**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT**

| **TERMS OF REFERENCE (to be completed by Hiring Office)** |
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| Requesting unit: | UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Istanbul |
| Purpose of consultancy: | **UNFPA**, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), is an international development agency that works to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every child birth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled. UNFPA is the lead UN agency that expands the possibilities for women and young people to lead healthy sexual and reproductive lives.Gender equality as a prerequisite for the health and development of families and societies, is a driver of economic growth and a key contributor to sustainable development. In order to ensure women’s autonomy and ability to live with dignity, good health and adequate support, central to achieving universal access to reproductive health and reaching the goals and targets of the ICPD agenda in the region, gender-responsive family policies will provide a policy framework for that. These policies address in particular parents roles by helping them to balance work and family life as well as addressing desired fertility so every pregnancy is wanted. Gender Responsive Family Policies are increasingly being recognized as an important part of national social policies and social investment packages aimed at reducing poverty, decreasing inequality and promoting positive parenthood behavior and gender equality on the household level and society overall.UNFPA has been promoting and supporting the implementation of family-friendly policies in the private sector and the national legal framework, as a means to support women to fulfil their career and fertility aspirations. With support from the Austrian Development Agency, UNFPA is implementing Expanding Choices, a three-year programme which focuses on gender-responsive family friendly policies through private sector and government engagement in Kosovo, Moldova and Albania. Specifically, the programme works towards the following four outcomes:1. Targeted governments, private sector actors and CSOs at regional and country/territory levels have increased knowledge, evidence and tools on gender-responsive family policies so that good practices can be replicated in government and private sector activities.
2. The private sector has improved understanding of the value of gender-responsive family policies, the link to gender equality and business outcomes. Champion companies in each focus country commit to/start implementing gender-responsive family policies and actions.
3. An increasingly supportive enabling environment for gender equality and gender-responsive family practices through public campaigns, communications and engagement with business associations.
4. Improved understanding and commitment to gender-responsive family policies by Governments.

**UNICEF**, the United Nations Children Fund, works in the world’s toughest places to reach the most disadvantaged children and adolescents – and to protect the rights of every child, everywhere. Across more than 190 countries and territories, UNICEF does whatever it takes to help children survive, thrive and fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence. UNICEF believes that investing in Family Friendly Policies (FFP) is good for families, businesses and economies. But for too many parents around the world, policies, such as paid parental leave, breastfeeding breaks, childcare and child grants, are not a reality. The lack of such policies compromises parents’ ability to securely bond with their babies in the first critical years of life – a time, evidence tells us, when the combination of the right nourishment, a loving environment and stimulating care can strengthen a baby’s developing brain and give her the best start in life.Greater investments in family-friendly policies are urgently needed. UNICEF advocates for an increase in the provision of adequate parental leave, paid breastfeeding breaks, affordable, accessible, quality childcare, and child support benefits by governments and businesses. UNICEF’s family-friendly policies agenda aims to create the following shifts:* **From ‘maternal’ to ‘parental’ leave**: Time and support from all key caregivers, including fathers, is important for young children’s development. The shift from maternal to parental leave is one way to strengthen the bond between babies and all caregivers.
* **From ‘infrastructure’ to ‘people’**: We must invest in families – not just infrastructure such as safer work conditions and breastfeeding rooms – so that parents can provide time and support to young children.
* **From ‘individual’ to ‘co-responsibility’**: The work-family balance is not just an individual matter. It is the shared responsibility of governments, private sector employers and families.
* **From ‘reducing parental stress’ to ‘enhancing family wellbeing’**: Family friendly policies can help to reduce parenting stress and promote wellbeing in parents. This, in turn, leads to better businesses, happier families, and healthier children[[1]](#footnote-0).

