Terms of Reference for Final Evaluation

Early Steps to Success (ESS)-Improving Access to Quality Early Childhood Care and Education for Rural Children Aged 3-6 in Yunnan Province, China

2022.03

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# Project Summary

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Type of evaluation | Final Evaluation |
| Name of the project | Early Steps to Success (ESS) - Improving Access to Quality Early Childhood care and Education for Rural Children Aged 3-6 in Yunnan Province, China |
| Project Start and End dates | 2019.9.1-2022.12.31 |
| Project duration | 3 years and 4 months |
| Project locations: | Da Yao County, Chuxiong, Yunnan Province, China |
| Thematic areas | Education |
| Sub themes | 3-6 ECCD |
| Donor | LEGO Group |
| Estimated beneficiaries | Children and teachers from 35 Rural Kindergartens, Caregivers, Education Officials |
| Overall objective of the project | Improve the access to quality preschool education for the most deprived children aged 3-6 in rural villages in Da Yao County in Yunnan Province |

# Introduction

This document provides Terms of Reference for ‘Early Steps to Success (ESS) – Improving Access to Quality Early Childhood Care and Education for Rural Children Aged 3-6 in Yunnan Province China’ Project.

‘Early Steps and Success – Improving Access to Quality Early Childhood Care and Education for Rural Children Aged 3-6 in Yunnan Province, China (ESS Project)’ is a three-year project implementation by Save the Children China with support from Save the Children Denmark (SCD). The project donor is LEGO Group. The project goal is – Most deprived and marginalized children, girls & boys, aged 3-6 have access to quality preschool education and support to fulfil their development. The specific objective is to – Improve the access to quality preschool education for the most deprived children aged 3-6 in rural villages in Da Yao County in Yunnan Province. To contribute to the overall goal of ensuring that young children (3-6) in marginalised, rural areas can fulfil their potentials, the ESS project will focus on increasing enrolment and improve the quality pre-school education. This project started on September 1st, 2019 and is in its last year of implementation. This Final Evaluation will target on children and teachers from 34 Rural Kindergartens (there are 34 kindergartens due to the merger of kindergartens), Caregivers, and Education Officials in Da Yao County to evaluate the achievement of goals and the effect of this project.

The project background, study scope, key questions, intended methodology (if applicable), reporting and governance, key deliverables and timeframes for its implementation are provided in the sections that follow.

# Background and Context

Established and active since 1919, Save the Children is the world’s leading independent organization for children. We work in 120 countries and our mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. Across all of our work, we pursue several core values: accountability, ambition, collaboration, creativity and integrity. We save children’s lives, we fight for their rights, and we help them fulfil their potential. Save the Children has had a presence in China for over 25 years, and remains one of the largest international NGOs working in China. By the end of 2020, the project in China benefited more than 15.41 million children and adults.

China has made impressive advances in pre-school education services for children aged 3-6 years with the general enrolment rate (GER) growing from 50.9% in 2009 to 79.6% in 2017. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has a further set a goal of 85% GER by 2020, however, the access for children aged 3-6 to preschool education in rural areas is below50% and even 0% for those living in remote villages. Within Yunnan Province, the gap between rural and urban areas is significant with the highest GER at 93.92% in the capital city, and the lowest GER of 30% in poor mountainous counties; 27% of Yunnan’s 1,370 townships have no public kindergarten.

Additionally, the quality of rural preschool education is sub-standard. Only 25% of rural kindergarten teachers have specialized teaching qualifications. The existing kindergarten curricula focuses heavily on academic learning and omit child motor and social emotional learning. Most of the teaching is carried out in big groups and through rote-teaching, leaving children with little space for free play and exploration.

Lacking access to quality pre-school education may be detrimental to children’s language acquisition, cognitive development, social-emotional development and well-being, and motor development. It may further affect school readiness and learning outcomes throughout their schooling careers.

Save the Children (SC) believes that learning through play (LtP) is key to learning and that it is critical for children to make sense of the world around them. Through play, children can develop social and cognitive skills, mature emotionally, and gain the self-confidence and self-regulation skills required to engage in new experiences and environments. Play develops children’s content knowledge and provide children with the opportunity to develop social skills, competences and disposition to learn.

