

Terms of Reference for Technical Assistance to document Early Childhood Intervention Project in Georgia

May 1st – October 1st, 2019

Overview:

The OSF-Early Childhood Program (OSF-ECP) requires support for the Enabling Childhoods - Disability Concept. The concept includes development and strengthening of early childhood intervention (ECI) system and services in Georgia, in partnership with civil society actors, including parents, leading to improved access to quality services for children at risk of developmental delays and with disabilities during their critical earliest years.

OSF-ECP's work in Georgia combines a bottom-up approach of empowering grassroots NGO partners, including parents, to advocate on behalf of young children and to demonstrate solutions to barriers preventing inclusion with a top down approach. The top-down approach includes building ECI system for young children in which the government of Georgia fulfils its role to guarantee the right of each young child to quality ECI services. Supporting ECI providers' capacity development and empowerment in Georgia has led to changes that translated to improved quality of ECI provision offered to children, even when policy for ECI was developed but was not fully enacted. Parts of the ECI strategic plan and ECI guidelines and procedures that were developed in a participatory manner were ultimately adopted and implemented at ministerial level. In addition, the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (MILHSA) and the Georgian Coalition of ECI Organizations use the ECI guidelines and procedures for program development, quality assurance and accountability. Dissemination of successful ECI models that can be scaled-up nationally can be powerful in supporting policy and practice development and giving voice to those rarely heard. OSF-ECP combines these approaches in Georgia by supporting efforts to build the case for early screening and identification of children in need of ECI and the provision of subsequent support to their parents through developmental assessments, individualised family service planning and visits in the natural environment of the child as well as transitions to inclusive preschool education. OSF-ECP recognizes that these steps, in partnership with national government, NGO partners, and Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF) led to improved child and family outcomes and increased inclusion of young children.

A shift in Georgian policy related to young children who have been historically placed in segregated institutions opened the door for the family-centered ECI approach. This evidence-based approach challenged the prevalent medical rehabilitation model and brought about a significant innovation to this post-Soviet country. Over the last five years, the national partners and the government of Georgia have made impressive progress towards building a national ECI system in Georgia. A number of initiatives were introduced to support the development of a comprehensive legislative framework for the national ECI system. The Law on Early and Preschool Education and Care was developed in 2015 through wide national consultation, and was adopted in 2016. The draft ECI Strategy with Action Plan was developed in 2015 but was not officially adopted due to adherence to legacy systems in the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (MILHSA). In 2017, the Parliament of Georgia issued a resolution on ECI calling for ministerial action in adopting the ECI Strategy. MILHSA subsequently adopted ECI Program Service Standards for all ECI service providers and a certification program for the ECI workforce. In 2018, the ECI State Action Plan (2018-2020) was adopted, followed by a decree on establishing an inter-sectoral, inter-agency working group to oversee the implementation of the State Action Plan.

Civil society organizations and UNICEF were critically important in shaping Georgia's remarkable progress in developing a National ECI System. Based on the initial leadership of three Georgian ECI programs, including First Step Georgia, the Georgian Association of Child Neurologists and Neurosurgeons, and Portage of Georgia, the national ECI System was developed. Demand for ECI services grew rapidly as the country worked hard to deinstitutionalize thousands of young children and prevent institutionalization. These efforts and those of several academic institutions led to creation of the Georgian Coalition of ECI Organizations in 2015. The Coalition is a growing network of over 16 civil society organizations. It has fostered new ECI programs in several regions with the help of MILHSA. ECI services are now provided in 13 municipalities. The Coalition had built its technical capacity and now provides pre- and in-service training, supervisory support and annual meetings of its members. It has become the main partner of MILHSA and the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) in building, expanding and improving the National ECI System.

Since 2011, these complementary efforts have resulted in a significant increase in the number of children served. The number of state-funded ECI vouchers provided by MILHSA has increased from 40 in 2011, to more than

1,000 in 2018. At least 25 service providers are operational in seven out of the ten regions of Georgia, and the state budget for ECI increased from 86,400 Georgian lari in 2011, to 2 million in 2018.

TOR Goals and Objectives:

An individual consultant is expected to carry out work necessary for planning, managing and producing detailed documentation of what has been achieved in Georgia since 2011 in relation to ECI, as a result of the efforts of the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (MILHSA), Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), the Georgian Coalition of ECI Organizations, UNICEF, various universities, and other partners with technical support from ECP. This documentation will result in the series of reports aimed at different target groups.

