

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANTS

### A. Background

1. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is providing knowledge and support technical assistance (TA) to the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The TA will help the PRC enhance gender equality and women's capacity to participate in the labor market by strengthening the policy framework for childcare services.<sup>1</sup> National case studies and international comparison will inform the policy tools. The TA will produce knowledge products and promote institutional capacity strengthening for social service delivery. The TA outcome, by 2024 will be an improved policy framework to strengthen the childcare system for children 0–2. The TA will have two outputs: (i) policy advice on strengthening childcare services finalized, and (ii) institutional capacity for service delivery strengthened.

2. **Output 1: Policy advice on strengthening childcare services finalized.** Output 1 will design a policy framework for the childcare system, considering the country's current policy system and local practices as well as national conditions and culture. The main technical report will be based on research to prepare three subreports: (i) detailed analysis of demand for childcare services based on research in urban and rural areas, by region and household income, to put forward policy recommendations for optimizing the distribution of childcare places; (ii) comparison of international practices in childcare services and financing, summarizing experiences and studying different family welfare and support policies; and (iii) research to design innovative financing mechanisms to support the expansion of affordable childcare services. The research should also consider the human capital impacts of expanded access to quality childcare (and how to improve quality) in areas such as nutrition and cognitive stimulation. Output 1 will include theoretical research and literature review as well as field visits and primary data collection.

3. **Output 2: Institutional capacity for service delivery strengthened.** Output 2 will include a series of workshops, seminars, and knowledge products based on the research under output 1 on policy framework design, demand analysis, international comparison, and innovative financing. Inception, midterm, and final review meetings will support high-quality policy research. The TA will develop capacity among policymakers through training of stakeholders from the agencies involved in the delivery of childcare services (based on stakeholder analysis). Training materials will include national and international case studies. National case studies may include municipalities such as Beijing and Shanghai, and prefecture-level cities such as Nanchang, Shenzhen, Suzhou, and Xi'an. The final selection will consider geographic distribution and cities' development stage to avoid one-size-fits-all policies. International case studies most relevant to the Chinese context will be determined in collaboration with the NDRC. The TA consultants will develop a detailed capacity development and knowledge dissemination plan during the inception phase.

### B. Scope of Services

4. NDRC is the TA executing agency. The implementing agency is the NDRC Social Development Department. ADB will engage four individual experts to deliver a total of 36 person-months of national and 2 person-months of international consulting services, all intermittent over

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<sup>1</sup> Childcare services are aimed at children aged 0–2, and are also referred to as daycare, crèches, or nurseries. Chinese children attend kindergarten from ages 3 to 5, also known as pre-primary or early childhood education. Together, childcare and kindergarten are referred to as early childhood education and care.

the 2-year TA implementation period (estimated from October 2021 to September 2023). A national social policy and service delivery specialist will serve as the TA team leader (12 person-months). The consultant team members will include an international social policy and service delivery specialist (2 person-months), a national childcare services financing specialist (10 person-months), and a national TA coordinator and research associate (14 person-months). For maximum flexibility and demand-driven response to needs in an evolving policy context, ADB can also engage national and/or international experts for short resource person assignments as needed and agreed with the executing agency during implementation. The outputs, performance indicators, and key activities of the TA are summarized in the design and monitoring framework (DMF) in the approved TA report, which will be used as a monitoring tool for tracking TA implementation progress and measuring results.

### C. Required Experts

5. **National social policy and service delivery specialist and team leader (12 person-months, intermittent).** The following qualifications and experience are preferred: (i) advanced degree in early childhood development, early childhood education, social policy, public policy, or related social science; (ii) at least 12 years of research and teaching experience and a track record of relevant publications; (iii) demonstrated analytical skills; (iv) affiliation with a university research institute focused on early childhood care and education, family welfare, and/or public policy development; and (v) native Chinese and excellent spoken and written English language skills.

