TERMS OF REFERENCE

International Expert on Methodological Support for the Risk-Based Development of the Child Protection System

Client	National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Duration	12 months (Time-Based Contract)
Working Modality	Hybrid, involving in-person engagement and fieldwork in the Republic of Uzbekistan

1. Background and Context

The Republic of Uzbekistan has received financing from the World Bank (WB) in the amount equivalent to USD 102 million to implement the project “Innovative Social Protection System for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in Uzbekistan” (INSON). The project will also be co-financed by the Early Learning Partnership Multi-Donor Trust Fund (ELP MDTF).

The National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (NASP) is the Project Implementing Agency (IA). Day-to-day project implementation is managed by the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), established under NASP.

The project will be implemented in close cooperation with various government authorities, non-governmental organizations and international development partners in Uzbekistan. The Project Development Objective is to improve access to higher-quality social services and social support measures for vulnerable groups.

The project beneficiaries include: a) recipients of social services provided by territorial social service centres (TSSCs) financed under the project, as well as by other service providers whose activities are regulated and licensed under the legislation, procedures and standards developed within the project; b) survivors of gender-based violence; c) people affected by floods and heatwaves exacerbated by climate change; d) vulnerable individuals and families registered in the Unified Social Protection Platform (USPP), including those residing in climate-vulnerable areas; e) survivors of violence against women.

NASP is consistently advancing the child protection system. The ongoing reforms aim to strengthen early identification of risks, ensure timely family support, establish a unified case management approach, expand family-based care arrangements and reduce children's prolonged stays in residential institutions.

At the same time, a digital platform is being developed to support key processes in working with children and families. The platform is expected to utilise available data and risk indicators to identify potential risks, track the stages of case management, monitor timelines and generate information to support management decision-making.

The expert's methodological support will focus on assessing how the new approaches are applied in practice and developing recommendations for their further improvement and scale-up.

2. Objective of the Assignment

The objective of the assignment is to provide expert and methodological support for the development and practical application of a risk-based child protection model, covering the full continuum from early prevention and family support to sustainable family-based care solutions for children and the systematic reduction of institutional care.

The expert's work will include assessing existing approaches, reviewing their implementation in practice, developing proposals for necessary improvements, and supporting key implementation stages, including recommendations on the functional and methodological logic of the digital platform.

Under this assignment, the expert is expected not only to provide expert assessments and recommendations but also to develop concrete methodological solutions and practical tools that can be piloted jointly with the relevant NASP departments and subsequently used to further strengthen and scale up the child protection system.

3. Key Areas of Work

Area of Work	Scope of Expert and Methodological Support
1. Prevention of Social Orphanhood and Early Family Support	Assessment of approaches to the early identification of risks and underlying factors that may lead to family crises and the separation of children from their families. Analysis of services available to families and identification of needs requiring additional support. Development of proposals for new preventive approaches, social services and forms of assistance for families with children. Where justified by identified needs, recommendations for establishing new types of social service facilities or transforming the functions of existing facilities to provide early intervention and crisis support to families. Proposals shall be informed by fieldwork findings and the actual needs of the regions. Under this area of work, the expert shall: ● Identify the main risk factors and risk levels that may lead to a family crisis and the separation of a child from their family; ● Develop proposals for classifying families and children by risk level; ● Define criteria for the early identification of families in need of support; ● Identify the social services required by families with different levels of need; ● Define mechanisms for referring families to the required services and for inter-agency coordination; ● Propose indicators for assessing the effectiveness of preventive interventions; ● Where necessary, develop proposals for new types of services or the transformation of existing social service facilities.
2. Risk Management, Case Management and Digital Platform	Development of: criteria and indicators for each risk level; grounds for transitions between risk levels; case review milestones and triggers; procedures for inter-agency referrals and coordination; case management quality criteria; criteria for measuring outcomes and case closure; and requirements for

