1. Background

As Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) rapidly penetrate all regions of the world, children’s experiences are increasingly informed by the use of these technologies. Global concern is coalescing around the need to understand how to reduce the risk of harm children face online while maximizing their opportunities for learning, participation and creativity. It is important that the ways young people use the internet are considered when online technologies, networks, services and policies are developed; however, there is still insufficient robust evidence from most middle and lower income countries on how internet use impacts children’s well-being and what risks and opportunities they encounter online, particularly in the global South.

To meet this need for evidence, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti (Innocenti) coordinates and facilitates cross-national research on child rights in the digital age and children’s internet use in developing countries as well as adding to the existing evidence base in developed countries. The Global Kids Online network (GKO) was created in order to develop a research toolkit and provide central coordination of resources and expertise to support national partners in generating and sustaining a rigorous evidence base in this area. It is a collaborative partnership with the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), the EU Kids Online and Latin America Kids Online networks, with a number of UNICEF country offices as well as a number of researchers and experts from different parts of the world. To date, a core Secretariat responsible for network coordination and strategic oversight has been provided by four staff members from Innocenti and LSE, with additional support provided by a Steering Group and International Advisory Group drawn from academia, international organizations, non-profit and other stakeholders. Starting with a pilot study of four countries in 2016 (Argentina, Philippines, Serbia, and South Africa), the research has now extended to fifteen participating countries (including also Albania, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Ghana, Iran, Montenegro, New Zealand, and Uruguay) and the network is still growing with additional countries preparing to join in 2018/2019.

Initially supported by the WeProtect Global Alliance (2015 – 2016), UNICEF, the Italian government and the Home Office of the United Kingdom, the project aims to connect evidence with the ongoing international dialogue regarding policy and practical solutions for children’s well-being and rights in the digital age, especially in the global South. The purpose of the project is to enable researchers globally to gather evidence to understand how children’s rights are being enhanced or undermined in the digital age and to provide a base for cross-national comparisons. Whilst initial research in this space tended to focus on child safety and online protection including cyber-bullying, our approach has attempted to reflect a more balanced perspective between risks and opportunities of both online protection and participation. This includes the benefits that online participation and engagement can bring to children worldwide, including helping to overcome marginalization and discrimination and enhancing opportunities through building digital citizenship.

As of 2017, UNICEF country offices and academic partners have collected data from nearly 12,000 children and 5,000 parents across four continents, supported by Global Kids Online methodology. Additional national projects
are planned for 2018 and 2019 and a comparative report is currently being prepared with data from 10 countries with planned launch in Q1 2019. The underpinning research by GKO involved building an open-access Creative Commons licensed research toolkit for researchers around the world. The toolkit comprises multi-method tools for reliable, ethical and standardized national research with children and parents on the risk and protective factors of children’s internet use. Ten methodological guides were authored by a range of experts to support national researchers during planning, implementation and data analysis. The toolkit and more information is available at www.globalkidsonline.net.

With additional funding from the LSE Knowledge Exchange and Impact Fund, more recent work has involved development of an impact tool (www.globalkidsonline.net/impact) which draws on the experience and best practice of country partners and experts which was launched in January 2018. The impact tool is designed to provide guidance and ideas relevant to all stages of the research life-cycle and to help researchers plan and monitor effective knowledge exchange and impact strategies and activities.

A brief description of the task

UNICEF’s Office of Research-Innocenti is seeking to commission a Consultant to work with us to validate and substantiate early emerging impact claims through production of an independently-verified impact case study of the Global Kids Online network. This will draw upon specific evidence from three country research sites in Argentina, Bulgaria, Ghana and Uruguay, as well as a review of the activities of the Secretariat. The consultancy will be co-funded and conducted in coordination with the London School of Economics through their ESRC Impact Accelerator Grant funding framework. In order to maintain objectivity and minimize any perceived conflict of interest, the Consultant(s) will report to the Chief of the Research Facilitation and Knowledge Management Unit at Innocenti rather than to the Global Kids Online Secretariat at Innocenti and LSE. GKO Secretariat members Sonia Livingstone (LSE), Daniel Kardefelt-Winther (Innocenti), Mariya Stoilova (LSE) and former Secretariat/Innocenti member Jasmina Byrne will however act as Key Informants.

