

Terms of Reference

Institutional consultancy to implement qualitative research about child online sexual violence Digital Engagement and Protection Unit

1. Background

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. To save their lives. To defend their rights. To help them fulfill their potential. Across 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, every day, to build a better world for everyone. And we never give up. For every child, answers.

To improve the global evidence base and support UNICEF's advocacy, programming and policy development for the future, UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight (UNICEF Innocenti) has been conducting research on children's use of digital technology for the past 8 years. The office continually contributes to global and national discussions and debates on a range of issues for children in the digital world including: the impact of technology on children's mental health; privacy and data protection regulation; parenting in the digital age; online violence; online sexual exploitation and abuse; digital skills development; the impact of online gaming on children's rights; and gaming and well-being.

To develop appropriate policy and program responses, UNICEF needs robust evidence on how children use the internet, whether they can make use of the many opportunities it offers, and which risks and harms they may face online. Such evidence will significantly contribute to the development of programs and policies that target children and their parents, teachers, law enforcement and others who bear responsibility for the protection of children.

In 2019, UNICEF Innocenti – along with ECPAT International and INTERPOL – received funding from the End Violence Fund to establish the Disrupting Harm project. Disrupting Harm is a multi-method, multi-country project that aims to understand the extent to which children experience technology-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse and to identify how national legislation and protection systems can be better prepared to respond to this new crime. Disrupting Harm is the most comprehensive evidence-generation project to date on online child sexual exploitation and abuse. By surveying and interviewing a wide range of stakeholders, the project provides tailored roadmaps for countries to strengthen their prevention and response systems. With its use of a standardized mixed-method approach in all study countries, it also provides data that is comparable across countries.

The first round of studies took place between 2019-2022 in 13 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa and South-East Asia. Disrupting Harm conducted innovative research on children's experiences of violence, sexual exploitation, and abuse online, including nationally representative household surveys with children and qualitative interviews in each country.

Following successful completion of Disrupting Harm in the first set of countries, a second round of studies has been planned for 2023-2025 in 12 additional countries listed below. For the second round of Disrupting Harm studies, UNICEF Innocenti will be responsible for implementing national qualitative research with young people (16-24 years), frontline service workers and justice professionals in the following countries:

- **Eastern Europe:** Armenia, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia
- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic and Mexico
- **Middle East and North Africa:** Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia
- **South Asia:** Pakistan

2. Objective, Purpose and Expected Results

UNICEF Innocenti is seeking qualified institutions (e.g. universities, consultancy firms, research agencies, etc.) to implement clinical and qualitative research activities:

These activities include:

1. Identify and conduct a total of 60 interviews with:
 - a. young people (16-24 years) who have experienced online sexual violence (*target: 30 interviews*).
 - b. frontline social support workers (e.g., social workers, psychotherapists, helpline workers) who have worked with cases of online child sexual abuse (*target: 15 interviews*).
 - c. justice professionals (e.g., lawyers, prosecutors, judges, customary and informal justice actors) who have worked with cases of online child sexual abuse (*target: 15 interviews*).
2. Transcribe all the interviews, code and analyze them according to a pre-defined protocol.
3. Write a report that synthesizes the results, main findings and conclusions.

The tools for conducting the interviews will be provided by UNICEF Innocenti and follow a journey mapping methodology. The contractor does not have to design the tools but is expected to work with UNICEF Innocenti to contextualize them (e.g., identify country specific professional bodies, adapt recruitment strategies, translate consent forms and interview guides in the local language/s).

Training on how to conduct the interviews using the tools will be provided by UNICEF Innocenti, either in person or online, depending on local circumstances.

These activities will be conducted in each of the 12 countries. Institutions are eligible to apply to conduct fieldwork in more than one country; please indicate as part of your proposal which country/countries you are able to conduct fieldwork in.

