

TERMS OF REFERENCE

**CONSULTANCY SERVICE FOR CONDUCTING
THE BASELINE STUDY ON GENDER-BIASED SEX SELECTION (GBSS) IN BAC GIANG AND
BA RIA-VUNG TAU PROVINCES**

1. BACKGROUND

Gender-biased sex selection (GBSS) in favor of sons is a manifestation of gender inequality and son preference and the undervaluing of girls. It is a symptom of pervasive cultural, social, political and economic discrimination against girls and women, leading to skewed sex ratio at birth (SRB). Sex ratio at birth is a statistical indicator computed as the number of boys born alive per 100 girls born alive. A normal SRB ratio lies between 102-106 boys for every 100 girls and remains quite stable over time. In Viet Nam, the SRB was at natural level before 2004, then has increased rapidly and was 110.6 boys per 100 girls in 2009, reached 112.2 in 2014 and was 111.5 in 2019. The SRB varies between socio-economics regions and population groups and is highest in the Red River Delta region (115.3) and lowest in the Mekong River Delta (106.9). However, evidence from the 2019 Census showed GBSS has been diffusing in most of socio-economic regions in Viet Nam¹. Nevertheless, unlike in most other countries, the SRB in Viet Nam is already skewed in the first births and kept rising in 2nd and 3rd births if the previous children were daughters².

International literature reviews and research in Viet Nam have confirmed GBSS is driven by three key factors:

- *Son preference makes it desirable:* In the countries where societal patterns are strongly patriarchal and mostly patrilocal, son is considered a major source of security for ageing parents; preservation of the family or the clan, etc.
- *Smaller family norm and fertility decline makes it necessary:* In some countries where fertility declines rapidly while patriarchal socio-cultural norms and structures still exist, families who intend to have only a limited number of children are therefore more likely to resort to GBSS to assure that they have at least one son.
- *New technologies makes it possible:* Sex selection can take place before a pregnancy, for instance, through sperm sorting, during pregnancy through prenatal sex detection and selective abortion, or following birth through infanticide or child neglect.³

If not addressed, GBSS will have a lasting impact on population dynamics with significant socio-economic consequences. The skewed SRB will lead to changes in the population sex structure with lack of women in the future as well as put women at more risk of violence and sexual exploitation. Projections also show that men will vastly outnumber women of marriageable age for over two generations resulting in a so-called “marriage squeeze”. This “marriage squeeze” is likely to have a range of problematic demographic and social consequences, including force marriages, trafficking and all forms of violence against women and girls.

¹ GSO (2019) The results of the 2019 Population and Housing Census

² GSO and UNFPA (2016) Sex Imbalances at Birth in Viet Nam 2015: Recent trends, factors and variations

³ WHO (2011). Preventing gender-biased sex selection: an interagency statement OHCHR, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and WHO.

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In Viet Nam, the imbalance of SRB was acknowledged by the Government in recent years. Addressing GBSS has been mentioned in related laws and legal documents. Since 2003, GBSS has been outlawed in the Population Ordinance. In 2006, the government also raised the issue in the Law on Gender Equality and since 2009, the Government started with interventions to eliminate GBSS in provinces with high SRB. Recently the Government approved the National Scheme on SRB prevention and control in period 2016-2025 including a number of interventions and communications at national and sub-national levels. However, the SRB is still at a high level and needs great investment and efforts to revert back to natural level in the future.

Since 2006 UNFPA has provided evidence on skewed SRB in Viet Nam through data analysis of annual population change surveys and health administrative data. The UNFPA has been playing an active role in supporting Viet Nam to address GBSS through UNFPA supported projects to key line relevant ministries, agencies and selected provinces in addressing GBSS at both national and subnational level since 2012. Based on the promising success of these interventions, the new programme “Addressing Gender Biased Sex Selection and Related Harmful Practices in Asia” period 2020-2022 will be implemented in three countries: Viet Nam, Bangladesh and Nepal. It was launched by the UNFPA in partnership with the Government of Norway. In Viet Nam, this programme will be co-implemented by UNFPA and the Government (Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), the General Office for Population and Family Planning (GOPFP) under the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Viet Nam Farmers’ Union, and the Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender, Family, Women and Adolescents (CSAGA).

