

## Terms of Reference

### The Development of National Gatekeeping Guideline for Children in Alternative Care.

**Duty station: Hargeisa, Somaliland**

**Project duration: 3 Months (70 working days)**

**Deadline for application: 24-04- 2024**

#### 1. Introduction

SOS Children's Villages is a global federation of 136 national SOS Children's Villages associations, working in more than 2000 project locations worldwide. We work together with a single vision: every child belongs to a family and grows with love, respect and security.

SOS Children's Villages is committed to the welfare of children who lost parental care or at risk of losing parental care - often ensuring that children grow up in a loving family environment, and to strengthening families and communities as a preventive measure in the fight against child abandonment and social neglect, and upholds child protection policy as part of their commitment to the protection of children and youth from abuse.

SOS Children's Villages in Somaliland (SOS CV), part of SOS Children's Villages International, the umbrella organization to which all SOS Children's Villages including SOS Children's Villages in Somaliland Association is affiliated. SOS CV is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that is not for profit, non-sectarian and non-partisan and which has been in existence since 1999. SOS Children's Villages in Somaliland shares vision with SOS CV International and believes that every child belongs to a family and grows with love, respect and security. To realize this, SOS Children's Villages in Somaliland builds families for children in need, help them shape their own futures and share in the development of their communities.

SOS Children's Villages in Somaliland is implementing 'Leave No Youth behind' project. The overall objective of the project is - young people in Somaliland to be resilient and self-reliant to become independent and contributing members of society with a special focus on youth leaving care (YLC). This project is to contribute to the realization of a better society where young people are self-reliant and depend on their own powers, resources and abilities to meet their needs and manage their own affairs. The project also aspires to make young people resilient to adversities/challenges in life and capable to withstand and recover quickly from difficult conditions.

The project will address the problems of discrimination, marginalization and stigmatization of young people aged 15-25 who grow up without parental care. Whether they have been placed in residential care facilities, in foster care or other types of care, they are at high-risk suffering from a variety of

challenges including poor social networks, mental health problems, unemployment and homelessness. Cultural and gendered norms give young women and men different vulnerabilities as they grow out of care and transition to independent living.

The project focuses on 3 major outcomes with their relevant outputs to achieve the above stated goal and focuses on human rights-based approaches and targets duty bearers to demonstrate capacity and commitment to fulfil their responsibility to respect, promote and realize the rights of youth, and Rights Holders (youth leaving care) to have the capacity to exercise and claim their rights, hold duty bearers accountable and understand their corresponding entitlements in relation to specific duty-bearer.

In summary, the project aims to achieve the following outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Policy Environment: Decision makers put policies/laws in place that strengthen the support for YLC.

**Outcome 2:** Strengthening Duty Bearers: Social protection systems respond to the needs and rights of young care leavers on their journey to independent living

**Outcome 3:** Empowering Right Holders:

During the program design, an area of interest was to find solutions and way forward from the Government and other stakeholders to solve issues of youth leaving care. One of these solutions is to develop and implement policies in favour of youth specifically touching issues related to YLC like Foster Care and Gatekeeping Guidelines.

In summary, the project aspires to realise a conducive policy environment, increased willingness and capacity of duty bears to address issues related to youth and specifically YLC, have a strong and motivated social workforce providing professional services to the YLC and an effective network of institutions standing for the support of YLC related issues.

On this, the first desired outcome of the project is that decision-makers put policies/laws in place that strengthen support for young care leavers. This means that the National Gatekeeping Guidelines are prioritized with the aim of preventing inappropriate placements and ensuring that the child/young person receives the most suitable support during placement and after care.

## 2. Background and rationale

The primary objective of gatekeeping guideline is to prevent unnecessary separation of children from their families and to divert children from entry into the formal care system (i.e. into any care situation where the child's placement was made by order of a competent authority).

Secondly, gatekeeping aims for a proactive approach when seeking reunification options for children already in the formal care system.

In countries where there is an overreliance on residential care, gatekeeping helps to restrict or prevent the entry of children into residential care, as well as support children's timely exit from residential care back.