SC has been working on increasing access and improving quality of education in the rural, poor and ethnic minority areas of Yunnan since 1999. SC has been working in Mojiang County in Pu’er Prefecture since 2009 and Weishan County in Dali Prefecture since 2017 to increase access to quality early childhood care and development (ECCD) services using different models. As a result, SC has accumulated rich working experience in those areas and has established strong partnerships with local education authorities at various levels. This established relationship will help to generate support from the local government and render the ESS project more sustainable.

Within the project period, SC will conduct the following interventions: 1) Support the establishment of 35 rural village kindergartens (there are 34 kindergartens due to the merger of several kindergartens) in Da Yao County of Yunnan Province and provide play-based quality preschool education. 2) Support the development of play-based curriculum and work with 23 training bases, to further disseminate the play-based curriculum outside of the targeted county. These 23 target training bases will incorporate the play-based curriculum. This will not only benefit the 34 target kindergartens, as the 23 training bases will train teachers in kindergartens under their administrative supervision, and this will spread LtP further in Yunnan. 3) Improve the rural parents/caregivers’ attitude, knowledge and skills to support the social emotional development of the child as well as school readiness. 4) Help increase the capacity and technical resources for education authorities at different levels to develop laws, policies and work plans supporting the development of quality preschool education in Yunnan and at national level.

Together, the work in these four focus areas is expected to contribute to improved caregiver practices and an increase in the GER for the target county by the end of the project.

Ultimately, the project will contribute to the realisation of children’s right to a quality education and adequately prepare children to seize lifelong learning and development opportunities, as ‘builders of tomorrow’.

This year is the last year of this project. And because of COVID-19, this project will be postponed for four months, and it will end in 31st December, 2022. Part of project activities has adjusted based on project goals and objectives.

# Scope of Study

## Purpose, Objectives and Scope

This study is being conducted at the end of the project - Early Steps to Success (ESS). It will build upon the baseline and mid-term evaluation.

This final evaluation will measure and gauge the overall progress according the DAC criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness Efficiency, Impact, Coherence and Sustainability. These will be essential findings for not only donor and SCI, but for the development forum in general to better understand and inform how the project managed to bring people out of vulnerability, and what strategies were adopted to achieve these results. This evaluation will document the achievement of project objectives, results and outcomes. The evaluation will use evidence to analyse the overarching lessons learned from the project.

The primary purpose of the study is:

* How did the project improve the quality of the 3 to 6 years ECCD education in the short term, medium term and long term through improvement of curriculum development, quality of teaching, quality physical learning environment and materials, management mechanism and impact on local education policy and quality?
* To what degree does the project meet each indicator?
* How is the quality of the project management and implementation through the project cycle?
* What factors support/impede meeting the designed goals during implementation? Especially why some measures are effective and other not? Could the interaction among different interventions facilitate the project more?
* What’s the intervention measures related to the target groups? E.g. how does the increase of the capacity of the authorities and/or teachers’ practice relate to parental behavior change?
* How and to what degree did the project create unexpected consequences (positive and negative)?
* How and to what degree could relevant stakeholders achieve the sustainability of the project after completion?
* How could the project be improved to bring better impacts to targeted stakeholders?
* What is the economic value of the program outcomes, outputs and major interventions activities how does that compare to the cost (cost-benefit analysis)?

The study main objectives are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of Evaluation** | **Overarching objectives/questions** |
| Outcome | * Did the program/project achieve its intended outcomes? (see key study questions regarding impact, effectiveness and sustainability) * How and why did the intervention make a difference? |
| Impact | * What positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended can be attributed to the programme? [DAC definition] * “What was the effect of the intervention on the outcome for the beneficiary population? The study of the attribution of changes in the outcome to the intervention requires either an experimental or quasi-experimental design” [International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3impact evaluation) definition] * What mechanisms worked and can explain the achievement or not achievement of the programme results? Which did not work and why? |
| Economic | * Did the program/project provide value for money? (see key study questions regarding cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness, Replicability & scale, efficiency and equity) * What is the economic value of the program outcomes, and how does that compare to the cost (cost-benefit analysis)? |

The study team will be required to undertake consultation with the SC study Project Manager and the study Working Group at the commencement of the project in order to further refine the Study questions.