This new program aims to support the ongoing Government’s efforts to fully implement approved legal and policy frameworks to end GBSS and includes campaigns through innovative approaches to change social norms and practices which reinforce son preference and the low value of girls, strengthening collaboration mechanism and capacities of the media, integration of GBSS issues in the fatherhood programme and other models implemented by Viet Nam Famer’s Union in Bac Giang and Ba Ria - Vung Tau provinces.

Within the framework of the new GBSS program, UNFPA will conduct the baseline study in two intervention provinces to recommend detailed interventions and to set up a baseline data for monitoring and evaluation of intervention by the end of this project. Therefore, the UNFPA CO is seeking one consultancy institution to design and conduct a baseline study during August 2020 – February 2021.

2. PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

The overall objective: To design and conduct a baseline study on GBSS in Bac Giang and Ba Ria - Vung Tau provinces using mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative). The aim is to use the study data and results to inform/recommend detailed interventions as well as to set up baseline data for measuring/evaluating the project’s relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the intervention model on GBSS by the end of 2022.

The specific objectives are to:

- a) Explore knowledge/understanding of local authorities, mass organizations, media, service providers, community leaders and religious leaders on:
 - Policies and policy implementation, and other interventions (at local levels) to address GBSS;

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- Roles, functions, responsibilities, interventions including communication and services of local agencies, particularly their coordination mechanism in addressing GBSS;
 - Local contexts, including socio-cultural norms, relating to GBSS, including son preference, the social status of women in relation to men in family, community and at work from the lens of gender equality, etc.
 - Identify the hinder and support factors toward gender equality in different local contexts.
- b) Measure knowledge, attitude and behavior (KAP) of community women and men, married and unmarried, and their family's members on:
- Current policies/local interventions to address GBSS;
 - Social norms on roles and status of men/sons and women/daughters in family (including the division of labor in child care and older person care among the family's members, etc.), community and at work, including but not limited to pressures for male heirs to carry on family name, worship, social relationship in extended families and communities, property inheritance among sons and daughters;
 - The differences in upbringing of sons and daughters (food allocation, education, health care, etc.);
 - Gender equality and equity, and son preference;
 - Prenatal sex determination and selection, methods of prenatal sex selection, consequences of GBSS;
 - The participation of men (young father) in prevention and addressing GBSS.
- c) Recommend interventions on addressing GBSS and effectiveness indicators for these interventions in reference with the national M&E indicators.

3. FINAL PRODUCTS

The institution is required to provide the following deliverables:

- A study proposal that addresses all requirements of this TOR with budget estimation, in English.
- A detailed work plan for the assignment submitted within 1 week of signing the contract both in Vietnamese and English;
- Study tools using mixed-methods including questionnaires, interview schedule/guidelines, sampling frame in Vietnamese and English, and survey manuals in Vietnamese.
- Study pre-test report and revised tools after pilot testing both in Vietnamese and English;
- Delivery of training for data collection using CAPI, including the study methodologies, questionnaires, interview schedule/guidelines, monitoring and supervision for data collection;
- Clean data set (raw data) and transcripts of interviews ready for analysis (the study team will submit the collected data in an Excel spreadsheet for storage and potential other usages by the UNFPA);
- Progress reports on implementation of this study for each stage in English;
- A baseline report outline, baseline reports (drafts and final) in Vietnamese and English;
- Presentations of reports and key findings to the UNFPA consultative workshops to obtain feedback, and dissemination workshop.

4. INTENDED USES AND USERS

4.1 *Intended uses:*

- To set up baseline data for monitoring and evaluating intervention including the social norm changes regarding GBSS for the period of 2020-2022.
- To provide further recommendations for designing GBSS intervention in Bac Giang and Ba Ria - Vung Tau provinces.

4.2 *Intended users:*

- *Primary users:* MOLISA, MOH (GOPFP), FU, CSAGA, and UNFPA; Bac Giang and Ba Ria - Vung Tau provinces.
- *Secondary users:* Programmers, policy-makers, professionals, researchers, managers and others who are concerned about the situation of GBSS would also find information and evidence useful in their specific work.

