

UNICEF EVALUATION OFFICE

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: Global evaluation of UNICEF's upstream engagement in education

Subject: **UNICEF's upstream engagement in education**
Date of the EOI: 07 February 2013
Closing Date of the EOI: 21 February 2013
Address EOI by e-mail to: evalrecruit@unicef.org

1.0 PURPOSE OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

UNICEF Evaluation Office (New York) plans to commission a global evaluation of upstream work in basic education and gender equality education programmes. This is an invitation for an Expression of Interest (EOI) from eligible institutions (consulting firms, research institutes universities, or vendors with similar capacities) to provide services to conduct a global evaluation of UNICEF's upstream engagement in education. Institutions that meet the requirements of this EOI will be invited to submit full proposals. More detailed terms of reference (ToRS) will be provided to institutions that will be invited to submit proposals.

2.0 SCOPE OF WORK

Upstream engagement in education: 'Upstream' refers to policy development and advocacy efforts that precede the actual implementation of policies, programmes and projects - work that has typically gone under the rubric of sector-wide policy analysis and advocacy. Upstream work is also often characterized by a shift from a project approach to programme approaches; an agreed set of implementation modalities, typically resource mobilization, agreed management and oversight/governance arrangements; and, a presence of robust partnership arrangements.

At the global levels, upstream education work entails engaging with partners to set a policy agenda that reflects holistic sectoral reflection and responses to critical issues such as poverty alleviation, climate change, linguistic pluralism, cultural identity, transitions between the education system and employment, educational innovation and use of appropriate new education technologies, to mention a few. Working upstream includes advocating for, and leveraging resources to ensure that developing countries make progress towards achieving for the general population, and for the most vulnerable children, Education For All (EFA) goals and education related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs 2 and 3). It also includes achieving greater inter-sectoral coherence and employing multidisciplinary approaches that reflect a more comprehensive view of how the sector operates.

Within programmes countries, while the policy agenda may vary according to local context, upstream education advocacy typically entails developing medium or long term sector policies, strategies and programmes and/or facilitating national co-ordination of policy dialogue with the Government's external partners. It also entails mobilizing funding sources within a sector-wide national programme framework, proper allocation and management of budgets, as well as strengthening national capacities to develop policies and programmes. Other critical inputs to the renewal and development of education systems come in the form of participatory processes for facilitating policy dialogue and national consensus building,

exposure to the most recent information and technologies, as well as exposure to thinking and experiences of the international community.

While UNICEFs upstream work in education may in some instances be through direct engagement with national governments, the majority of the work is carried out with through partnerships, typically Education for All (EFA) and Global Partnership for Education (GPE). It is also carried out through sector wide approaches (SWAps), a sector planning process and implementation modality that supports a single Government-led sector policy and/or plan that is accompanied by pooled funding, prioritized programme expenditures, and the utilization of Government procedures for disbursement and accounting of all public expenditure.

Purpose and scope of the evaluation: It has been several years since UNICEF declared its strategic intent to shift “towards a greater relative emphasis on upstream support to national policy, capacity and partnerships for scaled-up programme delivery” (UNICEF’S Medium Term Strategic Plan, 2006-2009). Country Programmes (CPs) have taken on the challenge of aligning these strategies with national objectives, at least since 2006, and as such an investigation of the usefulness of this approach is warranted. This evaluation aims to assess the extent to which UNICEF has lived up to these MTSP promises, and to identify good practices and lessons learned in relation to its upstream work in education.

The purpose of the evaluation will be to examine UNICEF’S contribution in “upstream” work in education, to assess the extent to which UNICEF engages strategically in education sector policy articulation and advocacy at the global and regional levels. The evaluation will also determine the extent to which upstream engagement efforts translate to desired transformations in education sector policy and practice, and national systemic strengthening in programme countries. Evaluation themes, criteria and objectives, to be finalized during the evaluation inception phase, are presented as Appendix A.

