

**Terms of Reference: Children's Media Partner for 'Story Time and Play:
Children's Media Project'**

1. Description of Services:

Plan International Australia (PIA) is seeking a children's educational media specialist/s as Contractor to partner on the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) funded project, *Story Time and Play: Children's Media Project*. The successful Contractor will work with country partners in Samoa and Niue, to provide a highly localized children's media experience, with radio content developed in-country by local children's media partners, to produce cost effective, locally driven content, which takes into consideration the emerging needs of the early learning sector within each country and will tailor messages and approach accordingly. The Contractor which PIA is seeking, will ideally need to have local connections to media specialists in Niue and Samoa, but needn't be based in these countries. If the Contractor does not have these local connections then PIA can assist the Contractor with introductions to relevant government ministries in country, to facilitate these connections.

2. Background:

Story Time and Play: Children's Media Project, is a unique pilot delivering an integrated media and community-led early childhood education programme in three countries in the Pacific (Solomon Islands, Samoa and Niue). In November 2018, PIA undertook a scoping study of children's media in the Solomon Islands to explore the opportunities and demand for early childhood educational media and traditional storytelling for children. Findings from this study recognised that quality children's media provides a valuable platform to promote literacy and numeracy, lifelong connections to culture, language and identity. The critical findings and needs identified from the study that influenced this project are:

- Storytelling and storytellers, underpinned by oral traditions, are of paramount importance in Pacific cultures;
- High demand for children's content in the region;
- Active play-based learning approaches recognised as a key to early learning success
- An effective medium for parents to engage with their children and support their learning;
- Using a multimedia approach including low-fi solutions for distribution may be needed;
- Partnership led approach for sustainability including community engagement and activation.

This pilot leverages the evidence that demonstrates the benefits of early childhood education media on a range of outcomes. Children's media promotes the value of learning through play. It engages both children and caregivers, which in turn supports caregivers to play with their children. It develops the foundations for learning (social wellbeing, literacy, numeracy for example), and builds an interest and enthusiasm for learning (sparking curiosity and questioning for example), in preparation for school.

This pilot will develop an integrated media and community-led early childhood education program, with children's radio and Play Hubs, community-managed playgroups focused on learning through

play that will provide an opportunity for parents and caregivers to put into practice the learning through play content delivered through radio. It will target pre-school and early grade school children (aged 4-7 years old), and their caregivers.

The *Story Time and Play: Children's Media Project* was approved and contracted with NZ MFAT and Trade in May 2021 and is led by PIA. This Terms of Reference is seeking a children's media specialist to partner with this work in **Samoa and Niue**, producing a localized audio/radio series to provide country specific children's media/messaging in local language. The audio content will be developed in-country with a specific focus on the production of cost effective, locally driven informative and entertaining children's content. As mention in the Description of Services, the Contractor which PIA is seeking, will ideally need to have local connections to media specialists in Niue and Samoa, but needn't be based in these countries. If the Contractor does not have these local connections then PIA can assist the Contractor with introductions to relevant government ministries in country, to facilitate these connections.

Each countries localised radio series will be complemented by PIA Play Hubs. Play Hubs are in essence parenting groups focused on playful learning, providing a chance for mother's, father's and other caregivers to put into practice some of the learning approaches role modelled within the *Story Time and Play: Children's Media* content. Complementing the *Story Time and Play: Children's Media* intervention with physical spaces for parents to translate learning into every day action will be a key element of creating sustained behaviour change at the household level.

All programs will have a focus on equity, gender equality and social inclusion, adopting a culturally sensitive approach and promoting the concept of 'unity in diversity'.

3. Rationale for Contractor:

The Contractor is required to partner on the *Story Time and Play: Children's Media Project* in Samoa and Niue, developing audio/radio episodes, and some associated visual content (for example social media, CDs/DVDs of radio episodes, and supporting booklets). The Contractor is expected to work as a close mentor with country partners, delivering quality capacity building activities through the pre-production, production, and post-production phase of the project.

The Contractor, together with PIA, is expected to respect and adhere to the foundational principles of this work of:

1. Local content created by local people
2. Content produced in local language
3. 'Good enough' production quality¹

Specifically, the successful Contractor is expected to:

- 1) Work with a number of in-country partners in Samoa and Niue to produce a children's educational radio series of between 13-15 episodes of 20-30min duration each, in local

¹ Where we refer to 'good enough' production quality we define this as being any audio is clearly intelligible and of a consistent volume, and any video is well lit, in focus and uses the appropriate short for the purpose.

language (or as locally advised). As stated earlier, the Contractor, will ideally need to have local connections to media specialists in Niue and Samoa, but needn't be based in these countries. If the Contractor does not have these local connections then PIA can assist the Contractor with introductions to relevant government ministries in country, to facilitate these connections.