**Scope:** The Final Evaluation will be conducted by selected External Team, including both desk review and field visit. The whole project will be evaluated. The stakeholders involved in Final Evaluation include Yunnan Provincial Education Department Officials, 23 training bases which are 23 city or prefecture level kindergartens in Yunnan, Da Yao County Education and Sports Bureau Officials, 34 project site kindergarten Head teachers, teachers and children, parents, caregivers, community leaders from 5 Township in Da Yao.

## Intended Audience and Use of the Study

Primary intended audience of the study are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder** | **Further information** |
| Project donor | LEGO Group |
| Primary implementing organisation | Save the Children International China Programme |
| Implementing partners | Da Yao County Education and Sports Bureau and 34 rural kindergartens in Da Yao County |
| Government stakeholders | Da Yao County Education and Sports Bureau  Yunnan Provincial Education Department |
| Community groups | 34 Village committees in Da Yao County |
| Beneficiaries | Children and adults involved in the program/project/s and the study |
| International development/humanitarian research community | N/A |

Moreover, the study will be shared with the following stakeholders:

* LEGO Group
* Save the Children Denmark
* Yunnan Provincial Education Department
* Da Yao Education and Sport Bureau

This Final Evaluation will measure this project’s outcome and effect. The finding will be used for future service improvement, adaptive programming, and accountability, to justify the expansion of the projects.

The study team will be required to propose how the primary audience will be involved throughout the evaluation process and how evaluation findings will be shared with each of the different stakeholders in the table above, particularly outlining how reporting back to communities, beneficiaries and children will be conducted in an accessible and child friendly manner.

## Key Study Questions

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Key Study Questions** | **Formative** | **Process** | **Outcome** | **Impact** | **Economic** |
| Accountability | * How has the program/project approached accountability to children and the wider community? |  |  | **X** | **X** |  |
| Child participation | * How have the children, their needs, desires and suggested solutions, been consulted and accounted for in programme or project design and implementation? * How were children supported to meaningfully participate across the programme/project cycle? |  |  | **X** | **X** |  |
| Child rights programming | * How has the program/project design and implementation considered a child rights approach? |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| **Coherence\*** | * Does the intervention support beneficial synergies and linkages with other interventions carried out by Save the Children in the country/community? * Is the intervention consistent with the interventions of other actors in the same context, such as supporting complementarity, harmonization, and co-ordination with government and other relevant service providers? |  |  | **X** | **X** |  |
| Cost-benefit | * What was the cost of delivering outcomes (cost-effectiveness analysis)? * What was the ratio of costs to benefits (cost-benefit analysis)? |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| **Effectiveness\*** | * Did the program/project achieve its intended outcomes? * Are there any differences in outcomes achieved by different groups? * Were there any unintended outcomes? * Are the objectives of the program/project being achieved? * How big is the effectiveness or impact of the project compared to the objectives planned? |  |  | **X** | **X** |  |
| **Efficiency\*** | * Were objectives achieved on time? (and budget) * Were activities cost-efficient? (What was the cost of delivering outputs? How were cost drivers managed?) * Was the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives? |  |  | **X** |  | **X** |
| Equity and equality | * Did/does the intervention have an impact on inequality or marginalization? * Is there evidence that the intervention reduces inequality and marginalization for specific groups? * What mechanisms / factors contributed to this result? * How much does it cost to provide the program to the hardest to reach? |  |  | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| Fidelity | * Was the program/project implemented as intended (e.g. according to Common Approach model, as adapted to the context)? Why / why not? * Did implementation meet quality standards / best practice? * What were the barriers and facilitators to implementation? |  | **X** | **X** | **X** |  |
| **Impact\*** | * Does the program/project contribute to reaching higher level objectives (preferably, overall objective)? Why/ why not? * What is the impact or effect of the programme or project in proportion to the overall situation of the target group or those effected? * What are the intended or unintended effects of the programme, either positive or negative, direct or indirect? |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| Inclusion | * How did the program/project consider inclusion of vulnerable groups in the design and its implementation of activities? |  |  | **X** | **X** |  |
| Reach and uptake | * Did the program/project reach its intended target populations? Why/ why not? * What proportion of eligible/referred beneficiaries engaged in the program? * To what extent did beneficiaries access and complete the program? * How do children/families who accessed and completed the program differ from those who did not? * What were the barriers and facilitators to beneficiaries accessing/completing the program? |  |  | **X** | **X** |  |
| **Relevance\*** | * Are we doing the right thing? Does the intervention respond to clearly identified needs and priorities of the project participants? Was the intervention appropriately adapted to the local context and target population? * How learning and evidence was used throughout the program cycle to adapt and ensure the project remained relevant? * How important is the relevance or significance of the intervention regarding local and national requirements and priorities? * Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects? |  |  | **X** | **X** |  |
| Replicability and scale | * Are the evaluation findings generalizable to other contexts? * Will the project or programme work in a different context? * Is there evidence that the program/project will reach greater numbers of beneficiaries through the implementation of an approach at scale? * Can the program/project be scaled up at cost? And how much does it would cost? |  |  | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| Satisfaction and experience | * How satisfied were the program/project beneficiaries? * Did program beneficiaries feel the services they received were acceptable, appropriate, and suited to their needs? |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| **Sustainability\*** | * Are the positive effects or impacts sustainable? * How is the sustainability or permanence of the intervention and its effects to be assessed? |  |  | **X** | **X** |  |