These terms of reference are framed within the context of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children that gives a direction to support efforts on keep children in, or return them to, the care of their family or, failing this, to find another appropriate and permanent solution. Additionally, the placement of children under different childcare options is said to be informed by the principle of Necessity as indicate in the guidelines. Thus, should it become necessary for a child to be placed outside the family of origin, gatekeeping services are needed to assess the necessity of such a placement, and then find a placement that is appropriate to the needs of the individual child. The 'necessity principle' concerns the establishment of a robust 'gatekeeping' mechanism capable of ensuring that children are admitted to the alternative care system only if all possible means of keeping them with their parents or wider (extended) family have been examined. Hence, the need for national guideline set clear gatekeeping systems which may include; child admission procedures, re-unification and integration criterion and processes.

It is expected that the developed guidelines will seek to address such topics as: Mechanisms for placement in care inside family setting and outside of families, Deinstitutionalization, including family reunification (with a detailed overview of the process and methods being used), Preparation of young people leaving care and after care services to support social reintegration and independent living, Data management system and data collection tools at different stages of case management, Key actors, relevant stakeholders, and their roles in case management processes, To prevent unnecessary separation of children whenever possible and in the best interests of the child (i.e., necessary), To ensure that when alternative care is required that the option selected best meets the unique needs and situation of the individual child (i.e., suitable), To support timely reintegration of children who are in alternative care, with particular focus on ensuring that the placement is safe and sustainable.

On the other hand, even though the government of Somaliland has enacted policies and guidelines through the various agencies and ministries such as the national youth policy, employment policy, the national development plan three, sector development plan 2022 to 2026 of the Ministry of Employment and Family Affairs, Child policy, child rights act, national alternative care policy and Miumum standards of care and their implementation plans; however, finalization and implementation of such policies and guidelines is very minimal. Besides, there are limited focus on children and young people who are living or have left care. The government of Somaliland has put in place efforts to address the holistic issues of that affect young people as a vulnerable group i.e unemployment, education access among others. It was found that, there is no specific focus or arrangement to target children and young people who are in care or have left care in Somaliland.

In addition, the Government of Somaliland recognizes the importance of protecting children from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and neglect. Gatekeeping plays a crucial role in this endeavor, as it involves identifying and responding to potential risks children face when interacting with various institutions and services. However, there is currently a lack of clear and comprehensive national gatekeeping guidelines in Somaliland, which hinders effective child protection efforts.

Currently, Somaliland lacks a national gatekeeping guideline for children in alternative care. This absence creates inconsistencies in practices, vulnerabilities for children, and challenges for stakeholders involved in their care and protection.

To address this gap, the Government of Somaliland seeks to develop and implement national gatekeeping guidelines for children. These guidelines will provide a framework for professionals working in various sectors, such as education, health, social welfare, law enforcement, and justice, to identify and report suspected child abuse and neglect

In conclusion, the Ministry of Employment Social Affairs and Family (MESAF) with the support of SOS Children's villages is seeking a consultant to develop a comprehensive national gatekeeping guideline for children in alternative care in Somaliland.

### **3. Objectives of the guideline**

#### **3.1. Overall objectives**

The overall objective of this consultancy is to develop a national gatekeeping guideline for children in alternative care in Somaliland that promotes their best interests, safety, and well-being within different care arrangements.

#### **3.2. Specific Objectives**

1. To assess the current situation of gatekeeping practices for children in alternative care in Somaliland, in line with the UN guidelines on alternative care, and domestic law/policies and guidelines and traditional best practices in identifying strengths, and gaps.
2. To convene inclusive consultations sessions for the development of gatekeeping with different stakeholders
3. To draft a comprehensive national gatekeeping guideline for children in alternative care, outlining clear procedures and standards for assessment, decision-making, placement, monitoring, and evaluation.
4. To examine and validate outcomes from stakeholders' consultation sessions
5. To develop a plan for the implementation and monitoring of the gatekeeping guidelines.
6. To develop standard forms for the child placement processes to be used by the different stakeholders
7. To develop comprehensive service delivery referral pathway for children in alternative care

### **4. Scope of work**

The consultant will be responsible for the development and validation of the National Gatekeeping Guideline as well as incorporating all feedback from all relevant stakeholders. In this process, the Consultant should be guided by local and international policies, guidelines and legislation that regulates the placement of children in alternative care setting as well as child protection and safeguarding.