3. Scope of Work & Deliverables

The scope of work for this institutional contract includes the following tasks (per country):

1) Research preparation and training:

- Adapt and refine existing research protocol, data collection tools and consent forms to local context and clinical considerations.
- Pilot and finalize existing research tools.
- Participate in methods and safeguarding training for conducting research delivered by UNICEF.

Deliverables:

- Localized research protocols, data collection tools and consent forms.
- Short report with learnings from the pilot testing.
- Training completed with satisfactory results.

Deadline: 31 October 2023

2) Recruitment of participants:

- Lead on identifying participants with support from UNICEF Innocenti, UNICEF Country Offices and local organisations and networks.
- Enrol participants following appropriate protocol, get consent and schedule interviews, making sure to maintain confidentiality and privacy of potential and enrolled participants.
- Conduct preparatory sessions with enrolled participants.

Deliverables:

- Implementation plan (including recruitment brief, including sample frame and recruitment methods).
- Finalised participant database and consent forms.
- Summary report of preparatory sessions.

Deadline: 30 Jan 2024

3) Data collection:

- Finalised participant database and consent forms.
- Conduct 60 in-depth qualitative interviews with young persons, frontline service workers and justice professionals. Maximum 1h30 to 2-hour per interview.
- Debriefing and supervision sessions completed

Institutions are expected to provide a confidential and safe space to carry out the interviews with all participants.

Deliverables:

- Incident reports completed and filed where relevant.
- All interview transcripts and visual artifacts de-identified in original language, crosschecked, translated into English and delivered to UNICEF via secure systems that will be indicated at a later stage.
- Summary report of follow-up sessions.

Deadline: 31 May 2024

4) Analysis and reporting:

- Carry out thematic data analysis of all interviews, including coding.
- Draft analysis write-up and report results.

Deliverables:

- Coded transcripts.
- Analysis write-up documents.
- Written report that synthesizes key findings, conclusions, recommendations, and limitations.

Deadline: 31 July 2024

Travel may be needed to complete the assignment; this will be costed based on the approved implementation plan.

All deliverables are to be provided in **English** except for original recordings.

It is expected that exact dates for deliverables will differ by country and may change depending on ethical clearance procedures, which may also impact contract closure. No-cost extensions can be negotiated with UNICEF Innocenti as needed.

UNICEF responsibilities

- UNICEF will provide original research protocols and tools
- UNICEF will provide training on how to use the tools
- UNICEF will be responsible for obtaining ethical clearance for the research; this does not need to be factored into the proposal but may affect the exact starting date for the assignment.

4. [Data security and ethical requirements](#)

The selected institution will need to abide by UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis.

5. Reporting requirements

In addition to the deliverables, UNICEF Innocenti requests regular communication for process updates and providing/integrating feedback on draft deliverables (frequency may vary depending on the needs of the project).

6. Duration

It is expected that the assignment will commence in July 2023 and be completed by July 2024 or sooner. The timeline for each country may vary according to ethical clearance procedures, the local context and specific situation.

7. General institutional qualifications

- At least 5 years of experience in conducting qualitative research with children and adults.
- Demonstrated experience in implementing research within the country of application, and knowledge of the local context and child protection system.
- Proven ability to maintain confidentiality and ethical standards in conducting research (see: UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis).
- At least one team member of the proposed personnel must be fluent in English and have capacity to deliver research outputs in English
- Fluency in the language(s) required for the service delivery, including demonstrated ability to organize translation of interview transcripts and other materials into all languages necessary for the fieldwork to be conducted
- Adherence to UN's values and ethical standards, understanding of UNICEF's mission and objective, sensitivity and adaptability to diverse cultural, gender, religious, national and age-wise contexts.

8. Specific qualifications for proposed experts

The successful institution will have to deploy and manage a team at least with the following expertise:

Clinical Researcher:

- Master or higher degree in psychology, counseling, psychiatry, or clinical social work.
- Registered with relevant national (if applicable) professional body for providing mental health services.
- At least 3 years of professional experience conducting research and/or providing psychotherapy services to children and adults.
- Clinical experience working with young (16-24) survivors of sexual abuse is considered an asset.
- Knowledge of trauma-informed care and best practices for working with survivors of child sexual abuse.

- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to establish rapport with research participants and work collaboratively with other team members.
- Experience in conducting qualitative interviews and analysis, including familiarity with qualitative data analysis tools is considered an asset.
- Fluency in country’s official language and ability to work in English.
- Experience supervising researchers would constitute an asset.

Qualitative Researcher:

- Master’s degree in social sciences, anthropology psychology, social work, public health, or related field and/or equivalent /relevant experience.
- At least 3 years of professional experience in designing and conducting qualitative research.
- Demonstrated working experience in the country, and knowledge of the social and local context.
- Experience in conducting qualitative interviews and analysis, including familiarity with qualitative data analysis software (e.g. NVivo, Altas.ti, Dedoose) is considered an asset.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to establish rapport with research participants and work collaboratively with other team members.
- Fluency in country’s official language and ability to work in English.
- Ability to organize own work and to carry out a research project with limited supervision according to deadlines.

9. Payment terms and schedule

Payments will be made only upon UNICEF’s acceptance of the work performed in accordance with the contractual milestones. The terms of payment are net 30 days, after receipt of invoice and acceptance of work. Payments will be effected upon satisfactory submission of deliverables and done by bank transfer.

Tasks/Milestone	Deliverables/Outputs	Deadline	Budget
<p><u>Research preparation and training:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt and refine existing research protocol, data collection tools and consent forms to local context and clinical considerations. • Pilot and finalize existing research tools. • Participate in methods and safeguarding training for conducting research delivered by UNICEF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Localized research protocols, data collection tools and consent forms. • Short report with learnings from the pilot testing. • Training completed with satisfactory results. 	31 Oct 2023	15% of total budget
<p><u>Recruitment of participants:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation plan (including recruitment brief, 	30 Jan 2024	20% of total budget

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead on identifying participants with support from UNICEF Innocenti, UNICEF Country Offices and local organisations and networks. • Enrol participants following appropriate protocol, get consent and schedule interviews, making sure to maintain confidentiality and privacy of potential and enrolled participants. • Conduct preparatory sessions with enrolled participants. 	<p>including sample frame and recruitment methods).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalised participant database and consent forms. • Summary report of preparatory sessions. 		
<p><u>Data collection:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalised participant database and consent forms. • Conduct 60 in-depth qualitative interviews with young persons, frontline service workers and justice professionals. Maximum 1h30 to 2-hour per interview. • Debriefing and supervision sessions completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident reports completed and filed where relevant. • All interview transcripts and visual artifacts de-identified in original language, crosschecked, translated into English and delivered to UNICEF via secure systems that will be indicated at a later stage. • Summary report of follow-up sessions. 	<p>31 May 2024</p>	<p>35% of total budget (including translation costs)</p>
<p><u>Analysis and reporting:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out thematic data analysis of all interviews, including coding. • Draft analysis write-up and report results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coded transcripts. • Analysis write-up documents. • Written report that synthesizes key findings, conclusions, recommendations, and limitations. 	<p>31 July 2024</p>	<p>30% of total budget</p>

10. Application and Evaluation Process and Methods

Proposers should include CVs of team members and evidence that demonstrates experience and expertise (e.g. relevant publications, research products, references, work samples etc.) in the technical proposal.

Qualified institutions are required to submit a technical proposal and a separate financial proposal. (See Appendix II, III and IV for detailed requirements regarding the proposals).

All proposals should contain the following **documents signed and submitted electronically, in pdf format**:

- Answer Sheets
- Technical Proposal
- Financial Proposal
- Detailed CVs of proposed key experts

The technical Proposal (TP) will be evaluated on a scale of 0-70. TPs that will receive a minimum of 40/70 points will be considered to meet the minimum requirement for the opening and review of the financial proposal.