There is increasing interest in demonstrating the outcomes from research for the purposes of learning, accountability, or to demonstrate the value of research investments but assessing the impact of social science research on policy and practice is challenging. It is recognized that the path from evidence generation to ultimate societal or economic impact is unpredictable, usually involves a substantial time-lag and is fraught with methodological challenges in terms of identifying cause and effect. Whilst long-term impact may be difficult to capture within the lifespan of many research programmes, it is nevertheless possible to capture ‘intermediate outcomes’ or ‘pathways to impact’ which signpost plausible longer-term impacts.

The Consultant will be free to propose the research impact assessment methodology which they consider to be the most effective for the task required in their proposal (subject to final approval by Innocenti and LSE). Given the importance of research partnerships to the Global Kids Online network, a methodology which captures a plausible ‘contribution’ rather than ‘direct attribution’ will be sufficient to define impact for the most part. An approach which adequately captures the impact of the research process, as well as the research outputs themselves should be utilized and in the spirit of openness and transparency, negative impacts, missed opportunities and lessons learned related to research uptake and impact should also be recorded.

The nominated approach should be in harmony with Global Kids Online’s holistic conceptual framework of research impact in order to capture the likely wide variety of impacts emerging from GKO activities (see Figure 1 below).
The broad research question the Consultant should aim to answer is:

What is the evidence of emerging national or global research impact from the collective activities of the Global Kids Online network looking in particular at-

(i) **the national and global influence of the core Innocenti-LSE Secretariat** and its cross-country comparative research, associated advocacy activities and added value of the capacity-building and convening activities;

(ii) **the national and global influence of the research conducted by countries**, usually but not always led by a UNICEF country office, drawing upon specific evidence from fieldwork in Argentina, Bulgaria, Ghana and Uruguay;

(iii) **the wider value of the network model** including but not limited to perceived knowledge-exchange and spill-over effects.

The Consultant should include the following broad areas as part of their analysis to capture emerging outcomes, impacts and lessons:

- The value and nature of partnerships within the project:
  
  **Role of international and national academic and NGO partners, role of UNICEF Representative and country office staff, creation of new partnerships and alliances across academia, UN agencies, practitioners and government; whether the variety of these partnerships helped to maximize lesson-learning and exchange, capacity-development, cross-country data comparison; opportunities to improve these partnerships.**

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**Figure 1: The Global Kids Online network’s definition of Research Impact**

- Contributing to the long-term scientific evidence base on children and the internet through publishing high-quality, relevant research in peer-reviewed books, journals and other relevant fora (**academic impact**).

- Influencing and reframing discourse, debate and dialogue among key stakeholders (academics, policymakers, NGOs, media) to affect their knowledge, understanding and attitudes about child rights in the digital age (**conceptual impact**).

- Building capacity at individual, organizational and systemic levels in the countries where we work to generate, communicate, analyze or utilize research on children and the internet for multiple purposes from teaching, academic publishing, advocacy or engaging in new practices and policy development processes (**capacity-building impact**).

- Brokering new partnerships, networks or strategic alliances within and between countries in order to develop joint commitments and common agendas around child rights in the digital age to foster longer term social change (**collective impact**).