\*[OECD DAC Criteria](https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm)

# Study Methodology

## Study Design

It is expected that this study will involve:

* A non-experimental design
* Mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative)
* Random sampling.
* Focus group discussions
* In-depth interview with key informants
* Multiple regression analysis

## Sampling

The sampling method to be used for survey and focus groups will be:

Probability sampling methods:

* Stratified sampling

## Data Sources and Data Collection Methods / Tools

All primary data collected during the study must facilitate disaggregation by gender, age, location. Save the Children will provide guidance on tools and classification schemes for this minimum dataset.

Existing Save the Children data sources that can be drawn on in the evaluation include:

* Project Situation Analysis Report
* Baseline Evaluation
* Mid-term Evaluation

Save the Children has existing data collection instruments/tools that can be drawn on in the study. These include:

* **Teach ECE** for quality evaluation of group teaching activity (This tool was localized by project team and can be used in kindergarten context.)
* **IDELA CE** for classroom’s environment (This tool was developed by SC and can be used in Chinese context.)
* **Surveys** for teachers and parents (These tools was developed by External evolution team who was responsible for conducting Baseline Evaluation.)

In order to evaluate project’s outcome, impact, cost-effectiveness etc. the study team may need to develop new instruments/tools.

Save the Children will not provide enumerators to assist with primary data collection. It will not be a requirement of the study team to source additional external data sources to add value to the study, such as government administrative data. The team should also indicate how data triangulation will be realised.

A range of project documentation will be made available to the study team that provides information about the design, implementation and operation of the Program. Documents include:

* Project Log Frame, Proposal, Situation Analysis Report, MEAL Plan
* Baseline Evaluation Report and Mid-term Evaluation Report
* Two Years Annual Report
* Monitoring documents
* Financial Report

The study team is required to adhere to the [Save the Children Child Safeguarding; Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying](mailto:https://www.savethechildren.net/about-us/our-commitment-safeguarding); and Data Protection and Privacy (See Annexes) policies throughout all project activities.

## Ethical Considerations

It is expected that this study will be:

* **Child participatory**. Where appropriate and safe, children should be supported to participate in the evaluation process beyond simply being respondents. Opportunities for collaborative participation could include involving children in determining success criteria against which the project could be evaluated, supporting children to collect some of the data required for the evaluation themselves, or involving children in the validation of findings. Any child participation, whether consultative, collaborative or child-led, must abide by the [9 Basic Requirements for meaningful and ethical child participation](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/applying-9-basic-requirements-meaningful-and-ethical-child-participation-during-covid-19).
* **Inclusive**. Ensure that children from different ethnic, social and religious backgrounds have the chance to participate, as well as children with disabilities and children who may be excluded or discriminated against in their community.
* **Ethical**: The study must be guided by the following ethical considerations:
  + Safeguarding – demonstrating the highest standards of behavior towards children and adults.
  + Sensitive – to child rights, gender, inclusion and cultural contexts.
  + Openness - of information given, to the highest possible degree to all involved parties.
  + Confidentiality and data protection - measures will be put in place to protect the identity of all participants and any other information that may put them or others at risk.[[1]](#footnote-2)
  + Public access - to the results when there are not special considerations against this
  + Broad participation - the relevant parties should be involved where possible.
  + Reliability and independence - the study should be conducted so that findings and conclusions are correct and trustworthy.