The grading of proposals will be done according to the following evaluation criteria, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - Evaluation criteria

The Technical Proposals will be evaluated against the following:		
REF	CATEGORY	POINTS
1	<p>Overall response:</p> <p>Understanding of the scope, objectives and completeness and coherence of response.</p> <p>Overall match between the RFP requirements and proposal.</p> <p>Supporting documentation of previous similar experiences performed by the organization.</p>	15
2	<p>Proposed approach</p> <p>Quality of the proposed research plan, e.g. how the organization plans to undertake recruitment and interviewing of participants, and expertise and qualifications of field personnel.</p>	25
3	<p>Corporate profile and technical capacity</p> <p>Years of experience in similar previous work/assignments, organizational structure, areas of expertise, and financial capacity.</p> <p>Proven experience conducting qualitative research, including the deployment, oversight and management of local research teams.</p> <p>Demonstrated experience in ethical research practices and in conducting social science research.</p> <p>Proven record in delivering timely, quality results.</p> <p>Demonstrated ability to produce high quality datasets, quality reports in English and manage quality translations to and from English to the languages required.</p> <p>Experience of conducting research with children.</p> <p>Experience of conducting research on sensitive topics.</p> <p>Experience in research on online child sexual exploitation and abuse.</p> <p>Expertise and qualifications of key personnel.</p>	30
<p>Only proposals which receive a minimum of 40 points at this stage will be considered further.</p>		

Stage 1 (maximum 70 points) – Desk review

Proposals will be reviewed against criteria listed in the above table. Only those proposals that score 40 points and above will be considered technically compliant. All other proposals will be disqualified.

Stage 2 - Financial Evaluation

The proposals will be evaluated only for those offers that meet the minimum passing grade in the technical evaluation. The financial proposals will be graded on a scale of 0-30. The highest number of points will be awarded to the contract with the lowest financial value. Other financial proposals will be scored on a relative scale, with points determined based on the percentage of difference with the lowest score. The total score for the financial offer (TS_{FO}) will be calculated in the following manner (rounded to one decimal):

$$TS_{FO} = \frac{\text{Lowest offer}}{\text{Actual offer}} \times 30$$

The total combined score (TS) for the proposal will then be calculated by adding the scores for the technical and financial proposal within the service area.

11. Contract management and supervision arrangements

The contractor will report to the Research Manager (Digital Engagement and Protection) at UNICEF Innocenti who has the primary responsibility for the *Disrupting Harm* project. The assignment will be overseen by two qualitative researchers in the Digital Engagement and Protection unit.

Compliance with the contract terms and timely delivery of the expected outputs/results will be closely monitored. Upon satisfactory completion of contract deliverables, the supervisor will certify relevant document, evaluate the firm's/university's work and process/follow-up on payments.

STRUCTURE OF PROPOSAL

Appendix I

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR SERVICES FORM

Appendix II

STRUCTURE OF TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

The technical proposal should articulate very clearly the interest and capacities of proposing institutions to provide the type and scope of services expected under the service area for which the proposal is submitted.

The proposal should be concise, and the information provided should be sufficient for the evaluation team to be able to assess the capacity of the institution and the proposed team members to partner with UNICEF to execute the TOR.

NB. No price information should be contained in the technical proposal.