	professional support and supervision of child protection specialists, including specialists working in “Inson” centres. Digital platform: Based on the developed methodology, the expert shall formulate requirements for the functional and methodological logic of the digital platform, including: data and information required to assess the situation of the child and family; risk indicators and levels; automated alerts and notifications; monitoring timelines; individual support plans; records of services provided; monitoring results; reassessment results; case decision history; grounds for changing the child's service pathway; grounds for case closure; and management indicators and analytical reports.
3. Family-Based Solutions for Children	Assessment of approaches to the safe reunification of children with their biological or extended families, family-based care arrangements, preparation of prospective caregivers and post-placement family support. Particular attention shall be given to children who have spent extended periods outside a family environment or face additional barriers to family-based placement. Recommendations shall aim to ensure timely and sustainable family-based solutions, taking into account the best interests and individual needs of each child. Under this area of work, the expert shall: ● Develop criteria for assessing whether a child can safely return to their biological family; ● Define approaches to assessing the extended family and relatives; ● Develop recommendations for preparing the family for the child's return or placement; ● Define criteria for family readiness; ● Define procedures for supporting the family after the child's placement; ● Propose a mechanism for monitoring the sustainability of family-based care; ● Identify risk factors for a child's return to the child protection system; ● Develop recommendations to prevent a child from being placed outside a family environment again.
4. Sustainability of Family-Based Care and Reduction of Institutional Care	Analysis of the causes of placement breakdowns, repeated entry of children into the child protection system and prolonged stays in residential care institutions. Development of recommendations on

	family support, prevention of placement breakdowns and expansion of services that help children remain in family environments. Provision of expert and methodological support for approaches to transforming the functions of residential institutions for children, with a stronger focus on services supporting children and families. The expert shall: ● Analyse the reasons why children are placed in residential care institutions; ● Identify categories of children for whom a family-based solution may be feasible; ● Analyse the reasons preventing a child from returning to their family; ● Identify the services required to prepare the child and the family; ● Propose an algorithm for working with children who have been living in residential care institutions for an extended period; ● Identify measures to prevent re-institutionalisation; ● Develop proposals for transforming the functions of residential care institutions for children towards supporting children and families; ● Propose indicators for monitoring the deinstitutionalisation process.

4. Approach to the Assignment

The expert's work shall combine document and data analysis, consultations with relevant teams and fieldwork. This approach will ensure that recommendations reflect actual implementation practices, regional operational contexts and the needs of professionals working in the child protection system.

As part of the fieldwork, the expert may review anonymised case management practices, discuss the application of new approaches with relevant specialists, and visit “Inson” centres, residential care institutions for children and other services involved in supporting children and families. The geographical coverage and scope of fieldwork shall be determined jointly with the Client, based on the objectives and requirements of each assignment stage.

The findings from the fieldwork shall inform recommendations for improving methodological approaches, operational practices and the functional and methodological logic of the digital platform.

5. Role of the Expert

The expert shall provide expert and methodological support across the key areas of the assignment, including assessing existing approaches, analysing their implementation in practice, and developing recommendations for their improvement and further implementation.

The expert shall:

- Conduct an initial assessment of the existing child protection system and identify key methodological and practical gaps;

- Develop proposals for a risk-based model for identifying and assessing risks to children and families;

- Develop and improve the case management and child and family referral methodology;

- Develop practical procedures, criteria, checklists and other tools for child protection professionals;

- Develop recommendations on child reunification and family support following reunification or placement;

- Analyse the causes of placement breakdowns and children's repeated entry into the child protection system;

- Assess the implementation of deinstitutionalisation and develop proposals for further reducing institutional care;

- Formulate functional and methodological requirements for the digital platform in relation to risk management, case management, referral pathways, monitoring and management analytics;

- Conduct selective field testing of the developed approaches and tools;

- Refine methodological solutions based on the findings of field testing;

- Conduct working consultations and reviews of anonymised cases with NASP specialists;

- Develop recommendations for training and providing ongoing methodological support to specialists;

- Conduct a final assessment of the implementation of the proposed solutions;

- Prepare a roadmap for the further improvement and scale-up of effective approaches.

Regulatory, operational and technical decisions shall be prepared and adopted by the responsible departments and designated implementing entities within their respective mandates. The expert shall provide methodological support in defining requirements for such decisions, review relevant materials within the scope of the assignment and, where necessary, provide recommendations for their improvement.