It is expected that:

* Data collection methods will be age and gender appropriate.
* Study activities will provide a safe, creative space where children feel that their thoughts and ideas are important.
* A risk assessment will be conducted that includes any risks related to children, young people, or adult’s participation.
* A referral mechanism will be in place in case any child safeguarding or protection issues arise.
* Informed consent will be used where possible.

The study team will not be required to obtain approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee. Save the Children will not provide assistance with this process.

## Known limitations [Optional]

Final evaluation must start in June, 2022. Although this project will end in December, 2022, there will be a problem of high teachers’ turnover at the beginning of new semester.

# Expected Deliverables

The study deliverables and tentative timeline (subject to the commencement date of the study) are outlined below. The evaluation team lead and SC Project team will agree on final milestones and deadlines at the inception phase.

**Deliverables and Tentative Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Deliverable / Milestones** | **Timeline** |
| The study Team is contracted and commences work | Apr 11, 2022 |
| The study Team will facilitate a **workshop** with the relevant stakeholders at the commencement of the project to develop the inception report. | Apr 29, 2022 |
| The study Team will submit an **inception report\*** in line with the [provided template](https://savethechildren1.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/what/me/EvtNzatd2hlFgFZvAblFe98BeYqbxHcXg_CrZTLdP7Gp8Q?e=4dDyJ6), including:   * Study objectives, scope and key study questions * description of the methodology, including design, data collection methods, sampling strategy, data sources, and study matrix against the key study questions * data analysis and reporting plan * caveats and limitations of study * risks and mitigation plan * ethical considerations including details on consent * stakeholder and children communication and engagement plan * key deliverables, responsibilities, and timelines * resource requirements * data collection tools (in line with the study matrix, and there are existing tools, and project team will discuss with study team to decide how to use them and whether there is a need to develop new tools or not.)   Once the report is finalised and accepted, the evaluator/researcher study team must submit a request for any change in strategy or approach to the study manager or the steering committee. | May 13, 2022 |
| **Ethics submission (*if applicable*):**  Should approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee be required, an ethics submission should include:   * study protocols (participant recruitment, data security and storage, consent and confidentiality etc.) * considerations for consulting with children and other vulnerable groups (if applicable) * participant information statement and consent forms | N/A |
| **Final data collection tools (in the report language)**:   * Survey instrument * Data collection mechanism | May 27, 2022 |
| An [Interim Report / Power Point Presentation] including a summary of formative findings from the study. The focus will be on:   * Summary of interim findings * Any emerging program issues or risks (if applicable) * Any changes that have had to be made to the study design (if applicable) * Key tasks for the next stage of the study and any proposed refinements or changes to methodology (if applicable) | N/A |
| A Study **Report\*** (Draft Version – [template available](https://savethechildren1.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/what/me/EvtNzatd2hlFgFZvAblFe98BeYqbxHcXg_CrZTLdP7Gp8Q?e=4dDyJ6) if useful though external actors may want to use theirs) including the following elements:   * Executive summary * Background description of the Program and context relevant to the Study * Scope and focus of the study * Overview of the study methodology and data collection methods, including a Study matrix * Findings aligned to each of the key Study questions * Specific caveats or methodological limitations of the evaluation * Conclusions outlining implications of the findings or learnings * Recommendations * Annexes (Project logframe, study ToR, Inception Report, Study schedule, List of people involved)   A consolidated set of feedback from key stakeholders will be provided by Save The Children within two weeks of the submission of the draft report. | Sep 23, 2022 |
| **Data and analyses** including all encrypted raw data, databases and analysis outputs | Jul to Sep, 2022 |
| **Final Study Report\*** incorporating feedback from consultation on the Draft Study Report | Oct 14,2022 |
| **Knowledge translation materials:**   * PowerPoint presentation of Study findings * Evidence to Action Brief\*\* | Oct 21, 2022 |

\*All reports are to use the Save the Children [Final Study Report template](https://savethechildren1.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/what/me/EvtNzatd2hlFgFZvAblFe98BeYqbxHcXg_CrZTLdP7Gp8Q?e=4dDyJ6). Please also refer to Save the Children technical writing guide.