- Being able to demonstrate a plausible contribution to changes in behaviour, policies, programmes and practice regarding child rights in the digital age within focal countries, at UNICEF and across the international community more broadly (**instrumental impact**).
Any added value of the Global Kids Online model in terms of capturing learning for others and in enhancing the likelihood of research uptake and impact: 

*Process and approach in terms of enhancing national ownership, accountability and capacity, empowerment, reputation and academic credibility, cross-national and international lesson-learning, advocacy and policy influence etc.; opportunities to improve and adapt the network model.*

Validation of any early emerging claims of academic, conceptual, collaborative, capacity-building and instrumental (policy) impact including scale-up and spillover effects: 

*Adoption of GKO approach in other countries outside of the initial 4 countries in the pilot project, changes in national legislation, national school curricula, public policies and new programmes resulting as a contribution from this project; enhanced academic research or debate; influencing national and international discourse and action plans; enhanced digital literacy amongst young people, attitudinal and behavioral change, invitations to participate in national advisory councils, leveraging co-funding and scale-up of investments from governments and other funders; opportunities to improve the nature and pace of research impact including any missed opportunities.*

As well as being both foreseen and unforeseen, impacts can be both positive and negative. Believing that truly innovative research might result in ‘failure’ sometimes, we advocate honest and transparent documentation of difficulties and challenges as well as successes along the way (process learning) in order to facilitate lesson-learning.

2. **Objective(s):**

The objectives of the Impact Case Study are to:

(i) Evaluate and provide independent verification and validation (if appropriate) of self-reported emerging national and global research outcomes and impact, as well as document additional impacts identified by the consultant from the Global Kids Online network using a robust, empirical framework.

(ii) Objectively capture and document process learning about GKO’s child-centred approach to maximizing opportunities and minimizing risks online for children around the world for the potential benefit and application of others.

(iii) Contribute four applied country case studies from selected research sites, including from the global South, to the (largely) theoretical and Northern-biased evidence base on the impact of research on children’s internet use.

3. **Specific activities to be completed to achieve the objectives:**

3.1 **Phases**

*Phase I:* This phase will include project set-up and appointment of a Consultant to lead the study, as well as getting agreement on any proposed impact assessment methodology for the study, drawing upon an initial conceptual framework for defining impact developed by GKO. It will also involve an initial one day planning and definition workshop with the GKO Secretariat at LSE premises in London, United Kingdom where a timeline for the study will be further developed and agreed and workshop participants will identify essential project documentation and
an initial list of stakeholders for snowball interviews. This workshop will be facilitated by the Consultant who will also produce a brief workshop report. Research assistance to compile project documentation will be provided by UNICEF. The specific focus and levels of analysis will be identified and the roles and responsibilities of the Consultant, the LSE and Innocenti defined.  

(Months 1 and 2)

**Phase II:** This phase will further refine the methodology for capturing research impact and the Consultant(s) will assemble existing self-reported evidence of impact and identify gaps through a desk review of national impact monitoring frameworks produced by GKO members, policy document analysis (language translation and research assistance support will be provided by Innocenti/LSE staff as necessary), a desk review of core project documentation and Skype interviews with the GKO Secretariat to identify the perceived wider international influence of cross-country comparative research and associated advocacy activities. The Consultant will also conduct Skype interviews with GKO network country members (and prospective members) including UNICEF country offices, gathering additional documentation about the nature of the GKO network, including the added value of the research and advocacy work of the Secretariat, and the network model. Finally, Skype interviews will be conducted between the Consultant, key GKO stakeholders (including selected GKO Steering Committee and International Advisory Group members) and secondary stakeholders such as key international policymakers outside of the project) to help validate claims of potential global impact and the added value of the Secretariat. Language translation and research assistance support will be provided by Innocenti/LSE staff if required.  

(Months 2, 3 and 4)

**Phase III:** This phase will involve more in-depth primary data collection about the national and global impact of country research conducted by GKO researchers through fieldwork in Bulgaria, Ghana, Argentina and Uruguay. This will include stakeholder interviews with researchers, policymakers and other partners as appropriate as well as likely review of policy documentation and other materials. Language translation and research assistance during fieldwork will be provided by UNICEF/LSE as necessary. Additional administrative/logistical support will be explored if required through GKO national teams.  