- 2) Produce social media promotion posts to support the program. Other media products may also be produced such as episode summary cards and CDs/podcast of the series, recognising that the final outputs will be defined by country partners to ensure it is locally-led and owned, informed and relevant to local contexts.
- 3) Producing the children's radio series will compose of three stages, pre-production, production and post production. This will include understanding country specific needs and advice to ensure a locally-led approach is developed and agreed to. A co-design approach will also ensure that the series broadly links back to the national early childhood education frameworks of each country, ensure the purpose of the series is realised to support developing the dispositions and enthusiasm for learning, and that the series structure enables a close relationship with families to support learning through play.
- 4) The Contractor needs to collaborate with PIA and our partners in-country on the work of Play Hubs. Play Hubs are a crucial complement to the media work, providing a tangible way for children, parents and caregivers and community members to translate radio programming content into practical day to day activities and interactions. The Contractor will work with PIA to ensure a mirroring of the key messages between the radio programming content, and the Play Hub activities, to ensure the Play Hubs complement and extend the learning and effectiveness of the radio outputs.

The preferred approach for the three stages will be development of a common script format by the Contractor, informed by country specific partners. Partners in Samoa and Niue can then build on and localise the script narrative with stories, songs and languages. In Samoa and Niue the series will be in local language.

Once the scripts are finalised, each episode will be locally produced and recorded with mentoring from the Contractor and support from early childhood education specialists, including those from PIA. The first episode will undergo pre-testing with small listener groups made up of the target audience. Their feedback will then be incorporated into the future episodes.

Key post-production steps will include editing and sound engineering. This will be done locally with mentoring support. Once the series is completed, support materials may be produced if there is local demand, such as episode summaries, CDs and social media promotion posts. International and in-country education advisors will be consulted at numerous points throughout the process. The capacity of in-country partners will be assessed so knowledge and skills can be built throughout the process, as part of the ongoing mentoring process.

4. Key Activities and Deliverables:

Implementation work detailed in this ToR is to be undertaken by the Contractor between 1st September 2021 until 31st August 2022. The Contractor is then expected to contribute input to the scalability recommendations report and associated scalability recommendations workshop, due in September 2022.

Key activities are listed below:

Description	Approximate Timelines
Work with partners and define responsibilities/roles, establish listener group, consult stakeholders. While the ideal Contractor will have local media connections, if the Contractor does not have these local connections then PIA can assist the Contractor with introductions to relevant government ministries in country, to facilitate these connections.	September – October 2021
Consultation and co-design process (mix of remote and face to face discussions and workshop)	September – October 2021
Intellectual copyrights to be discussed as part of the content co-design process, recognising the importance of local ownership and copyright of stories, songs and play	September 2021
Pre-production phase, format creation and scripting	October – December 2021
Localise scripts (stories, songs, language)	November – December 2021
Production phase of series (to be confirmed but expected 13-15 episodes x 20-30min)	November 2021 – January 2022
Test first episode with listener groups, incorporate feedback	November – December 2021
Post-production phase, editing, sound mixing	November 2021 – February 2022
Social media posts produced, broadcast schedules and broadcast	January – May 2022
Supported outputs for community engagement, social media/CDs/podcasts/episode summaries, in partnership with PIA	January – May 2022

5. Location:

Due to COVID-19 restrictions this work will be likely to be completed from the Contractors home-base, but with intense mentoring support with partners in Samoa and Niue. There may be a face to face meeting held at PIA's office in Melbourne, Australia, dependent on COVID-19 restrictions.

6. Budget and Payment:

The budget available to the successful Contractor for completing this work is AUD \$410,000. The payment is in instalments and subject to the successful delivery of outputs and approval by PIA.

- First payment: August 2021
- Second payment: July 2022
- Final payment: March 2022

7. How to apply:

Interested applicants are requested to apply by submitting the written and financial proposals electronically to Tracy Shields at tracy.shields@plan.org.au with “**Story Time and Play: Children’s Media Project – ToR RESPONSE**” as subject heading. **Proposals are due by close of business Australian Eastern Standard Time on Friday 10th July 2021.**

Proposal submitted to any other email account except this and in hard copy will be treated as disqualified. Submissions after the deadline on Friday 10th July, 2021 will be treated as disqualified. Only those who meet the requirements will be contacted.

Proposals must include:

- A cover letter outlining how the Contractor understands and meets the Rationale for Contractor, including relevant previous experience.
- Samples of previous children’s media work.
- CVs of the consultant(s) who will carry out the work.
- At least one reference from previous clients.
- A proposed budget/quote (This budget/quote is expected to be within the AUD \$410,000 maximum available).

If you are a Pacific-based organisation, where English is not your first language but you have direct and relevant experience which meets the requirements of this ToR, please reach out to Tracy Shields (tracy.shields@plan.org.au) in order to discuss proposal requirements and the potential to submit in a language other than English. We would be happy to consider this in order to receive a broad array of responses.

8. Child Safeguarding:

As an international child centred community development organisation, Plan International Australia is committed to protecting children from harm and ensuring children’s right to protection under Article 19 of the UNCRC is fully realised. We take seriously our responsibility to promote child safe practices and protect children from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation in any form. Ethical and child protection issues therefore need to be taken into consideration by the Contractor(s) when carrying out the activity. The proposal should clearly and in detail explain how appropriate, safe, non-discriminatory participation of all stakeholders will be ensured and how special attention will be paid to the needs of children and other vulnerable groups. Also, the Contractor(s) should explain in the proposal how confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be guaranteed. A child protection risk assessment, primary caregiver assent and informed consent of minors prior to data collection is obligatory.



9. Plan contact details:

Tracy Shields
Senior Program Manager, ECD and Education
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