This consultancy is primarily focused on carrying out objective, external, and participatory documentation of the OSF-ECP funded initiative in Georgia which has focused on improving the quality of ECI for young children at risk for and with developmental delays, disabilities, behavioural and mental health needs, and with special educational needs. Documentation will identify processes, practices and approaches that may be replicated and/or adapted for use in other post-Soviet countries. The consultant is expected to work closely with OSF Georgia, the Georgian Coalition of ECI Organizations, and the ECP team to document ECI development from 2011 to the present.

The documentation should reflect the following types of support provided by the ECP and OSGF since 2011:

- support for the development and implementation of all processes, documents, program elements and procedures for a national ECI system;
- support for the development of key pieces of legislation and strategy/action plans;
- support for capacity development of civil society/system service providers to establish and maintain high-quality ECI services;
- support for networking and capacity development of civil society organizations, including parent-led associations, for policy advocacy and social communications on ECI;
- support for enhancing the organisational capacity and sustainability of the Georgian Coalition of ECI Organizations;
- initial support for ECI workforce development initially at the program level and subsequently at the higher education level;

In addition, the consultant will describe enabling and hindering factors that contributed to shifts in policy and practice: the participatory approach and multisectoral approach /coordination created at different levels with the key stakeholders. This includes the role of other key players such as UNICEF and other organisations that played a big role in the ECI system building in Georgia.

The consultancy shall run from May 1st, 2019 to October 1st, 2019. The number of actual working days during the consulting term should not exceed 53 days.

Rationale for the documentation:

The project in Georgia is important for the CEE/CIS region where historically, stigma and institutionalisation of children with disabilities and developmental delays is still quite strong and present. Georgia has managed to complete the deinstitutionalisation process and introduce a new National ECI System. This experience is potentially important for other countries in the region, which are struggling to overcome legacy systems and to build a new inclusive system for all children, especially children from 0-3 years. This documentation of a paradigm shift from the medical model to a social and human rights model of ECI services will provide evidence and “lessons learned” for the region on possible ways to scale-up existing good practices or replicate aspects of Georgian ECI system development. Documentation must also reflect the positive and productive collaboration between the state and civil society organisations in reforming the system, and the cross-sectoral reform approach.

The documentation of the Georgian ECI System is intended to be used for the production of three documents: 1) a policy brief for policy makers and funders in other countries, who are trying to introduce ECI and inclusion across sectors who employ multisectoral governance and who are interested in evidence for future programming to support inclusion reforms; 2) a descriptive case study which will include the history of the establishment of ECI policies and the maintenance of high-quality ECI services, including a description of providers and

professionals, and the role of parents, civil society, and government; 3) a shorter case study about the role of civil society organisations and parents in developing the ECI system and advocating for the rights of their children (for civil society stakeholders and parents, who are willing to change the lives of their children for the best, and who potentially can play a key role in the reform).

Objectives and scope of work of the documentation:

The main purpose of this consultancy is to document the key drivers, achievements, obstacles, methods for overcoming major obstacles, and approaches of a reform in Georgia in relation to ECI, supported by OSF-ECP and OSGF. This documentation will contribute to an evidence database of the OSF-ECP's Enabling Childhoods portfolio strategy and how the OSF-ECP and OSGF can learn from this documentation to further plan its programming.

More specifically, the documentation objectives include:

1. Identifying and recording the key milestones that preceded the start of the OSF-ECP's initiative, and which created enabling environment for the early childhood intervention development and reform efforts;
2. Documenting the fluctuating political will and challenges of in-line ministries, and opportunities in using parliamentary leadership to introduce reforms and other enabling factors in the country;
3. Identifying and recording enabling factors as well as difficulties encountered during the process of introducing and implementing inclusive policies and services;
4. Documenting the role of NGOs and civil society in jointly introducing the early childhood intervention concept in Georgia in 2012 and afterward;
5. Recording key stakeholder perceptions about the main challenges and achievements during the course of the reform at central, regional and municipal levels;
6. Identifying how the Georgian Coalition of ECI Organizations was established and strengthened and what is their vision, mission, strategic priorities, and actions;
7. Investigating and documenting the technical assistance provided by OSF-ECP and OSFG in the area of policy making, improving the quality of services, and organisational assessment and development; and
8. Providing the OSF-ECP and OSFG with recommendations for future support to similar projects aimed at reforming and building national ECI system.