(Months 4 and 5)

**Phase IV:** This phase will conclude assembling and review of the evidence of emerging impact outlined. The Consultant should write up the findings in the form of a final report in English (with a clear executive summary), as well as in an impact case study format for the UK’s Research Excellence Framework exercise (REF). Any validated findings about the impact of the GKO network and model will be publicized through print, press, and social media as appropriate in consultation with Innocenti and LSE’s communications departments. The Consultant should attend a GKO network meeting at Innocenti premises in Florence, Italy to present the findings. A final, Skype wrap-up webinar will also be required to present the findings to those members of the GKO network and other interested parties unable to attend in person. The potential for further dissemination of findings, lessons and wider application within and beyond LSE and UNICEF will be explored as part of this.  

(Month 6 and 7)

3.2 The likely audience

The impact case study’s likely audience is researchers, research funders, knowledge brokers and policy makers, as well as those interested in child rights in the digital age and ICT’s more broadly. It is likely to be of most use to research managers and commissioners involved in priority-setting and funding decisions related to new research initiatives in the child rights in the digital age area, as well as those involved in synthesizing evidence into briefs and similar knowledge products for policymakers.
Researchers and research funders usually need to understand the state of the evidence about the impact and effectiveness of research interventions aimed at better understanding child rights in the digital age, how internet use impacts children's well-being and what risks and opportunities they encounter online, particularly in the global South. They also need to understand the capacity to apply this new knowledge in policymaking contexts, as well as new methodologies to capture holistic research impact. UK research funders (ESRC and DFID) are likely to have a particular interest in this area, particularly in LMIC settings. UNICEF also has a particular interest in both testing a robust approach to evaluate the impact of its current research investments and learning how to improve the design of its future research to better capture impact on an ongoing basis.

Knowledge brokers/intermediaries and policy makers are likely to be most interested in the policy implications of research findings, any process-learning related to application of the methodology and its potential scale-up or application elsewhere. It will be important to ensure such learning is made publicly available on UNICEF/ LSE websites, as well as through relevant online and offline research impact/ knowledge exchange communities of practice.

4. **Specific Deliverables and Timeline:**

4.1 **Deliverables**

The Consultant is to deliver five outputs:

i. Facilitation of a project planning and inception workshop to be held at LSE premises in London, United Kingdom and brief workshop report outlining the proposed impact case study methodology, agreeing additional project documentation to be consulted, roles and responsibilities of partners, and an agreed initial list of key stakeholders for snowball interviews by 14th December 2018.

ii. A final technical report including documentation or practical tools which describe the process and methodology used for capturing evidence of research impact across this collaboration, the core results, conclusions, implications, lessons and recommendations by 3rd May 2019.

iii. A Powerpoint presentation of findings to be delivered at the GKO network meeting at the Innocenti premises in Florence, Italy during late April/early May 2019 (dates tbc).

iv. A Skype webinar to present the findings to the GKO network and other interested parties with associated social media promotion during May 2019 (date tbc).