The evaluation will commence with the inception phase, which will include a comprehensive desk-based review of relevant literature and programme documents, national development plans, education sector plans, and past evaluations findings on the theme of ‘upstream engagement’ (both UNICEF and non-UNICEF). This phase will result in an inception report detailing the lessons from the document review and analysis, and incorporate those lessons into the evaluation approach and methodology.

In the second stage of the evaluation, the evaluation team will conduct field investigations in selected countries using the case study approach. This part of the evaluation will assess how planned and/or stated results have enabled UNICEF to make a strategic shift towards upstream policy engagement, how effective strategies for upstream engagement have been, as well as examine how particular pilots have been used as a basis for policy advocacy and/or engagement. Field investigations will be carried out employing a variety of methodological tools, to be further expounded in the evaluation ToRs and the inception phase.

3.0 TEAM COMPOSITION AND PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The contractor will make available a team of evaluation specialists with expertise in the education sector and work experience that covers the following areas or comparable professional area/content; education policy development/advocacy; partnerships in education development; education systems strengthening; public sector budgeting approaches; aid effectiveness; cooperation within and between developing country blocs; and, South-South cooperation. Evaluation teams will be required to demonstrate familiarity with UNICEF work for children and gender rights, to have experience/familiarity with

countries of different typologies, including countries undertaking humanitarian programming. Adequate gender and geographic balance is also desirable.

Given the large scope of this evaluation, it requires professionals with high level expertise at senior levels, as well as solid organizational back-office support functions. The Evaluation Office encourages applicants to proffer an initial team of evaluators, with the understanding that more work of finding the relevant team members and ascertaining their availability will be carried out at the proposal-writing stage.

Period of assignment: The timeline for the evaluation is 7-8 months, beginning in April 2013 through November 2013, including field visits to 5-6¹ case study countries. While the level of effort for the team leader may be the entire 8 month period, other members of the team will be required to make inputs that require less time.

4.0 SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Interested institutions are required to complete and submit the EOI form in Appendix B, and provide a response (up to 4 pages) to the 6 open-ended questions on the second page of the EOI form.

EOIs should be sent to these e-mails: evalofficeapplications@unicef.org and kletshabo@unicef.org no later than **21 February 2013, at 5.00 PM NY Time**.

Please note the following:

1. Responses received without a duly completed form or an incomplete form will not be considered.
2. This EOI does not constitute a solicitation. We seek your expression of interest in participating in the tender at this stage, and not proposals or price quotes.
3. A response to this request for EOI does not ensure automatic selection to participate in the tender.
4. UNICEF reserves the right to change or cancel this EOI at any time, and to require compliance with additional conditions in subsequent stages of the solicitation process.

Following this EOI, institutions will be short-listed and invited to tender. More detailed Terms of Reference (TORs) will be sent to short-listed institutions in the form of a Request for Proposal of Services (RfPS). Final technical proposals in response to the RfPS are expected to be submitted by invited qualified applicants by the end of March 2013.

¹Tentative list of countries: China, Turkey, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Cambodia, Laos, Mexico, Senegal, Ghana, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Appendix A: Evaluation themes, criteria and objectives

	Evaluation Themes/Criteria	Key Components	Evaluation Objective
1	Shared Definition	Definitions, expected outcomes and pathways	To articulate UNICEF's education upstream approach, examine the extent to which there is a shared understanding of this approach in education programming, and whether outcomes and pathways to achieving results in policy advocacy work are articulated clearly.
2	UNICEF Positioning	Global best practices and UNICEF's strategic engagement relative to its comparative advantage	To identify and review approaches, principles, best practices and benchmarks in global education policy development and other aspects of upstream engagement for comparison with UNICEF strategies and practices, relative to UNICEF's comparative advantage.
3	Building back better	Strengthening of education system response after humanitarian crises.	To examine UNICEF's performance in capitalizing on opportunities created by humanitarian crises to advance education policy development and advocacy, leverage resources for 'building back better' in order to strengthen education system response
4	External Partnerships	Outcomes of partnership strategy; the credibility of UNICEF as a partner	To examine whether UNICEF's engagement in different types of external partnerships ² is strategic, and whether UNICEF's partnership strategy contributes significantly to advancing education policy advocacy and education outcomes in countries of different typologies, including countries undertaking humanitarian programming;
5	UNICEF-wide collaboration	Internal collaboration and coordination with other PD sections, DPS, and EMOPs	To determine the extent to which BEGE collaborates and coordinates internally with respective divisions, sections and offices in UNICEF to advance UNICEF's upstream agenda in education
6	Capacity	Building capacities for upstream work, for UNICEF and partners	To identify core skills, tools, systems and institutional arrangements required for UNICEF's upstream education work, and evaluate efforts at building capacities of UNICEF education staff and key partners in government.
7	Measuring progress	Relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability	To determine whether UNICEF's education upstream engagement is relevant, coherent, efficient, translates to attainment of planned/stated results (IRs. PCRs or KRAs, as well as MDGs 2 and 3) and outcomes (transformations in education sector policy and practice, national systemic strengthening), and whether the efforts are sustainable.

