 15-26 months of age vaccinated against preventable childhood diseases. The situation is even worse in urban area: 82% percentage of children 15-26 months of age vaccinated in urban area versus 92% in rural area. In the Transnistrian region, a break-away region of Moldova, the situation is worse when it comes to immunization of children. The immunization coverage based on administrative data for children up to 23 months of age with all other antigens is low. The vaccination is significantly delayed. Only 23% to 37% of children born in 2013 in Transnistrian region received primary series of vaccination on time†.

Over the last decade, several significant interventions have been initiated in the area of maternal and child health. UNICEF has been and continues to be engaged in the on-going process of improving the quality of care for mothers and children, with a particular focus for the ante- and postnatal care levels, and promotes an integrated and comprehensive approach on both banks of the Dniester River. UNICEF supports Government in improving the quality of services provided at the primary healthcare level, especially by strengthening supportive supervisory system for child health and implementing the positive parenting and home visiting practices.

UNICEF supported a series of workshops with involvement of MoH representatives and health professionals in order to advocate for alignment of national legal framework to the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. A team of health professionals collected data for

* National Centre for Health Management

† Comprehensive Review of the Immunization Programme in Transnistria Region, April 2014. WHO, UNICEF (preliminary Report)

Assessment of compliance with ICMBS. The assessment of attitudes and practices on exclusive breastfeeding was carried out. Results of both assessments have been presented to national stakeholders in order to advocate for alignment of national legislation to ICMBS. Additionally, UNICEF supports Government in the GAVI graduation process through diversification of mechanism for vaccines procurement and promotion of vaccination among families with children, including in Transnistrian region.

To strengthen the achievements in the in the area of immunization, nutrition and maternal and child health, UNICEF Moldova is looking for a specialist in public health to provide technical assistance in the area of public health, with particular focus on strengthening immunization, nutrition, and mother and child health programmes aimed at improving health of children, including in Transnistrian region.

1. Purpose of work

In this context, UNICEF Moldova is looking for a local specialist in public health to provide technical support on immunization, nutrition and mother and child health programmes, aimed at improving health and achieving equity in child well-being.

2. Objectives

The specialist will have following major area of responsibilities:

- Provide assistance to UNICEF and partners in strengthening Extended Programme on Immunization (EPI), including Transnistrian region, with a special focus on quality improvement of the immunization services and implementation of GAVI graduation plan.
- Provide assistance to UNICEF and partners in strengthening nutrition programme, with a special focus on promoting breastfeeding through the alignment of national legislative framework to the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, implementation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative and capacity building.
- Provide assistance to UNICEF and partners in strengthening MCH services available at ante- and postnatal care levels, with a special focus on home visiting, including the Transnistrian region.
- Provide support to UNICEF in the analysis and planning process of the high-impact evidence-based interventions under the Health programme, including in preparation of the new UN Partnership Framework.
- Guide design of UNICEF supported health interventions, and provide inputs for preparation of proposals and reports. Collaborate across sectors to develop public health interventions that promote child health and wellbeing.
- Review and document good practices at global and regional level in the area of nutrition (breastfeeding, complementary feeding, anaemia prevention), immunization (promotion of vaccination and procurement of vaccine), and MCH care practices.

Perform other duties as required within the above topics.

3. Details of how the work should be delivered

The contract is planned for 11 months, with possibility for extension. The specialist will develop activities according to the schedule bellow, and in close consultation with UNICEF Programme colleagues.

4. Deliverables and delivery dates (based on the work plan):

no.	Activity	Deliverables	Tentative deadlines*
1.	Develop general and monthly individual work plans based on the review of on-going and planned activities and projects, relevant UNICEF Global and Regional Strategies, available publications and reports, rolling work plans and other relevant documents related to public health area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work plans developed 	First plan – after contract signature and subsequent monthly up-date by 30 th of every month
2.	Develop brief monthly reports on implementing of all planned and ad-hoc activities with attached deliverables related to below items 3-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly reports on implemented activities, along with deliverables 	By 25 th of every month
3.	<p>Provide technical support to UNICEF and partners in strengthening immunization services, including in the Transnistria region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure implementation of GAVI graduation plan (activities under UNICEF mandate); support international expert(s) in adjusting Vaccine management SOP to the local level; guide design of UNICEF supported interventions on strengthening immunization services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents prepared (briefing and concept notes), and inputs to relevant documents provided Terms of Reference prepared and inputs provided to selection process. Written inputs on: methodology, tools, reports 	Based on the monthly work plan
4.	<p>Provide technical guidance to UNICEF and partners on nutrition in line with with a special focus on infant and young children feeding, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support in alignment of national legislative framework to the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (ICMBS); support in strengthening the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative implementation; support in strengthening the capacities of health providers at the primary level in promoting breastfeeding and YCFP; guide design of UNICEF supported activities on social mobilization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents prepared (briefing and concept notes), and inputs to relevant documents provided. Terms of Reference prepared and inputs provided to selection process. Written inputs on: methodology, tools, reports 	Based on the monthly work plan
5.	<p>Provide technical support and guidance to UNICEF and partners on strengthening MCH services available at ante- and postnatal care levels, including home visiting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support on improving child growth monitoring; support on revising and updating standards for antenatal care; support in developing the programme on improving home visiting practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents prepared (briefing and concept notes), and inputs to relevant documents provided Terms of Reference prepared and inputs provided to selection process. Written inputs on: methodology, tools, reports 	Based on the monthly work plan
6.	Provide support and contribute to the development of the Common Country Assessment, as an analytical framework to inform further the UN Partnership Framework and Country Programme Document development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inputs provided (concept notes, proposals, expert opinions) 	Based on the monthly work plan
7.	Ensure liaison between UNICEF and the Ministry of Health, other line ministries, relevant public authorities, international	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inputs provided (concept notes and project proposals, prepared comments on documents) 	Based on the monthly work plan