v. An impact case study, formatted in the UK’s REF format by 10th May 2019.
### 4.2 Indicative Project timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy advertised on Innocenti/LSE websites</td>
<td>Advertisement issued in October 2018 with deadline for applications including CV and short proposal of Friday 2nd November 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal review and Consultant contracting</td>
<td>5th November 2018- 21st November 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant initial review of key project documentation and workshop planning</td>
<td>23rd November- 27th November 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One day planning and definition inception workshop with the GKO Secretariat and other UNICEF-Innocenti staff at LSE premises in London, United Kingdom</td>
<td>28th November 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short inception workshop report and project implementation plan produced by the Consultant, feedback given and edits incorporated, then signed off by Innocenti and LSE</td>
<td>First draft of report by 4th December 2018, feedback by 11th December 2018, edits incorporated and final version produced by 14th December 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invoice I (End of Phase I )</strong></td>
<td>14th December 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant assembly of additional key documentation and desk review</td>
<td>17th December - 20th December 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth Skype interviews conducted by the Consultant with the 4 GKO Secretariat members to identify perceived national and global impacts</td>
<td>7th January- 8th January 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype interviews conducted by the Consultant with representatives from the 15 GKO network country members including UNICEF country offices, plus 2 countries seeking to join the network to identify perceived global impacts and added value of the Secretariat and network model</td>
<td>9th January 2019- 6th February 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype interviews conducted by the Consultant with selected GKO Steering Committee and International Advisory Group members to help identify perceived national and global impacts and added value of the Secretariat and network model</td>
<td>9th January 2019-6th February 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype interviews conducted by the Consultant with key selected secondary stakeholders such as key international policymakers outside of the project to help validate claims of cross-national and global impact and added value of the Secretariat (note approx. 40 stakeholder interviews are envisaged throughout a four-week period between 9th January 2019 and 6th February 2019- not full-time)</td>
<td>23rd January 2019- 6th February 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant fieldwork planning and additional documentation review-Argentina</td>
<td>8th February 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One week primary data collection in Argentina (incl. travel days) to validate perceived national (and global impacts) of Argentinian GKO activities to include stakeholder interviews with researchers, policymakers and other partners as appropriate.</td>
<td>9th February -15th February 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant fieldwork planning and additional documentation review-Uruguay</td>
<td>16th February 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Dates</td>
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<tr>
<td>One week primary data collection in Uruguay (incl. travel days) to validate perceived national (and global impacts) of Uruguayan GKO activities to include stakeholder interviews with researchers, policymakers and other partners as appropriate (to be conducted back to back with Argentina fieldwork)</td>
<td>17th February 2019-23rd February 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant fieldwork planning and additional documentation review-Ghana</td>
<td>1st March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One week primary data collection in Ghana (incl. travel days) to validate perceived national (and global impacts) of Ghanaian GKO activities to include stakeholder interviews with researchers, policymakers and other partners as appropriate</td>
<td>3rd-9th March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant fieldwork planning and additional documentation review-Bulgaria</td>
<td>15th March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One week primary data collection in Bulgaria (incl. travel days) to validate perceived national (and global impacts) of Bulgarian GKO activities to include stakeholder interviews with researchers, policymakers and other partners as appropriate</td>
<td>17th March-23rd March 2019</td>
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**Invoice 2 (End of Phase ii and iii)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultant concludes assembling and review of the evidence of emerging impact</td>
<td>26th March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final report (with a clear executive summary) produced by the Consultant, feedback given and edits incorporated, then signed off by UNICEF/LSE</td>
<td>First draft of report by 12th April, feedback by 26th April, edits incorporated and final Word version produced by 3rd May 2019 (note Easter 19th-21st April)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, layout and e-publication of final report by UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti</td>
<td>6th- 31st May 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant presentation of interim findings at 2-day GKO Network meeting at Innocenti premises, Florence, Italy</td>
<td>Late April/early May 2019 (date tbc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-hour Webinar to present the findings to GKO network members not present at the network meeting, plus other interested parties.</td>
<td>May 2019 (date tbc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact case study (in REF format) produced by the Consultant, feedback given and edits incorporated, then signed off by UNICEF/LSE</td>
<td>First draft of case study by 19th April 2019, feedback by 3rd May 2019, edits incorporated and final version produced by 10th May 2019</td>
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**Invoice 3 (End of Phase iv)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contract finalized</td>
<td>17th May 2019</td>
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</table>

* Deadlines are indicative and may change upon agreement between the Consultant, UNICEF and LSE, particularly for fieldwork. Note separate invoicing will be required to UNICEF and to LSE- further instructions will be given upon contracting.