### **5. Key Deliverables**

At the end of the assignment, the consultant is expected of the following:

1. An inception report that included all aspects identified above including a detailed work plan with a detailed schedule of activities, methodology and tools to be applied.

- II. A rapid assessment of the current situation of gate keeping practices for children in alternative care in Somaliland to inform the development of the national gatekeeping guideline.
- III. A detailed consultation plan for different stakeholders (e.g., government officials, social workers, community members, children and young people, Residential care centers management, courts, care givers, child focused organizations).
- IV. A clear report/outline from stakeholder engagements
- V. Draft a comprehensive national gatekeeping guideline for children in alternative care, outlining clear procedures and standards for assessment, decision-making, placement, monitoring, and evaluation
- VI. Final gatekeeping guideline and its Implementation plan, Monitoring & Evaluation Plan, standard forms, referral pathways and Risk Management Plan as well as implementation roadmap.
- VII. Develop a detail implementation plan for the guideline

## 6. Methodology

The Consultant will engage stakeholders including Government, children and young people, residential care centers management, alternative care givers, district courts as well as child focused organizations and other relevant sector-professionals who provide services to children. These consultations will provide the basis for the following:

- i. **Desk Review:** Review relevant literature, legal frameworks, policies, guidelines, strategies, and standards which relates to Gatekeeping of children in alternative care, protection systems and review existing best practices, as well as generic case management processes in Somaliland and globally. The consultant is also expected to review tools regarding Child Admission, Reunification, Integration and After Care support and follow up.
- ii. **Data Collection:** Conduct consultations with key stakeholders, including government officials, child protection professionals, civil society organizations, community representatives, and children and young people, through focus group discussions, interviews, and other appropriate methods. Analyze the collected data to identify strengths, and gaps in current gatekeeping practices.
- iii. **Guideline Development:** Draft a national gatekeeping guideline for children in need of placement of suitable care, based on the findings of the desk review, data collection, and stakeholder consultations, the consultant should compile a national gatekeeping guideline for children in need of care placement. The guideline should:
  - Be clear, concise, and easy to understand for all stakeholders.
  - Align with relevant national and international legal frameworks, policies, and standards specifically UN guidelines on alternative care.
  - Outline clear procedures and standards for assessment, decision-making, placement, monitoring, evaluation and follow up of children in alternative care.
  - Be culturally sensitive and adaptable to the specific context of Somaliland.

- iv. **National level consultation and validation workshops:** Facilitate the national level consultation and validations meetings to prioritize and approve on key expected result areas for the new gatekeeping guideline.
- v. **Final Document:** Produce final gatekeeping guideline.

## 7. Timeline

Total length of the assignment is **70 working days** within the period of beginning of **1<sup>st</sup> –May-2024** till **10<sup>th</sup> -July- 2024**. The working schedule will be determined jointly by the Ministry of Employment Social affairs and Family and SOS Children’s Villages.

### Deliverables and delivery dates (based on the work plan)

Activity	No. of Days
<b>Inception report:</b> produce an inception report, which will include a work plan, the final selection of the regional consultation sites and sample characteristics, as well as the tools	5
<b>Desk review:</b> conduct a desk review of legal-policy documents, secondary literature, annual reports and other programme documents related to gatekeeping both at central and local level and produce review report.	6
<b>Primary data collection:</b> conduct primary research and regional consultation meetings. Primary research will be undertaken in coordination with MESAF	15
<b>Development of the National Gatekeeping Guideline</b>	11
<b>Costed National gatekeeping guideline action Plan including M&amp;E Plan</b>	7
<b>Risk Management Plan:</b> Prepare a detailed five-year risk management plan	5
<b>Development of standard forms and referral pathways</b>	5
<b>validation workshop at national level:</b> Organize validation workshop and consolidate brief report from the validation workshop	6
<b>Submission of the new developed guideline</b>	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>

## 8. Reporting line

The consultant will report directly to SOS Children’s Villages in Somaliland and Ministry of Employment Social and Family Affairs.