In UNICEF’s Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region - comprising 22 countries - the progress has been slow. According to UNICEF’s yearly monitoring, national review of some FFPs have been initiated in 4 of the region’s countries; a national consultation on how to update existing policies or introduce new policies has started in 2; and development a national coordination mechanism to support families with family friendly policies has been initiated in other 2[[2]](#footnote-1). Family friendly policies play a significant role, one that is increasingly recognized by governments across the globe, with most welfare policies focusing on families[[3]](#footnote-2). Governments can use gender-responsive family-friendly policies to provide broader support for families, caregivers and children, including for poverty reduction and income maintenance, compensation for the economic cost of children, fostering employment, especially amongst women, improving gender equality and supporting early childhood development and the overall wellbeing of families and the people living in these families. Moreover, family friendly policies contribute to providing better opportunities to optimal early childhood development, starting a virtuous cycle that has been found to increase lifelong learning, earning and wellbeing and move children and families out of poverty[[4]](#footnote-3).However, even before the pandemic, many countries globally, including some of the richest, were still failing to provide robust gender-responsive family-friendly policies, therefore missing the potential that these can offer[[5]](#footnote-4). Gender blind or *maternalist* policies, unreliable or frequently changed policies due to political instability, misaligned or mistargeted policies or narrow and exclusionary policies that do not take into account the variety of family forms; peoples family aspirations and the barriers in social norms, institutions and policies – gendered or otherwise – that prevents people from their family aspirations can hinder the support to families and be overly costly compared to the benefits they may have[[6]](#footnote-5). While the design and impact of family friendly policies have been well documented in high income and OECD countries, there is a lack of data and evidence around family friendly policies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, specifically around the cost to governments and their economies of not having such policies or having improperly designed ones. It is against this background that UNFPA and UNICEF are seeking to engage the services of a consultant to undertake a study on the cost to countries and governments of not having gender-responsive family policies. |
| Scope of work:*(Description of services, activities, or outputs)* | The objective of the consultancy is contributing to UNFPA and UNICEF’s work in the promotion of gender-responsive family friendly policies in the EECA region. The main output of the consultant’s work will be the “*Gender-responsive family friendly policies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: can countries afford not to have them?*” study and policy review.Specific objectives:1. Complement a mapping of existing gender-responsive family policies in the region to include breastfeeding/lactation-related, subsidised early education and care, and sick leave policies. This should include good case studies and examples of best practices from the region.
2. Provide an economic and social argument to governments and the private sector in the region on designing and implementing gender-responsive family friendly policies
3. Provide a framework on how to design robust, sustainable and gender-responsive family friendly policies in the region to respond to the pandemic and to support resilient, prosperous and more equal families and societies.

The research will cover the following areas:* Prevailing social norms
	+ Background/overview of prevailing social norms – e.g. how people perceive the place of women at work (and gender equality more broadly), role of men at home/as caregivers, if/how the COVID19 pandemic has led to attitudinal shifts, etc.
* Changing families
	+ Changes and trends in family formation, composition, role of caregivers;
	+ Changes and trends in labour market participation, including for women and mothers,
	+ Demographic changes, such as age-dependency ratios
	+ Changes in key social indicators, such as gender equality, family poverty, etc.
	+ Prevalence and impact of adolescent and child caregivers (typically considered invisible caregivers) outside of just adult caregivers.
* Gender-Responsive Family policies policies in EECA: complement an existing mapping of policies in the region, including in terms of
	+ Policy portfolios, effective coverage, costs, strategies for uptake and implementation, including private sector engagement
	+ The following should be covered by the assessment: fertility policies, leave policies, pre and post-natal family services/birth services, childcare, child grants, Universal Child Benefits (UCBs) or other family allowances, advances on maintenance payments, family tax breaks, elder care policies, policies, support for unpaid care work, subsidized Early Child Education (ECE), childcare and support for families with children with disabilities.
* The case for strengthening gender-responsive family policies in the region
	+ Drawing on evidence for public and private best practices, the research will include an economic and social case for strengthening gender-responsive family friendly policies at the national level.
	+ The case for gender-responsive gender-responsive family policies should cover policies that promote family outcomes and child development (i.e. lower poverty rates, lifetime earnings, health, education, etc.), gender equality and redistribution of unpaid care work, public social and economic returns (productivity, formality, national and international development targets, including cost of inaction or CEA/CBA), and fertility policies and links between all the above.
	+ The case for these policies should also consider the needs for adolescent girl mothers such as out of school girls and pregnancy bans, access to child care, returning to education, etc.
* How to make the changes
	+ The research will provide practical recommendations for policy reform that are context specific, including a role for the private sector, focusing on quick wins, priority actions for getting to a comprehensive and robust gender-responsive family friendly policies portfolio, specific elements of gender-responsive family friendly policies that are most effective for achieving the needs of changing families in the region (coverage, adequacy, equity).