	development partners and civil society working in public health. Keep the office updated on key developments. Identify channels and opportunities for advocacy by UNICEF and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports from meetings with national counterparts. 	
8.	Document good practices in the area of nutrition (infant and young child feeding, micronutrients), promotion of vaccination at regional and global level (vaccine procurement mechanisms, vaccine coverage), and MCH services (antenatal, perinatal and postnatal care).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 2 stories per year 	June 2016 November 2016

** Exact deadlines will be mutually agreed upon contract signature.*

5. Performance indicators for evaluation of results:

The performance of work will be evaluated based on the following indicators:

- Completion of tasks specified in ToR;
- Compliance with the established deadlines for submission of deliverables;
- Quality of work;
- Demonstration of high standards of work with UNICEF and with counterparts.

6. Qualifications and experience

This assignment requires strong technical skills, as well as good knowledge of the national health policies, strategies, legal and institutional framework in public health.

Key expected qualifications are as follows:

- Advanced academic degree in Public Health or other relevant studies;
- Minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience in public health and relevant policy development, especially in the area of nutrition, immunization and mother and child health;
- In depth knowledge of the health system and decision making processes within the central and local public administration system;
- Analytical capacity and proven experience in conducting desk-review, research, and/or studies;
- Excellent knowledge of English and good writing skills;
- Excellent command of Romanian;
- Good knowledge of Russian;
- Experience of working with UNICEF or other UN Agencies would be an advantage.

Other qualifications:

- Availability to work full-time with UNICEF as indicated in the current ToR;
- Flexibility in responding to office needs.

7. Financial proposal and payment modality

The financial proposal shall specify the fee requested for the tasks described in the current ToR, and based on the full-time work schedule envisaged. Best value for money principle will be taken into consideration under final selection.

The payment will be done based on the list of deliverables listed in monthly reports on performed duties and implemented activities. The financial proposal should be indicated in Moldovan Lei.

8. Evaluation criteria for selection

The candidate is expected to reflect in his/her application the qualifications/ knowledge/ experience related to the qualifications and tasks above. Technical evaluation will be performed through a desk review of applications, and if necessary, may be supplemented by an interview.

The selection will be based on the principle of “best value for money” among the technically qualified candidates.

9. Definition of supervision arrangements

The specialist will work in oversight of Health Officer of UNICEF Moldova. Monthly fee payments will be rendered upon written approval by the Supervisor, and contingent upon the quality of deliverables and monthly report.

Health Officer will regularly communicate with the consultant and provide formats for reports, feedback and guidance on his/her performance and all other necessary support so to achieve objectives of the consultancy, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to consultant's performance and quality of work. She/he will meet with relevant partners and UNICEF specialists as required.

The specialist is expected to work closely with the Health Officer for quality of deliverables and consultancy related tasks.

All activities and deliverables will be discussed and planned in consultation with UNICEF.

10. Description of official travel involved

The work will require local travels. Prior to starting the assignment, the selected candidate must undertake the on-line Basic Security in the Field training (to be provided by UNICEF).

11. Copyrights & utilisation rights

The copyright and the right of utilization of all the materials will belong to UNICEF Moldova.

12. Support provided by UNICEF

UNICEF will regularly communicate with the specialist and provide feedback and guidance and necessary support so to achieve objectives of the work, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to the performance and quality of work. UNICEF will provide with relevant documents and available research; contacts and lists of relevant technical people to work with, constant guidance and feedback in relation to specialist's work.

The consultancy is full-time, including 12 hours per week office, UNICEF will provide desk, chair and upon exceptional approval by Representative - UNICEF laptop with UNICEF access to email, Intranet and internal network.

13. UNICEF resource in case of unsatisfactory performance

In case of unsatisfactory performance the contract will be terminated by notification letter sent 5 days prior. In the meantime, UNICEF will initiate another selection process.