The expert shall work in coordination with the relevant NASP departments at key stages of implementing and further improving new approaches within the child protection system.

5.1. Expected Deliverables of the Expert

Upon completion of the assignment, the expert shall submit the following key deliverables to NASP:

1. Diagnostic Report on the Current State of the Child Protection System.

2. Methodological Model for Risk-Based Child Protection.

3. Risk Management and Case Management Methodology.

4. Package of Practical Case Management Tools.

5. Methodological Model for the Prevention of Child-Family Separation.

6. Methodology for Identifying and Supporting Sustainable Family-Based Solutions for Children.

7. Recommendations on Deinstitutionalisation and Reducing Children's Prolonged Stays Outside Family Environments.

8. Methodological Requirements for the Digital Platform.

9. Field Testing Results Report.

10. Recommendations for Training and Competency Development of Child Protection Professionals.

11. Final Report Assessing the Results of Implementation.

12. Roadmap for Further Development and Scale-Up of the Model.

6.1. Assignment Stages and Expected Deliverables

The expert's work shall be carried out in successive stages over a period of 12 months. The scope of each stage shall build on the results of the preceding stage and may be adjusted to reflect implementation progress, fieldwork findings and NASP priorities.

The indicative maximum level of effort for the expert is approximately 192 person-days over the 12-month assignment period. The allocation of person-days across the stages shall be determined in accordance with the agreed work plan, taking into account the tasks and expected deliverables of each stage.

Period	Stage and Expected Outcome	Key Activities	Submission Deadline	Deliverables
Months 1–2	Initial Assessment and Methodological Support Plan	Review of existing approaches and documentation; identification of priority issues; coordination of fieldwork and sequencing of expert and methodological support activities.	By the end of Month 2	Diagnostic Report and agreed Methodological Support Plan.
Months 3–5	Prevention, Risk Management and Case Management: Development of Methodologies and Tools for Subsequent Field Testing	Assessment of early identification and prevention practices; proposals for developing social services, new approaches and, where necessary, new types of social service facilities. Development of methodological recommendations on risk management, case management and their integration into the digital platform. Preparation of tools for field testing in coordination with relevant NASP departments.	By the end of Month 5	Risk-Based Child Protection System Methodology; Early Risk Identification Model; Case Management Methodology; initial requirements for the digital platform; preliminary versions of methodologies and practical tools ready for field testing.
Months 6–8	Family-Based Solutions and Family Support: Field Testing of	Assessment of approaches to reunification and family-based care, determining	By the end of Month 8	Methodology for Family-Based Solutions, Reunification and Family Support;

	Developed Approaches and Tools	children's individual care pathways, family support and prevention of placement breakdowns. Development of recommendations for improving existing approaches. Field testing of the developed methodologies and tools.		practical assessment and support tools; Field Testing Report identifying implementation challenges and recommendations for adjustments.
Months 9–10	Months 9–10: Reduction of Institutional Care: Assessment of Existing Practices, Analysis of Field Testing Results, and Refinement of Methodologies, Algorithms and Practical Tools	Analysis of the causes of children's prolonged stays outside family environments; assessment of opportunities to expand family-based solutions and support services; proposals for further developing the role of residential institutions in supporting children and families. Review of field testing results and refinement of methodologies, procedures and practical tools.	By the end of Month 10	Analysis of Institutional Care; Recommendations on Deinstitutionalisation and Transformation of the Functions of Residential Care Institutions for Children; revised and improved methodologies and practical tools.
Months 11–12	Final Assessment and Recommendations for Further Development	Consolidation of the results of methodological support and fieldwork; assessment of the application of new approaches; recommendations for further improvement, digital enablement and scale-up of effective solutions.	By the end of Month 12	Final Report; recommendations for scale-up; Roadmap for the subsequent period.

*All methodologies, tools and recommendations developed under this assignment shall be guided by the principles of the best interests of the child, family preservation, prevention of unjustified family separation, promotion of family-based care arrangements and non-discrimination.