The research should cover the EECA region, which includes the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244), the Kyrgyz Republic, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. |
| Duration and working schedule: | The work will take place between January 2023 and April 30th 2023 for a total of 55 work days.UNFPA and UNICEF will be providing feedback on stated deliverable submissions within the timeframe of 7 working days. |
| Place where services are to be delivered: | Remote work and communication with the joint task team from UNFPA EECARO and UNICEF ECARO. No travel is foreseen. |
| Payment and fees, delivery dates and how work will be delivered (*e.g.* electronic, hard copy etc.): | The consultant is expected to produce the following deliverables, which have to be submitted to the joint task team from UNFPA EECARO and UNICEF ECARO in electronic format within the timeframe of this assignment:* Methodology and workplan: 10-15 page methodology describing how the consultant intends to achieve the assignment’s objectives in the expected areas, with a clear indication of the methods selected (including draft surveys, questionnaire, if relevant), the report outline, and the time-frame (8 work days)
* First and second draft - two rounds of comments will need to be included (28 work days)
* Final draft - (14 work days)
* Final presentation, including slide deck, to UNICEF and UNFPA regional and country offices (5 work days)

Exact dates for deliverables will be agreed jointly with the consultant and the joint task team.The Consultant works in narrating and ensuring the quality of texts (structure, coherence of content, syntax, style, presentation) and will be responsible for editing of the document with a view to ensure clarity and continuity of the narration, internal consistency, including terminological accuracy, as well as general readability and accessibility to broad users. All costs for editing should be considered within the total remuneration/fees for the contract and will not be covered separately.  |
| Monitoring and progress control, including reporting requirements, periodicity format and deadline: | At the inception of the assignment, UNFPA and UNICEF will communicate the assignment’s focal persons (task-team), with whom the consultant will be interacting solely during the duration of the assignmentThe work of the Consultant at all stages will be monitored and coordinated by the task team. |
| Supervisory arrangements:  | The Consultant will perform under the overall guidance of and report to the task team. |
| Expected travel: | Travel is not foreseen during the consultancy |
| Required expertise, qualifications and competencies, including language requirements: | Education & Experience:* Master’s Degree in Social Science, Demographics, Economics, International Development, Gender Studies, Social Studies or related field.
* Minimum of 10 years of relevant academic and research experience related to family policy, social policy and welfare, gender equality, economics, or related fields
* A strong publication record relating to the above themes and proven experience of development of technical brief, context analysis, research.
* Excellent writing and analytical skills and ability to convey complex ideas simply and cogently;
* Cultural and gender sensitivity;
* Previous experience in delivering similar assignments;
* Experience of work with the UN is an asset.
* Experience of working in the region is an asset.

Language Requirement* Excellent spoken and written skills in English
* Knowledge of a language spoken in the region is an asset

Corporate Competencies:* Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN’s values and ethical standards;
* Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
* Treats all people fairly without favouritism.
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| Inputs / services to be provided by UNFPA or implementing partner (e.g support services, office space, equipment), if applicable: | UNICEF and UNFPA will be providing support to the consultant to liaise with our country offices’ team. Note that the ultimate responsibility for country-specific work remains with the consultant. |
| Other relevant information or special conditions, if any: | Payment will be made in one instalment (lump sum equivalent to the total amount for 55 work days @ daily fee rate) upon submission of all deliverables in the right quality and certification by UNFPA & UNICEF |
| Signature of Requesting Officer in Hiring Office:Date: |

Cleared by: Approved by:

Date: Date:

1. <https://www.unicef.org/early-childhood-development/family-friendly-policies> [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Reference to Standard Indicators SMQ-CS-05-H5.b.3, as reported in 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Richardson, D., Dugarova, E., Higgins, D., Hirao, K., Karamperidou, D., Mokomane, Z., and Robila, M. Families, Family Policy and the Sustainable Development Goals UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ920516.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Richardson, *et al.*, 2020. Gromada, Anna, and Richardson, Dominic, Where do rich countries stand on childcare?, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. UNFPA, 2020. Policy responses to low fertility: How effective are they? [↑](#footnote-ref-5)