## 9. Required Qualification and Experience

### Education

- Advanced University Degree in Law, Social Science, Social Work, Public Policy or related areas. Or any other related technical field.

### Experience

- At least 5 years of experience working on child protection and alternative care issues, preferably in a developing country context.
- High level of practical understanding of current issues around vulnerable children and international development and the ability to conduct in-depth analysis of emerging trends and historic evidence-based research.
- Extensive experience in working with policy makers and government authorities in developing countries to strengthen their policy/regulatory, institutional framework and alternative care services for vulnerable children especially children without parental care.
- Knowledge of child protection, alternative care, CRC, the UN Guideline for the Alternative Care (2010), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the context of Somaliland.
- Experience working in Somaliland is an asset.
- First-hand knowledge of the socio-cultural, economic and political situation in Somaliland will be an added advantage.
- Willingness to work in difficult circumstances, including traveling to Somaliland regions
- Demonstrated ability to work independently

### Desirable

Extensive experience in developing guidelines or policies on children's care and protection issues, especially in Somaliland.

### Language Skills

- Excellent command of spoken and written English and Somali language.

### Skills and Competencies

- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Exceptional writing skills.
- Excellent organizational and multi-tasking skills.
- Conceptual and analytical skills with ability to produce high quality work.
- Ability to work under time constraints and deadlines in challenging settings.
- Ability to work in multicultural and multi ethnic environments.

- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to establish effective working relations with other stakeholders.
- Experience in convening and facilitating consultations.
- Ability to work independently.
- Ability to work in a team and good interpersonal skills.
- Must be committed to respecting deadlines of delivery outputs within the agreed timeframe;

#### **10. How to Apply:**

Interested individuals or companies are requested to submit the following:

- a. Cover letter highlighting expertise and experience in relation to this assignment, and summary of technical expertise,
- b. Technical proposal with methodology, and proposed schedule for deliverables
- c. CV of consultants who will be responsible for the task.
- d. Degree/diplomas of each consultant (will be verified by SOS Children Villages)
- e. Two sample documents previously produced by the consultants relevant to this task (soft copies - and it will be verified by SOS Children Villages. Any fraud will be grounds for disqualifications.)
- f. Detailed financial proposal which includes all anticipated costs.

#### **11. Evaluation Process**

Each proposal will be assessed first on its technical quality and compliance and subsequently on its cost/price. The proposal with the best overall value, composed of technical merit and price, will be considered for final approval. SOS Children's Villages in Somaliland has a procurement committee to lead the overall process, review and evaluate bids and decide based on the criteria listed.

#### **12. Evaluation Criteria:**

- Quality/merit of technical proposal (knowledge of subject matter, understanding of the requirement, effectiveness of the methodology and timeline)
- Qualification and experience of the consultants in the specific areas of requirement listed above.
- Quality and relevance of the sample documents submitted.
- Information provided by references to be contacted by SOS Children's Villages
- Other relevant criteria deemed essential by the evaluators to ensure the best value for cost.

#### **13. SOS Children's Villages in Somaliland has the right to:**

- Contact any or all references supplied by the bidder(s).
- Request additional supporting or supplementary information from the bidders.
- Arrange interviews with the bidders.



- Reject any or all or parts of proposals submitted.
- Accept any proposals in whole or in part.
- Negotiate cost, timeline and methodology with the winning bidders ranked from one to three.
- Contract any number of candidates as required to obtain best value for cost.

#### 14. Application submission address

- The full application and required documents listed above must be sent to [procurement@sos-somaliland.org](mailto:procurement@sos-somaliland.org).

#### 15. Deadline for application:

- Applications must be submitted ~~24-04-~~ **2024-** 14:00 Hrs. EAT time.
- Submissions after the deadline will not be considered.

SOS Childrens Villages is an equal employer. Qualified and competent candidates are encouraged to apply. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

SOS Children's Villages is committed to safeguarding the rights of children, young people and communities. Therefore, it is expected that any partner, service provider or third party who works with the organization fully understands the responsibility of protecting and safeguarding young people.

**Note:** The title of the consultancy and location should be clearly indicated on the subject of the application email.