

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Enhancing Coverage and Access to Prevention of Child Maltreatment and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services in Sistan and Balouchestan

Context

Background: UNICEF's strategy for preventing child maltreatment and providing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) among refugee and host communities focuses on equitable access to integrated, high-quality, and community-based services that ensure no child is left behind. This approach aligns with Iran's national health strategy, which emphasizes preventive and promotive care with full population coverage through community centres, including the Primary Health Care (PHC) centres. UNICEF promotes the strategy to strengthen existing national systems, enabling them to provide services to Afghan refugee children and their families as well as the host community, avoiding parallel service delivery. In partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MoHME), UNICEF works to strengthen PHC capacities for prevention of child maltreatment and provision of MHPSS, particularly in marginalized areas where large numbers of Afghan refugees reside.

Rationale: Iran has long hosted Afghan refugees, many of whom live alongside host communities in designated provinces. The current economic and political situation in Afghanistan has led to increased cross-border movement, placing additional burden on Iran's health, social protection, education, etc. systems. Iran's inclusive health policy mandates provision of primary healthcare services to all individuals residing in the country. Immigrant Afghan families rely heavily on local health services, further increasing demand in areas already facing resource constraints, particularly in bordering provinces, including Sistan and Balouchestan. In May 2025, provincial officials in Sistan and Balouchestan identified 16 high-priority social harms requiring urgent intervention. These include divorce, informal settlements, addiction, violence, child labour, limited access to education, immigration, and children without legal identity.¹

Since Iran's 2014 Health Transformation Plan, mental health services, including prevention of child maltreatment, have been integrated into PHC network, particularly in urban areas. This has played a critical role in promoting mental health and preventing child maltreatment among communities on a large scale, given the wide access of the PHC network in communities. However, rural PHC centres and Health Posts lack resident mental health professionals, limiting access to prevention, early identification, and response to child maltreatment, MHPSS, and family empowerment services. Referral systems (from rural to urban PHC centres) are often interrupted due to stigma associated with child maltreatment and mental health disorders as well as social norms, distance, and expenses. In deprived provinces, hardship and deprivation have impeded the consistent deployment of mental health professionals, even within urban primary health care settings.

To address these gaps, UNICEF, in alignment with its global commitment to ensure equitable health and protection services, is partnering with MoHME to strengthen the capacity of PHC network in high-risk areas of Sistan and Balouchestan province. The initiative will expand MHPSS and prevention of child maltreatment services for refugee and host communities, ensuring that no child is left behind.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE WORK

- **Objectives:** To strengthen capacities of the PHC network for prevention of child maltreatment and provision of MHPSS to Afghan refugees and host communities in deprived areas of Sistan and

¹ IRNA News Agency, 12 May 2025

Balouchestan with high populations of Afghan families, through deployment of eight mental health workers to the targeted areas.

- **Geographical Boundaries:** The intervention will be implemented in four districts i.e. Zahak, Hamoun, Hirmand, and Nimrouz within Sistan and Balouchestan Province, under the jurisdiction of the Zabol University of Medical Sciences.
- **Population:** The target population consists of Afghan refugee children and their families and members of the host community, with a total population of approximately 185,000 individuals, including almost 35,000 Afghans.

METHODOLOGY

The project aims to increase the access and quality of prevention of child maltreatment and provision of MHPSS services to refugees and host communities through deployment of mental health professionals to the PHC centres in four districts i.e. Zahak, Hamoun, Hirmand, and Nimrouz, in partnership with the Zabol University of Medical Sciences.

The above will be addressed by providing:

- **Preventive and educational social and mental health services:** Awareness-raising, family/individual skills training and empowerment.
- **Early identification and intervention services:** Identifying at-risk individuals/families and providing required interventions or referrals.
- **Supervisory and collaborative services:** Coordination, monitoring, referral, and collaboration with other health and social service providers.

The aforementioned services will be delivered through the deployment of mental health professionals to the selected PHC centres that currently lack the capacity to offer these services in accordance with the MoHME-approved service package. The mentioned deployment aims to bridge existing service gaps and ensure standardized delivery of mental health services.

The responsibilities of the mental health providers are defined based on the official job description developed and endorsed by the MoHME. In alignment with these national standards, the mental health worker is expected to carry out the following overarching functions:

- Determine the geographical service area and demographic characteristics of the covered population, including data disaggregated by number, age, and gender.
- Identify social and mental health risk factors and vulnerable individuals or families such as those affected by substance abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment, and other related issues.
- Implement promotional and preventive health interventions in accordance with MoHME guidelines and service package, including self-care education, parenting and life skills training, and family empowerment initiatives.
- Deliver psychological education and interventions, including both individual and group sessions, as well as ensure appropriate referrals and follow-up care.
- Conduct screenings for high-risk conditions such as substance abuse and child maltreatment.
- Support and contribute to community-based mental and social health services.
- Prepare and submit reports in compliance with MoHME requirements.
- Conduct any other relevant duties as specified by the Zabol University of Medical Sciences.