Each deliverable shall be submitted to the Client in draft form. The Client shall review the submitted materials and provide consolidated comments within 10 working days. The expert shall submit a revised version

within 7 working days, unless otherwise agreed by the parties. A deliverable shall be deemed accepted upon satisfactory resolution of substantiated comments and written confirmation by the Client.

The Final Report and Roadmap shall be submitted by the expert no later than 22 working days before the contract end date to allow sufficient time for the review, revision and acceptance procedures to be completed within the contract period.

Revision of materials within the scope of services specified in these Terms of Reference shall not constitute grounds for an adjustment to the contract price. Payments shall be made based on the actual person-days worked and approved, in accordance with the terms of the contract.

The main deliverables and working materials shall be submitted in Russian. Subject to agreement with the Client, selected final deliverables or their executive summaries may also be submitted in English.

7. Working Arrangements and Presence Requirements

The assignment shall be carried out under a hybrid working arrangement, combining remote analytical and methodological work with periodic in-person presence of the expert in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The working arrangement shall involve predominantly in-person engagement in Uzbekistan. Remote work may be used for analytical and methodological activities for approximately up to 7 calendar days per month. The specific periods of in-person, remote and fieldwork shall be determined in the work plan based on the requirements of each assignment stage and agreed with the Client.

Expenses related to approved travel within the Republic of Uzbekistan shall be governed by the contract provisions and applicable project procedures.

8. Coordination and Reporting to the Client

The relevant NASP department (Department for the Development of Social Services for Children in Difficult Life Situations) shall coordinate the substantive aspects of the assignment and review and accept the expert's deliverables. The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) shall provide technical and administrative support for contract management.

The Client shall provide the expert with the necessary regulatory, methodological, analytical and anonymised statistical materials and facilitate coordination with relevant central and regional departments as required for the implementation of the assignment and the conduct of agreed fieldwork.

9. Qualification Requirements

- A Master's degree in Child Protection, Public Administration, Law, Education, Social Policy, Social Work or another relevant field. A PhD degree will be an advantage.
- At least 10 years of demonstrated professional experience in one or more of the following areas: social policy and social protection; child protection and family support; public administration in the social sector; or the development, implementation and methodological support of social programmes and projects.
- At least 5 years of demonstrated professional experience in child protection and family support, gained specifically in one or more of the following areas: prevention of social orphanhood and family separation; family placement and family-based care; child reunification; or deinstitutionalisation. This five-year experience forms part of the ten-year requirement above.
- Demonstrated experience in developing, implementing and scaling up new models and approaches, including working with regional teams, training professionals and supporting organisational change.
- Experience working with government authorities, international organisations and development partners, as well as preparing expert recommendations to inform management decision-making.
- Experience in adapting and scaling up successful practices across different regional or national contexts.

- Professional experience in Europe and Central Asia, including post-Soviet countries, in social protection, child protection, family support or institutional care reform will be an advantage.
- Demonstrated experience with risk-based approaches and case management in the social sector. Experience in providing methodological support for the digitalisation of social processes will be an advantage.
- Fluency in Russian, including the ability to prepare analytical and methodological documents. English proficiency sufficient to work with international materials and project documentation. Knowledge of Uzbek will be an advantage.

10. Other Conditions

Child Safeguarding

In carrying out the assignment, the expert shall comply with child safeguarding principles, including the best interests of the child, the principle of “do no harm”, prevention of violence, exploitation, abuse and discrimination, as well as confidentiality and personal data protection requirements.

Information concerning children and families shall be handled primarily through the use of anonymised data and in accordance with the Client's established child safeguarding and risk response procedures.

Code of Conduct

The expert shall comply with the Code of Conduct governing interactions with children, including respect for children's dignity and rights, confidentiality, prevention of all forms of violence, exploitation and discrimination, and avoidance of any conduct contrary to the principle of “do no harm”.

Reporting Obligations

In the event of identifying signs of violence, abuse, exploitation or other threats to a child's safety, the expert shall immediately notify the designated focal point appointed by the Client, in accordance with established child safeguarding and risk response procedures.

Matters relating to intellectual property rights, confidentiality and the prevention of conflicts of interest shall be governed by the provisions of the contract.