The consultant will be expected to perform the following tasks:

- Desk review of all relevant project documents and reports, including documents relevant for understanding the policy context in Georgia on issues related to ECI;
- Review the main achievements of the Georgian Coalition of ECI Organizations and those related to the process of establishing this Coalition;
- Review all data collected by the ECI Coalition member organisations, respective ministries, and consultants' reports, which were supported by OSF-ECP and OSGF, as part of their ongoing monitoring efforts;
- Develop a detailed design for the documentation, including a work plan for the whole process – a draft inception report is to be submitted to the OSF-ECP for approval;
- Communicate and plan with the OSF-ECP, OSGF, and the ECI Coalition on preparatory activities needed before the data collection visit to Georgia;
- Analyse the growth of ECI services in municipalities over time, identify how regional program development and training challenges were overcome, review program data, and verify/validate documented pieces with select stakeholder/ECI Coalition member organisation;
- Include a basic cost analysis of services related to regarding selected ECI services in Georgia (including intensity, frequency, length of the services, rural/urban), approaches for mentoring and supervision sessions among ECI specialists, which will be completed by a national consultant;
- Analysis of the current state of in-service training and pre-service trainings of professionals conducted by the Coalition, external advisors, and increasingly by university faculties to meet the current and future needs of the ECI workforce;
- Outline future plans for pre- and in-service training, monitoring and evaluation, supervision and other forms of quality assurances, etc.;
- Prepare the draft documentation report with key recommendations and lessons learned based on all sources of information used;
- Provide the draft documents to OSF-ECP, OSGF and the ECI Coalition for data verification, completeness, and objectivity; and

- Revise and submit the final versions of the three documents with all key findings, recommendations, and lessons learned (including the summary section), following the agreed ToR.

Key deliverables/timeline:

As a result of this consultancy the three key documents are expected:

1. Full documentation report (a descriptive case study) for OSF and OSGF staff (up to 40 pages plus annexes and bibliography)
2. A shorter documentation report for civil society groups and parents (up to 10 pages)
3. A policy brief for policy makers (4-6 pages)

The timeline for the consultancy is as follows:

- Inception report (including desk review of project and policy documents, work plan, methodological approach, decisions on the data collection instruments, ethical considerations) to be presented and approved by ECP – by May 10, 2019;
- Data collection in Georgia (June 13, 2019 – July 1, 2019);
- Draft full documentation report (a descriptive case study) - by July 15, 2019;
- Draft shorter case study for civil society and parents – by July 26, 2019;
- Draft short policy brief – by August 17, 2019;
- Final full documentation report, shorter case study and policy brief – by September 20, 2019.

Activity schedule and logistics:

The timeframe for this work assignment is from May 1st, 2019 to October 1st, 2019. During that period, the total number of consultancy days available is up to 53 days, with the estimated share of days as following:

- Desk review and work on the inception report– 10 days;
- Data collection in Georgia – 15 working days;
- Draft documentation report - 15 days;
- Draft shorter case study – 5 days;
- Draft policy brief – 5 days;
- Final full documentation report, shorter case study and policy brief – 3 days.

Data collection visits will be organized by the Georgian Coalition of ECI Organizations with support of the OSF-ECP and in close cooperation with the Open Society Foundation in Georgia. Photocopying services, interpretation during field visits, translation of documents and tools, and other similar services will be provided by the Georgian Coalition of ECI Organizations.

Skills and experience required:

The consultant is expected to meet the following criteria:

- Excellent analytical and writing skills;
- Experience conducting field and policy research and assessment using appropriate data collection approaches and data analysis skills;
- Ability to write analytical materials and prepare detailed reports and recommendations;
- Extensive experience in documenting complicated projects;
- Knowledge and experience of both qualitative data and basic quantitative data collection approaches and analytic skills;
- Knowledge of ECI theoretical frameworks, principles, system components, policies and practices is preferred;
- Familiarity with the models of early childhoods intervention services in the CIS/CEE region is preferred;
- Good communication and presentation skills; and
- Ability to keep within strict deadlines.

Management

The gathering of essential documentation will be managed by the OSF-ECP Programme Officer. The management of the documentation will include liaison between the ECI Coalition and the consultants, as well as quality assurance and approval of the deliverables.

All project documents, together with a contact list of all relevant project stakeholders, will be provided to the consultant once a contractual agreement has been made.

Application process:

Applications should be submitted to Joe Wood at joe.wood@opensocietyfoundations.org **by 26th of March 2019** with a CV, expected consultancy daily rate, a writing sample related to the task and 1-2 page document describing methodology/approach. Successful applicants will be contacted by **1st of April 2019.**