In view of the above, the contractor shall be responsible for carrying out all necessary administrative procedures related to recruitment and deployment of the mental health professionals listed below, assigning them to the

designated PHC centres in close consultation with the Zabol University of Medical Sciences. The qualifications and professional experience of the selected mental health professionals must align with the national standards set by MoHME and be approved by the Zabol University of Medical Sciences.

- Zahak District: 3 mental health experts
- Hamon District: 1 mental health experts
- Hirmand District: 2 mental health experts
- Nimrouz District: 2 mental health experts

Work Conditions:

1. Insurance Requirements:

The contractor is required to continuously maintain the specified coverage for the duration of the contract:

- I. Insurance against all risks in respect of its property and the equipment used for performance of the contract.
- II. Workers' compensation insurance, or its equivalent, or employer's liability insurance, or its equivalent, with respect to the contractor's personnel, sufficient to cover all claims for injury, death and disability, or other benefits required to be paid by law, in connection with performance of the contract.
- III. Liability insurance in an adequate amount to cover all claims, including claims for death and bodily injury, products and completed operations liability, loss of or damage to property, and personal injury, arising from or in connection with the contractor's performance under the contract, including liability arising out of or in connection with the acts or omissions of the contractor's personnel, agents, invitees, subcontractors, or the use, during the performance of the contract, of transportation vehicles.

The contractor shall be responsible for any costs or claims associated with any illness, injury, death, or disability of the contractor's personnel. The contractor shall ensure that all of its personnel used to perform obligations in connection with this contract are adequately covered by insurance for any service-related illness, injury, death, or disability. UNICEF accepts no responsibility for providing any corresponding insurance coverage.

2. Duty Station and Working Arrangements

The duty stations for delivering services are Zahak, Hamon, Nimrooz and Hirmand Districts which are under jurisdiction of the Zabol University of Medical Sciences. The working arrangements for the recruited services are governed by rules and regulations of the Health Network System, Deputy for Health and national labour law.

3. Equipment and Office Provisions

All necessary medical equipment and supplies for the Service Delivery Points will be provided by the Zabol Deputy of Health. This also includes office space and essential office equipment such as computers.

4. Contract Duration and Salary

The duration of this contract is one year, with the possibility of extension. All salaries have been calculated in compliance with the 1404 Labour Law. The contract amount will be amended upon announcement of the official minimum wage by the government, based on the 1405 Labour Law.

5. Personnel Deployment and Approval

Upon signing of the contract, the contractor is obligated to begin deployment of personnel to the service delivery points within 15 days. The background experience and CVs of the personnel must be reviewed and approved by the Zabol Deputy of Health.

6. Liability and Legal Responsibility

In the event of any financial or human losses occurring within the service delivery point, whether involving personnel, the target group or any natural or legal persons, the company shall bear full responsibility for providing compensation. This obligation extends to cases involving personnel errors, team-related errors, and medical errors, for which the company shall be held legally accountable, and UNICEF is hereby absolved of any and all responsibilities.

In accordance with the terms of this contract, all individuals employed by the contractor to execute the contract's objectives shall be deemed as parties affiliated with the contractor. All associated responsibilities, including those stemming from labour laws, workers' compensation, insurance, unforeseen accidents, and any applicable laws within the country, along with associated rights and benefits, shall rest solely with the contractor's personnel. UNICEF shall bear no responsibility in this regard.

7. Transportation Requirements

Transportation of the mental health workers to duty stations should be provided by the contractor. For transportation services, the contractor must ensure that the quality of the vehicle meets the standards provided by the Deputy Health of Zabol University of Medical Sciences, with mileage being less than 100,000 miles.

8. Payment Terms and Conditions

Payments shall be made upon satisfactory performance and receipt of invoices demonstrating the payment of insurance for personnel and the performance report of the recruited personnel, approved by the Zabol Deputy for Health.

9. End-of-Contract Compliance

According to the Labour's Law and Social Security Organization's rules, the company should provide social security organization clearance related to the bilateral contract for the entire contract period following end of the contract. The last payment of management costs will be kept on hold, until UNICEF receives the above-mentioned certificate. The contractor should have the ability to pay the staff for the last month of the contract and UNICEF will pay the contractor upon receiving the above-mentioned clearance.

10. Financial Guarantees and Other Insurance

At the outset of the contract, the contractor shall provide UNICEF with a bank guarantee equivalent to the price of one month's salary for eight personnel from the last month, as well as an amount equal to one quarter of the management costs and services. The bank guarantee expiry date must be at least 3 months after the end of the contract.

