

UNICEF GEORGIA
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Selection Of A Local Organization To Define The Spending Of The Child Grants

Start date: October 2022 End date: December 2022

Background:

Georgia has had a Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) programme since 2006, which aims to improve the socio-economic situation of vulnerable families. A family seeking TSA must be registered in the Unified Database of Socially Vulnerable Families. To register in the database, an adult member of the family must apply to the territorial body of the Social Service Agency. Within a month of the application, the family will be visited by a social agent who will check the family property, income and expenses. The family declaration is filled out during the inspection. No later than a month after inspection, the family is assigned a proxy means test (PMT) score. The score determines what kind of assistance a family will receive from the state. The amount of subsistence allowance is based on the number of family members and the value of the PMT score.

The amount of cash assistance for the families is defined as follows:

- Family with a PMT score of less than 30,001 - subsistence allowance is set at 60 GEL for each family member;
- Family with a PMT score of 30,001 or more but less than 57,001 points - subsistence allowance is set at GEL 50 for each family member.
- Family with a PMT score of 57,001 or more but less than 60,001 points - subsistence allowance is set at 40 GEL for each family member;
- Family with a PMT score of 60,001 or more but less than 65,001 points - subsistence allowance is set at 30 GEL for each family member;
- Family with a rating score of 120,001-less: receives a subsistence allowance of GEL 150 for each member under the age of 16, often termed child grant or child benefit programme.

Until July 1, 2021, the child grant was provided to families with a score of less than 100,001 in the amount of GEL 50 allowance for each member under the age of 16. There were mixed methods of administration whereby in some municipalities, the assistance was issued in cash (or to the family bank card and could be fully cashed), whereas in other municipalities, out of the 50 GEL allowance for a member under the age of 16, 20 GEL was transferred to the family bank card (with the right to withdraw money), and the remaining 30 GEL was transferred to the "Child Feeding Card" (without the right to withdraw money from the card).

With the "Child Feeding Card " it was possible to buy only food and it was not allowed to buy alcohol and tobacco. The " Child Feeding Card " (as well as the family bank card) was issued by the JSC - "Liberty Bank".

From July 1, 2021, "Child Feeding Card " was abolished and the balance on these cards was transferred to the subsistence recipients' bank cards and the allowance doubled (from 50 GEL to 100 GEL). From June 2022, the child allowance increased to 150GEL.

With the transfer of funds to family bank cards, the Government is not able to track the spending of the child benefits by the families. UNICEF is seeking to contract a local organization to define the spending of the child grants. This activity is meant to reveal the characteristics of the family's spending of the child benefit, including the possibilities of meeting the needs of the child with this allowance. This will inform the government's future planning of the child cash benefits, taking into account identified characteristics, with a greater focus on the needs of the family and the child.

Purpose and scope:

The overall purpose of the assignment is to determine on what items families spend subsistence allowance from the Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) Programme for children under 16. More specifically, the focus of the study will be on the spending of the cash transfer by the families.

Methodology and activities:

The proposed research should follow a qualitative research approach, involving the use of the semi-structured focus group discussions (FGDs), as the primary method. All FGDs should be tape-recorded and vary in length from 1.5 hours to 2 hours. The number of participants in each group should be 6-8 participants (maximum 80 participants) and there should be geographical coverage.

The selected organization will carry out following activities:

- Develop research questions according to the **Key Research Directions** listed below.
- Develop detailed working instruments (forms/discussions guidelines etc.)
- Plan and conduct focus group discussions with the selected groups of Georgian citizens – The selected organization will recruit participants of the focus groups, develop agendas and conduct the focus group discussions. The focus group guide should be finalized and approved by UNICEF.

The groups that will form then ten focus groups should represent following PMT cut scores:

- TSA recipient with the PMT score less than 0-57,001
- TSA recipient with the PMT score less than 57,001-65,001
- TSA recipient with the PMT score less than less than 120 001
- TSA recipient with any PMT score children with disabilities

Focus group participants should be beneficiaries of the targeted social assistance programme and as well as specialists working with them should be interviewed.

- a) Beneficiaries of the targeted social assistance programme (8 FGDs):
- b) Group 1-3. Mothers (according to PMT score and urban / rural areas)
- c) Group 4-6. Fathers (according to PMT score and urban / rural areas)
- d) Group 7-8. Children (below 120 001 PMT points and urban / rural areas)
- e) Specialists working with families who are beneficiaries of the TSA program (2 FGDs)
- f) Group 9. Social Workers from State Care Agency;
- g) Group 10. Social Agents from Social Service Agency;

Key Research directions:

1. What is the Child Grant used for by the families?

2. At what extent the parent realizes that this benefit is for the child, and s/he is spends it for child needs.
3. In the parent's view, what would be the wisest way to use this fund in comparison to how s/he is using it now.

Ethical considerations:

The selected organization shall comply with UNICEF's Procedures for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis (Annex 1).