The technical proposal for each service area should be no more than 20 pages excluding appendices and should be organized according to the following contents:

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

1. **Executive summary:** A Section summarizing the main features and benefits of the bidder's solution and the value it will bring to UNICEF.
2. **Introduction and methodological approach:** A section that introduces the Technical Proposal and adequately describes the approach to conduct the study, the project management and other practices that guide the bidder's overall approach to meeting UNICEF's requirements as described in this RFPS. The section should also summarize previous experience with similar work.
3. **Delivery:** This section should describe in detail the strategy and work plan with milestones of how the proposal will fulfil the services, scope and schedule described in the Terms of Reference. Responses should not be a restatement of the requirements, but should be comprehensive, well-conceived and include detailed approaches to accomplishing tasks and providing the deliverables. The section should clearly describe the proposed team, including a description of the team roles, the number of resources who will fill each role and the timeline of their involvement in the project.
4. **Project team credentials:** A section that summarizes the credentials, experience and capabilities of the delivery team on related projects and clearly shows how their expertise matches the requirements described in the Terms of Reference. A curriculum vitae of the proposed personnel must be included. Please note that substitution of team members during Project implementation shall be subject to the approval of UNICEF.

5. **Corporate profile and technical capacity:** A section that lists the experience of the Institution/Company in relation to delivery of similar services on similar projects, including project scope, duration, number and geographic location and the years in which the work was undertaken and financial capacity. The section should clearly show that the Institution/Company's expertise matches the requirements described in the Terms of Reference. It should also include information regarding quality assurance processes, including approaches taken to minimize negative unintended consequences. Since this research project is conducted with children, the company must include in this section its existing child safeguarding policies.

The section should also briefly summarize any previous or present contracts of the Institution/Company with the United Nations or any UN agencies, programmes or funds.

6. Annexes

Please attach the detailed Curriculum Vitae of each proposed team members. While there is no prescribed format for submitting CVs, institutions are encouraged to submit CVs with a similar/same format for each team member.

Appendix III

Financial Proposal

Instructions for completing the financial proposal:

Important: Please include costs as required, expressed in United States Dollars (\$US)

Professional Fees - Please list each person's all-inclusive daily rate covering a standard person-day. Rates quoted must be all inclusive and therefore taken together sufficient to cover the efforts of the entire team assigned for each task. The costs indicated should indicate the **maximum amounts per expert**.

Proposers should review the expected activities and typical products expected under each service area, and propose prices commensurate with the level of complexity of the expected deliverables.

The Price Proposal must be organized in such a manner that it distinguishes between Fixed Costs and estimate Reimbursable Costs against approved expenses.

The proposal shall include a payment schedule linked to clearly defined milestones.

All prices/rates quoted must be exclusive of all taxes as UNICEF is a tax-exempt organization

The format shown below is suggested for use as a guide in preparing the Financial Proposal. The format includes specific expenditures, which may or may not be required or applicable but are indicated to serve as examples.

Travel and per diems will not be used for evaluation purposes, as this will later be determined and finalized by UNICEF and the chosen bidder.

N.	Category	Unit	Unit cost	Quantity	Total cost
1	Personnel cost (must include all research support and technical personnel)	Days			
2	Personnel cost				
Sub-total consultancy fees					
3	Travel for consultants	Lump sum			
Sub-total travel costs					
5	Audio Transcription	Days			
6	Transcripts Translated to English	Days			
Sub-total transcripts and translation costs					
7	Participant Reimbursement	Lump sum			
8	Software (if needed)	Subscription			
Sub-total operational costs					
TOTAL					

*Payment Provisions

UNICEF's policy is to pay for the performance of contractual services rendered or to effect payment upon the achievement of specific milestones described in the contract. UNICEF's policy is not to grant advance payments except in unusual situations where the potential contractor, whether a private firm, NGO or a government or other entity, specifies in the bid that there are special circumstances warranting an advance payment. UNICEF will normally require a bank guarantee or other suitable security arrangement.

**Travel

The contractor will be responsible for administering their own travel. Travel expenses will be reimbursed separately upon presentation of receipts based on actual cost or as per UN rates (<http://icsc.un.org/rootindex.asp>) whichever is lower. Travel expenses 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).

Number of travelers, duration and dates of travel and travel locations will be agreed with UNICEF and the contractor prior to being arranged, undertaken and expensed. Any variation in reimbursable travel budget should be authorized in writing by UNICEF through the Contract Manager.