Other insurances that are paid by the contractor and are separate from the insurance payments related to personnel and salaries will be paid upon receipt of the relevant invoice and necessary approvals within the framework of the contract.

ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES, TIMELINES AND PAYMENTS

ACTIVITY	DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATED TIME	PAYMENT
Complete all administrative procedures for the deployment and performance management of eight mental health professionals at the selected PHC centres in June 2025.	Performance report of eight mental health workers approved by Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 July 2025	One month salary and other entitlements of the health workers

Complete all administrative procedures for the deployment and performance management of eight mental health professionals at the selected PHC centres in July 2025.	Performance report of eight mental health workers approved by Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 August 2025	One month salary and other entitlements of the health workers
Complete all administrative procedures for the deployment and performance management of eight mental health professionals at the selected PHC centres in August 2025.	Performance report of eight mental health workers approved by Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 September 2025	One month salary and other entitlements of the health workers
Conduct management of the contract.	Report on satisfactory delivery of services approved by the Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 September 2025	Three months overhead cost &Service
Complete all administrative procedures for the deployment and performance management of eight mental health professionals at the selected PHC centres in September 2025.	Performance report of eight mental health workers approved by Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 October 2025	One month salary and other entitlements of the health workers
Complete all administrative procedures for the deployment and performance management of eight mental health professionals at the selected PHC centres in October 2025.	Performance report of eight mental health workers approved by Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 November 2025	One month salary and other entitlements of the health workers
Complete all administrative procedures for the deployment and performance management of eight mental health professionals at the selected PHC centres in November 2025.	Performance report of eight mental health workers approved by Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 December 2025	One month salary and other entitlements of the health workers
Conduct management of the contract.	Report on satisfactory delivery of services approved by the Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 December 2025	Three months overhead cost &Service
Complete all administrative procedures for the deployment and performance management of eight mental health professionals at the selected PHC centres in December 2025.	Performance report of eight mental health workers approved by Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 January 2026	One month salary and other entitlements of the health workers
Complete all administrative procedures for the deployment and performance management of eight mental health professionals at the selected PHC centres in January 2026.	Performance report of eight mental health workers approved by Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 February 2026	One month salary and other entitlements of the health workers
Complete all administrative procedures for the deployment and performance management of eight	Performance report of eight mental health workers approved by Zabol	7 March 2026	One month salary and other entitlements of the health workers

mental health professionals at the selected PHC centres in February 2026.	University of Medical Sciences		
Conduct management of the contract.	Report on satisfactory delivery of services approved by the Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 March 2026	Three months overhead cost & Service
Complete all administrative procedures for the deployment and performance management of eight mental health professionals at the selected PHC centres in March 2026.	Performance report of eight mental health workers approved by Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 April 2026	One month salary and other entitlements of the health workers
Complete all administrative procedures for the deployment and performance management of eight mental health professionals at the selected PHC centres in April 2026.	Performance report of eight mental health workers approved by Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 May 2026	One month salary and other entitlements of the health workers
Complete all administrative procedures for the deployment and performance management of eight mental health professionals at the selected PHC centres in May 2026.	Performance report of eight mental health workers approved by Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 June 2026	One month salary and other entitlements of the health workers
Conduct management of the contract.	Report on satisfactory delivery of services approved by the Zabol University of Medical Sciences	7 June 2026	Three months overhead cost & Service
Total		12 Months	100

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES

The company must meet the following qualifications:

- Legal registration and updated official gazette.
- A minimum of 3 years of demonstrated experience in the recruitment, deployment, and management of healthcare personnel, preferably within the public health or humanitarian sectors.
- Proven ability to manage all administrative procedures related to employment (contracts, payroll, insurance, taxes, etc.).
- Capacity to deploy personnel to remote or underserved areas, including logistical arrangements for transportation, accommodation, and safety.
- Proven experience working with government health institutions, international organizations, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is highly desirable.

Only short-listed applicants will be contacted for the next recruitment formalities.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

TECHNICAL CRITERIA	Score Unit	Maximum Score
Proven working experience in the recruitment, deployment, and management of healthcare personnel.	10 scores per year of experience. Minimum required score: 10	30
Proven administrative, financial and logistical capacities to deploy personnel to remote areas in Sistan and Balouchestan.	CVs of relevant personnel, description of the company's organizational structure, and logistics contract. 10 scores per item	30
Proven satisfactory experience working with government health institutions, international organizations, or non-governmental organizations.	Letter confirming satisfactory completion of services. 10 scores per letter Minimum required score: 10	20
TOTAL SCORE		80
Financial offer		20

Minimum scores for the technical criteria: 65 scores

The financial proposal must provide a detailed breakdown of the salaries for the 8 staff throughout the project's duration, as well as the total amount, including the management fee and service charges.