The study considers involvement of children and their parents; therefore, the institution should address all ethical requirements before the study can commence, including but not limited to:

- Social care and authorities may place requirements on researchers and raise other ethical issues besides the ethical requirements of the research;
- Written consent should be obtained from caretakers prior to the research. If caretakers give their approval for research to be carried out with their children, researchers also need to determine whether the children themselves have been consulted about their involvement. Children themselves have the right to decide about their participation in research;
- The study should not harm the participants. Respect for the dignity of the research participants should be prioritized;
- Access for children with disabilities and their parents should be defined carefully;
- The selected organization needs to provide evidence of having undertaken ethics training or commit to undertaking ethics training prior to commencement of this work;
- The selected organization should identify relevant potential ethical issues and mitigation strategies relating to potential harms, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality and compensation. Before commencement of the field work, ethical review of the full research protocol (that includes all data gathering tools/instruments and methods as well as information on how ethical issues will be dealt with) must be performed by an independent and impartial ethics review board in line with UNICEF's Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis. This can be performed by internal ethics review board or by the UNICEF Ethical Review Board. Before issuing approval, the ERB must determine that the following requirements are satisfied:
 - informed consent is sought from each subject or the subject's legally authorized representative;
 - the proposed research design is scientifically sound and that risks to subjects are minimized;
 - any risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits;
 - subject selection is equitable;
 - safeguards are included for subjects that are likely to be vulnerable to undue influence or coercion;
 - subjects' safety, privacy, and confidentiality are maximized.

Deliverables and Timeline:

Duration of the project is 2 months. The following deliverables are expected:

1. Research questions and a plan of in-depth interviews to avoid group bias effect.
2. Finalized focus group guide for focus group meetings on Child Benefit Programme (GEO)

3. Transcripts of the focus group meetings (GEO)
4. Report on the findings of the focus group meetings (GEO and ENG)
5. Final report of the project, describing the project activities, its findings and results. (ENG)

Required Qualifications, Experience and Competencies:

- At least 3 years' experience in engaging with different social groups, including children and youth, preferably in social affairs.
- Experience in conducting qualitative research, organizing and delivery of workshops, focus group discussions, and similar activities.
- Familiarity with on how to obtain research ethics approval.
- Ability to mobilize highly-qualified professionals for the project implementation, with relevant expertise and experience in the areas of social affairs
- Partnership building and networking experience.
- Fluency in conducting workshops and focus groups meetings in Georgian and developing reports in Georgian and English is required.

Timeframe and duration

The duration of the contract is up to 2 months. Actions should commence immediately after the signing of the agreement.

Supervision and Work Arrangement

The organization will work under the direct supervision and guidance of UNICEF Georgia's Social Policy & Economic Specialist. UNICEF will support the contractor in establishing contacts/working relations with necessary stakeholders when necessary.

Performance of the organization will be evaluated against the following criteria: timeliness, responsibility, initiative, teamwork and the quality of deliverables.

Payment Terms:

The payments will be done based on the confirmed budget of the proposed project in two tranches:

Tranche one – after submitting deliverables 1-2 - 30% of the total budget.

Tranche two – after submitted deliverables 3, 4, 5– 70% of the total budget.

Termination of Contract:

Either party may terminate the contract before its expiry date by giving a 14 days' notice in writing to the other party. However, in the event of termination on the ground of misconduct, UNICEF will be entitled to terminate the contract immediately, without earlier notice. In case of early termination of the contract, the Contractor will be compensated on a pro-rata basis for no more than the actual amount of work completed to the satisfaction of UNICEF.

Application Deadline And Documents:

Applications should include:

- Project proposal detailing all actions mentioned in the given TOR and the working methodology;
- Description of the proposed work plan and timeline;
- Detailed proposed budget with indication of all activities and the proposed fees;
- List of completed similar projects
- CVs of suggested experts.

Selection And Evaluation Process:

Evaluation Criteria: The Evaluation ratio between the technical and financial proposal is 70:30.

Technical Proposal: 70

Overall correspondence between the ToR requirements and the proposal (specific tasks, deliverables) - 20

Experience of the organization in similar assignments (local self-governance, organization of consultative processes, enhancing capacities of local self-government bodies, youth/public engagement) - 25

Qualifications and expertise of proposed experts – 25 points.

Total - 70

Only proposals which receive a minimum of 70% (42 points) will be considered further.

Price Proposal: 30

The price proposals in GEL should include detailed breakdown of all listed tasks and deliverables.

The total amount of points allocated for the price component is 30. The maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest price proposal that is opened and compared among those invited bidders who obtain the threshold points in the evaluation of the technical component. All other price proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price, e.g.:

Score for price proposal X = (Max. score for price proposal) * (Price of lowest priced proposal) / (Price of proposal X)

Total Technical and Price 100 Pts

UNICEF will award the Institutional Contract to the organization whose proposal is of high quality, clear and meets the project goals.

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Endorsed by: Deputy Representative Amy Clancy

Approved by: Representative Ghassan Khalil