6. The consultant's tasks include the following:

- (i) Lead the detailed design and implementation of the TA research and manage the delivery of all knowledge products and TA outputs, as per the TA DMF.
- (ii) Work with the executing and implementing agencies and members of the consultant team to develop an inception report that includes a detailed research plan and TA implementation timeline, to be finalized and agreed with ADB and NDRC at the TA inception workshop.
- (iii) Develop a detailed capacity development and knowledge sharing plan (including an assessment methodology for DMF outcome indicator 2a), working closely with the implementing agency, to be approved at the inception workshop.
- (iv) Review literature and direct the national research (with team members) to produce the demand analysis subreport (subreport 1).
- (v) Supervise and contribute to the research for subreports 2 (international experiences) and 3 (innovative financing).
- (vi) Develop format for national and international case studies and produce or supervise the production of 10 case study briefs focusing on access, quality, and financing issues to serve as training materials in capacity development activities.
- (vii) Implement the capacity development and knowledge sharing plan, including (a) a series of capacity development activities aimed at stakeholders from government agencies, private sector, and social forces involved in childcare service delivery and supervision; and (b) a series of published articles, briefs, and/or press releases.
- (viii) Synthesize the 3 subreports and 10 case studies to produce a comprehensive final technical report on the recommended design of policy framework that includes clear policy recommendations and a concise executive summary.
- (ix) Produce and disseminate knowledge products according to the agreed research plan.

- (x) Supervise the work of all TA consultant team members, ensuring their understanding of tasks assigned and providing mentorship and feedback.
- (xi) Organize and lead TA inception, midterm, and final workshops; and prepare materials (inception report, midterm report, final report) for ADB and NDRC review at least 10 days ahead of time, in English and Chinese.
- (xii) Produce online learning materials (e.g., lectures, presentations) to be posted on the NDRC or other websites, and produce public communication materials to showcase TA results in a form that is understandable and accessible.
- (xiii) Coordinate closely with the ADB SDTC-GEN team of experts preparing TA 6574-REG knowledge product on promoting investments in sustainable childcare in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>2</sup>

7. **Reporting requirements.** The team leader will report to ADB and NDRC and will coordinate and ultimately be responsible for the delivery of all outputs, including (i) inception, midterm, and final reports; (ii) three subreports; (iii) three policy briefs based on the subreports (with the consultant team); (iv) 10 case study briefs; (v) a technical report on the recommended design of policy framework that includes clear policy recommendations and a concise executive summary; (vi) TA quarterly progress reports; (vii) a capacity development program including seminar series with summaries and participant feedback survey results included in TA quarterly progress reports; and (viii) online learning materials.

8. **International social policy and service delivery specialist (2 person-months, intermittent).** The following qualifications and experience are preferred: (i) advanced degree in social policy, early childhood education and care, social work, or a related social science; (ii) at least 12 years of experience in social policy research and/or consulting assignments with international organizations, with experience of social service delivery (especially early childhood education and care) in multiple countries; (iii) demonstrated understanding of childcare and family welfare systems in developed countries, including in Europe, North America, and/or East Asia; (iv) demonstrated experience in providing policy advice based on international best practices; and (v) an understanding of the social policy system in the PRC.

9. The consultant's tasks include the following:
- (i) Consult with NDRC on potential international case studies of interest, and on work previously done, to avoid overlap.
  - (ii) Review international literature and undertake research on international case studies in childcare service delivery and financing policies and mechanisms to prepare the international experiences subreport (subreport 2) with a focus on lessons learned and potential policy recommendations for the PRC.
  - (iii) Produce international case study briefs to use in training (number to be determined based on the detailed research plan prepared with the inception report led by the team leader).
  - (iv) Prepare a policy brief summarizing the key lessons and policy recommendations from subreport 2.
  - (v) In close coordination with the team leader and the TA coordinator, support the development and implementation of the capacity development plan.
  - (vi) Participate in TA review missions and training events and deliver presentations and facilitate sessions on international experiences where needed.

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<sup>2</sup> ADB. Regional: Support to the Implementation of Strategy 2030 Operational Plans. <https://www.adb.org/projects/54023-001/main#project-overview>.