² The major partnership on policy development and advocacy within programme countries is with the GPE. Other partnerships include global and regional organizations, national governments, donor nations, public institutions, private institutions/organizations.

APPENDIX B: UNICEF Evaluation Office – Expression of Interest Form
UNICEF’s upstream engagement in education

Please fill-in page 1 of the form in its entirety and submit it to us electronically or via fax.

Full Company Name:

Type of Company:

User Salutation: Mr. Ms. Mrs. Dr.

First Name:

Last Name:

Job Title:

Mobile: (please include country & city code)

Fax: (please include country & city code)

Official e-mail address:

Office Address:

City:

State:

Postal Code:

Country:

Website Address:

Alternate contact person:

Please respond to the six mandatory questions below in a narrative not exceeding 4 pages.

- 1 Provide information which will enable us to determine whether your team or organization has the capacity to carry out a multi-country evaluation. Information should include:**
 - a) organizational structure, and infrastructure in place to support the evaluation, including an overview of contractor's financial profile;
 - b) Staff capacity, both technical and support staff (to the extent possible, attach CVs of prospective team members, pending confirmation of their availability);
 - c) the year in which your company or consultancy firm started operating, and the number of years in the consultancy business.

- 2. Provide information which will enable us to determine whether your team or organization has relevant evaluation experience. Information should include:**
 - a) a description of the technical competencies of your team members, and the number of years of evaluation experience
 - b) a description of the type of evaluations you have carried out by the team as currently constituted, as well as experience of individual members
 - c) evaluations commissioned by UN agencies and other comparable organizations that your team conducted, or individual members participated in.

- 3. Provide information which will enable us to determine whether your team or organization has relevant specialized knowledge on issues to be covered by the current evaluation. Information should include;**
 - a) a description of **programming experience** in the education sector, and/or programming in another sector, where issues relevant to the current topic were part of the applicants' portfolio.
 - b) a description of **education evaluation experience**, or experience in education policy development/advocacy; partnerships in education development; education systems strengthening; public sector budgeting approaches; aid effectiveness; cooperation within and between developing country blocs; South-South cooperation; or comparable professional area/content

- 4. Provide any additional experience that may be critical to the success of the proposed evaluation. This should include**
 - a) ability to communicate in one of the local languages of one or more sample countries (see note below)
 - b) experience of team members having worked in one or more sample countries, either as a consultants, or having resided in those countries.
 - c) currently operating in one or more sample countries (e.g., having an office and national staff)
 - d) any other pertinent information that may be relevant to the evaluation.

- 5. What Quality Assurance Certifications (technical or financial) are in place? If the team or company have any certifications, please provide a short description of internal mechanisms for assuring the quality of products.**

- 6. Confirm that the company or any team member:**
 - a) has no on-going litigation with the UN;
 - b) is not currently removed/invalidated or suspended by the United Nations or UN system organizations;
 - c) shall declare if it currently employs or anticipates employing any person(s) who was employed by the UN at the time of publication of this EoI.

NB: Indicative sample countries are China, Turkey, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Cambodia, Laos, Mexico, Senegal, Ghana, and the