\*\* The Evidence to Action Brief is a 2-4 pages summary of the full report and will be created using the Save the Children Management Response template.

All documents are to be produced in MS Word format and provided electronically by email to the SC Evaluation Project Manager. Copies of all PowerPoint presentations used to facilitate briefings for the project should also be provided to Save the Children in editable digital format.

# Reporting and Governance

The Evaluation team lead is to provide reporting against the project plan. The following regular reporting and quality review processes will also be used:

* Verbal reporting each week to the Save the children study Project Manager by outlining progress made over the past month.

SC PDQ Education Director will be accountable for approving the Final Evaluation Report.

# Study Management

**Study Tentative Timeline, with key deliverables in bold. The final timeline and deliverables will be agreed upon the inception phase.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| What | Who is responsible | By when | Who else is involved |
| Study tender submissions due [if external] | Evaluation proponents | Apr 11, 2022 |  |
| Tender review and selection of study team [if external] | SC tender review panel | Apr18, 2022 |  |
| Documentation review, desk research | Evaluation team | Apr 29, 2022 |  |
| Consultation | Evaluation team | Apr 29, 2022 | Refer to Key Stakeholders section |
| Inception report | Evaluation team | May 13, 2022 |  |
| Review of inception report | SC Evaluation Project Manager | May 27, 2022 | Evaluation Working Group, Project Manager, Technical advisor, Regional MEAL Managers, Head of Research and Evaluation - Asia |
| Development of Data collection tools | Evaluation team | May 31, 2022 | Evaluation Working Group,  Technical advisor |
| Ethics submission | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Logistical arrangements | Evaluation team or  SC Project Manager | Jun 10, 2022 | SC Logistical support |
| Data collection | Evaluation team | Jun-Sep, 2022 | SC enumerators |
| Data management and analysis (coding, transcriptions, data cleaning, integration and analysis) | Evaluation team | Jun-Sep, 2022 |  |
| First draft of the Final study report | Evaluation team | Sep 23, 2022 |  |
| Review of first draft report | SC Evaluation Project Manager | Sep 30, 2022 | Evaluation Working Group, SC Project Manager, Technical advisor, Regional MEAL Managers, Head of Research and Evaluation - Asia |
| Meeting with evaluators and evaluation team to finalize the report | SC Evaluation Project Manager | Oct 8, 2022 | Evaluation Working Group |
| Validation of study findings and recommendations | SC Evaluation Project Manager | Oct 14, 2022 | SC MEAL staff, Technical advisor |
| Final study report and submission of data and analyses | Evaluation team | Oct 14, 2022 |  |
| Knowledge translation materials | Evaluation team | Oct 21, 2022 |  |
| Project team meeting to develop Evaluation Response Plan | SC Evaluation Project Manager | Oct 28, 2022 | SC Project Manager, Technical advisor |
| Evaluation final report (together with response plan) posted on OneNet and reviewed (see page 1 above for platform links) | SC Evaluation Project Manager | Nov 11, 2022 | SC Peer reviewers |

# Study Team and Selection Criteria

Interested consultants will be required to submit an Expression of Interest in line with the provided template, which should demonstrate adherence to the following requirements.

### Understanding of Requirements and Experience

To be considered, the study team members together must have demonstrated skills, expertise and experience in:

* Designing and conducting project’s effect final evaluations using non-experimental design
* Conducting research in the field of education, particularly in relation to 3-6 ECCD Education
* Leading socio-economic research, evaluations or consultancy work in China that is sensitive to the local context and culture, particularly Early Childhood Development, Education, or other factors
* Conducting ethical and inclusive studies involving children and child participatory techniques
* Conducting ethical and inclusive studies involving marginalised, deprived and/or vulnerable groups in culturally appropriate and sensitive ways
* Managing and coordinating a range of government, non-government, community groups and academic stakeholders
* Experience conducting study in humanitarian contexts
* Sound and proven experience in conducting evaluations based on OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, particularly utilisation and learning focused evaluations
* Extensive experience of theories of change and how they can be used to carry out evaluations
* Strong written and verbal skills in communicating technical and/ or complex findings to non-specialist audiences (especially report writing and presentation skills)
* A track record of open, collaborative working with clients