- (vii) Provide input to the TA final report and serve as a technical reviewer for subreports 1 and 3, national case study briefs, and the technical report.

10. **Reporting requirements.** The consultant will report to the consultant team leader and the ADB mission leader, and will deliver the following: (i) input to the TA inception report coordinated by the team leader; (ii) an outline, draft, and final subreport on international childcare service delivery experiences, relevant to the PRC policy context (subreport 2); (iii) a policy brief based on subreport 2; (iv) presentation materials on lessons from international childcare systems case studies for TA workshops and seminars, as needed; and (v) input to the technical report and the TA final report (draft and final).

11. **National childcare services financing specialist (10 person-months, intermittent).** The following qualifications and experience are preferred: (i) advanced degree in early childhood education and care, family welfare, public policy, public finance, or a related social science; (ii) at least 10 years of research experience and a record of publications and contributions to publications; (iii) a detailed understanding of the Chinese childcare and social policy systems; and (iv) excellent writing skills.

12. The consultant's tasks include the following:
- (i) Review financing mechanisms for childcare in the PRC.
  - (ii) Together with the team leader and TA coordinator, consult with NDRC on national case studies of interest and contribute to their preparation.
  - (iii) Undertake literature review and detailed analysis of international and national cases to propose innovative financing mechanisms to promote affordable childcare service delivery.
  - (iv) Take the lead in producing the innovative financing subreport (subreport 3).
  - (v) Prepare a policy brief summarizing the key lessons and policy recommendations from subreport 3.
  - (vi) Participate in TA review missions and training events and deliver presentations and facilitate sessions on innovative financing mechanisms for childcare services, where needed.
  - (vii) Provide input to the technical report and the TA final report, and serve as a reviewer for subreports 1 and 2 and case study briefs.
  - (viii) Complete other tasks as assigned by the team leader.

13. **Reporting requirements.** The consultant will report to the consultant team leader and the ADB mission leader, and will deliver the following: (i) input to the TA inception report coordinated by the team leader; (ii) an outline, draft, and final subreport 3 on innovative financing mechanisms; (iii) a policy brief based on subreport 3; (iv) presentation materials for TA workshops and seminars, as needed; and (v) input to the technical report and TA final report (draft and final).

14. **National TA coordinator and research associate (14 person-months, intermittent).** The following qualifications and experience are preferred: (i) advanced degree in public or social policy, social welfare, early childhood education and care, or a related social science; (ii) at least 5 years of directly relevant work experience, including demonstrated research skills; (iii) fluent spoken and written English; and (iv) strong organizational skills and project management experience, preferably with an international organization or research institute.

15. The consultant's tasks include the following:
- (i) Support NDRC and the consultant team leader in handling administrative aspects of the ADB TA, including logistics and travel arrangements for workshops, training,

seminars, and field research, following ADB's *Technical Assistance Disbursement Handbook* (2020, as amended from time to time).<sup>3</sup>

- (ii) Provide technical research assistance to the TA consultant team, including translation support where needed.
- (iii) Provide coordination and administrative support for ADB TA supervision missions (inception, midterm, and final review missions) including identifying the agenda, venue, translation, and participants.
- (iv) Keep track of progress against the TA DMF, providing brief updates with each quarterly TA progress report.
- (v) Support ADB, NDRC, and the consultant team in identifying resource person assignment needs and preparing terms of reference for their engagement.
- (vi) Coordinate the production and translation of the inception report, technical subreports 1-3, final report, policy briefs, and any other TA outputs.
- (vii) Working with the executing agency, develop a dissemination plan and coordinate dissemination of TA outputs, including to the public.
- (viii) Complete other tasks, as needed.

16. **Reporting requirements.** The consultant will report to the team leader and the ADB mission leader and liaise closely with NDRC to handle administrative and coordination tasks, undertake research (including field research), and support the production of all TA outputs.

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<sup>3</sup> The handbook is available electronically from the ADB website: <https://www.adb.org/documents/technical-assistance-disbursement-handbook>.