This Consultancy is open to Individual and to Institutional Consultants
4.3 Roles and responsibilities of the Consultant

The Consultant is responsible for meeting all deliverables outlined in section 4.1 on time. All work must follow the highest academic standards for research rigor, referencing, and citation. Under no circumstances can the Consultant engage in plagiarism or breaches of copyright law. However, where legal opportunity to build on good quality work exists, the Consultant may do so provided that permission is granted from the copyright owner and the original work is appropriately referenced. References in the summary report and any other written material should be inserted as footnotes and follow formatting instructions outlined in the UNICEF Style Guide.

The Consultant must also ensure that all reports and publications produced during the collaboration are factually correct and that all hyperlinks are active and accurate.

The Consultant must meet all deliverable deadlines unless otherwise agreed with UNICEF and LSE. Should the Consultant not be able to meet a particular deadline they must advise UNICEF and LSE in writing at least one week in advance.

The Consultant must respond to all deliverable related questions by UNICEF and LSE within one week.

5. Qualifications and/or specialized knowledge/experience required and desirable for undertaking the assignment

This consultancy is open to Individual or Institutional Consultants, throughout this document referred to as “The Consultant”.

Essential requirements:

- PhD/doctorate or equivalent (in terms of qualifications or experience) in the social sciences, public policy, ICT4D, child rights, research methods, impact assessment or another technical field relevant to this collaboration.
- At least 10 years of professional experience in mixed methods social research, policy and research impact assessment.
- Demonstrated experience in developing and utilizing tools for assessing the impact of research on policy and practice.
- Sound knowledge of approaches to social research use which address complexity.
- Led or co-authored peer-reviewed journal publications- for examples in research impact assessment, knowledge brokering, ICT4D and/or research on children and adolescents.
- Demonstrated understanding of the particular challenges and complexity in assessing research impact and multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- Demonstrated understanding of the barriers and facilitators to the use of evidence in decision-making for policy and practice.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate complex issues to a lay audience.
- Demonstrated understanding of conducting research in low- and middle-income countries.
- Excellent English oral and writing skills.
Desirable:

- Understanding of child rights according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly as they relate to the digital age.
- Understanding of the emerging body of research evidence related to adolescent protection and participation.
- Experience of conducting primary research in high and middle-income countries
- Knowledge of and/or experience of preparing an impact case study for the UK’s Research Excellence Framework exercise (REF)
- Knowledge of ICT4Ds, particularly in developing country contexts.
- Experience of assessing the impact of research networks.
- Experience of working with the United Nations or with other international organizations.
- Knowledge of Spanish is an asset although translation support will be provided if necessary.

6. Duration of the contract

This contract is to commence on **21st November 2018** and will expire on **20th June 2019 (7 months)**

7. Work arrangements

The Consultant’s key contact will be Kerry Albright, Chief, Research Facilitation and Knowledge Management Unit at Innocenti. Relevant research staff from UNICEF and LSE will be consulted throughout the process and review the deliverables including the lead Innocenti and LSE researchers involved in the Global Kids Online network, as well as Global Kids Online research (including UNICEF country offices) in Argentina, Bulgaria, Ghana and Uruguay.

The Consultant is to direct all queries, ideas, drafts and other deliverables to Ms Albright, who will share them with colleagues at the Office of Research - Innocenti and London School of Economics and Political Science colleagues and provide feedback to the broader Global Kids Online network.

Communication with UNICEF’s Office of Research-Innocenti is to take place over email, the phone or Skype. The Consultant is to deliver all deliverables electronically, via email to kalbright@unicef.org. The Consultant is to participate in teleconferences as requested by UNICEF’s Office of Research-Innocenti and the London School of Economics. No budget will be allocated to the Consultant for telephone calls or internet usage. However, Innocenti and the London School of Economics will initiate telephone calls and teleconferences whenever possible.

The Consultant is free to work from a location of their choice so long as all deliverables are delivered on time. A one-day visit to the London School of Economics, London, United Kingdom, four one week field visits to Buenos Aires (Argentina), Montevideo (Uruguay), Sofia (Bulgaria), and Accra (Ghana), and a two-day visit to the UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti in Florence, Italy should be included and costed in this contract.