There is a high expectation that:

* Members (or a proportion) of the study team have a track record of previously working together.
* A team leader will be appointed who has the seniority and experience in leading complex study projects, and who has the ability and standing to lead a team toward a common goal.
* The team has the ability to commit to the terms of the project and have adequate and available skilled resources to dedicate to this study over the period.
* The team has a strong track record of working flexibly to accommodate changes as the project is implemented.

### Financial Proposal

Save the Children seeks value for money in its work. This does not necessarily mean "lowest cost", but quality of the service and reasonableness of the proposed costs. Proposals shall include personnel allocation (role / number of days / daily rates / taxes), as well as any other applicable costs.

# Annexes

**SCI Evaluation Scoring for perspective consultants**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Evaluation Quality Criteria** (used for internal scoring after completion) |
| **Purpose, Design and Methods** | 1. Does the evaluation report clearly identify the evaluation's purpose (including its key objectives, questions and criteria) as set out in the evaluation's Terms of Reference (ToR)? |
| 2. Are the data collection and analysis methods a clearly justified approach to addressing the evaluation's purpose and questions? (Do they provide valid, reliable and ethical data?) |
| 3. Is the methodology suitably tailored to the context and population groups to which the evaluation questions relate (e.g. re gender, disability, socio-economic status, geographic location, cultural context, ethnicity)? |
| 4. Is the size and composition of the sample in proportion to the conclusions sought by the evaluation? |
| 5. Does the evaluation build on what is already known, for example existing tried and tested frameworks and tools, existing data/evidence, and previous lessons learned? |
| 6. Are the methods used to collect and analyse data and any limitations of the quality of the data and collection methodology explained and justified? |
| 7. Has any personal and professional influence or potential bias among those collecting or analysing data been recorded and addressed or mitigated ethically? |
| **Analysis and Findings** | 8. If evaluating impact, is a point of comparison used to show that change has happened (e.g. a baseline, a counterfactual, comparison with a similar group)? |
| 9. Is the explanation of how (e.g. theory of change, logframe, activities) the intervention contributes to change explored? |
| 10. Is the data well triangulated, such as by using different data collection methods, types of data and stakeholder perspectives? |
| 11. Are alternative factors (eg. the contribution of other actors) considered to explain the observed result alongside an intervention’s contribution? |
| 12. Are unintended and unexpected changes (positive or negative) identified and explained? |
| 13. Are the perspectives of children & communities included in the evidence, including the most deprived and marginalised? Note: For evaluations focused on young children, caregiver perspectives are adequate instead. |
| 14. Are the findings disaggregated according to sex, disability and other relevant social differences? |
| 15. Is there a clear logical link between the data that was collected and analysed, and the conclusions and recommendations presented? |
| 16. Are conflicting findings and divergent perspectives presented and explained in the analysis and conclusions? |
| 17. Are the findings and conclusions of the assessment shared with and validated by a range of key stakeholders (e.g. communities, partners, and Save the Children staff)? |
| **Communication and Use** | 18. Is the analysis and interpretation of the data well communicated through accessible language and helpful visuals (diagrams, graphs, tables as needed)? |
| 19. Are references, annexes and links included that provide additional relevant data, analysis or references (including key documents and which individuals/stakeholders were involved)? |
| 20. Is there a clear plan for how to use the results, including recommendations that are 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound) and directed toward the appropriate 'end users', a dissemination plan, and specific actions for implementing these recommendations? |

1. If any Consultancy Service Provider, Freelancer or Contingent worker will have direct contact with children and/or vulnerable adults and/or beneficiaries and/or have access to any sensitive data on safeguarding and/or children and/or beneficiaries, it is the responsibility of the person receiving the consulting service to contact the local HR team and child safeguarding focal point to ensure vetting checks and on-boarding are conducted in line with statutory requirements, local policies and best practices guidance. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)