5. SCOPE AND FOCUS

5.1 *Scope and focus:*

The baseline study should cover all specific objectives and focus to gain data on socio norms relating to GBSS and implementation of GBSS related policies and intervention including communication mobilization to address GBSS:

- a) Explore knowledge/understanding of local authorities, mass organizations, media, service providers, community leaders and religious leaders on:
 - Policies and policy implementation, and other interventions (at local levels) to address GBSS;
 - Roles, functions, responsibilities, interventions including communication and services of local institutions, particularly their coordination mechanism in addressing GBSS;
 - Local contexts, including socio-cultural norms, relating to GBSS, including son preference, the social status of women in relation to men in family, community and at work from the lens of gender equality, etc.
- b) KAP of community women and men both married and unmarried, their families' members on:
 - Family structure (cohabitation, extended family, living arrangement, etc.);
 - Cultural and religious factors (worship, clan organizations etc.);
 - Demographic factors (children already born);
 - Normative aspects (masculinity, status of sonless parents, etc.);
 - Economic constrains and opportunities (farm work, support, etc.);
 - GBSS related policies;
 - Social norm relating to roles of men and women in the families (including the division of labor in child and older person care among the family's members). Pressure for male heirs to carry on family name, worship, social relationship in extended families and communities. Pressure of female to have sons for husband families.
 - The differences in the roles and status of sons and daughters in the families; community, and at work. Support from extended families in valuing daughters/sons;
 - Property inheritance among sons and daughters;
 - The differences in upbringing of sons and daughters (food allocation, education, health care, etc.);
 - Prenatal sex determination and selection, methods of prenatal sex selection, and consequences

of GBSS;

- The participation of men (young father) in prevention and addressing GBSS.

Sex ratio at birth of intervention and non-intervention provinces will not be collected in the baseline study. It will be analyzed from available reports of UNFPA and GSO or from administrative data of GOPFP.

5.2. Geography:

- The intervention areas: Bac Giang and Ba Ria - Vung Tau provinces
- The control areas: Technical proposal on baseline study should suggest two control provinces near the two suggested intervention provinces and outline the reasons for selecting control provinces (having similar demographic, social economic characteristics, and SRB with intervention provinces)

5.3. Time:

The assignment will start in August 2020. Preliminary study results should be made available by the second week of November 2020. It is anticipated that the baseline study including the final reports will be completed in February 2021. Therefore, the institution will be required to provide intermittent inputs and revisions based on comments by UNFPA and Government Partners (MOLISA, GOPFP, CSAGA, FU, Bac Giang and Ba Ria - Vung Tau provinces) during this period. The work will be carried out in Ha Noi with travels to Bac Giang and Ba Ria - Vung Tau provinces and control provinces to field test the tools, collect data and monitor implementation of the study.

6. PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

6.1. Approach

- The base line study will utilize mixed-methods and draw on quantitative and qualitative data. These complementary approaches will be deployed to provide credible information about the extent of results, and ensure the study responds to the needs of users and their intended use of the study results;
- The baseline study will be designed to cover intervention area and relevant non-intervention area (control) to allow for relevant comparisons and impact evaluation of the interventions;
- Gender and human rights principles will be included throughout the study process. The study will follow the guidance on the integration of gender equality and human rights principles in the evaluation focus and process as established in the UNEG Handbook, Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation - Towards UNEG Guidance. The evaluation will follow UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN system and abide by UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct and any other relevant ethical codes (see Annex C);
- Data will be disaggregated by relevant criteria (wherever possible): age, gender, marginalized and vulnerable groups, etc.;
- All study subjects should participate on a voluntary basis after giving informed consent. Information from the interviews will be analyzed and disseminated ensuring confidentiality and the protection of individual identity.

6.2. Methodology:

A detailed methodology has to be included in the technical proposal, including the study approach and sampling design for quantitative survey and sampling for qualitative interviews

Below are suggestions for the methodology used for the baseline study:

Data collection: the baseline study will use a multiple-method approach including literature review/document review, existing data analysis, survey at individual and household levels, group and individual interviews, focus group discussions and in-depth interview, case studies. The study team need to combine these methods in a way that uses the comparative strengths of one approach to correct for the relative weaknesses of the others. It is encouraged to apply electronic devices (smart phones/tablets) in data collection, especially quantitative data collection to ensure quality and transparency of data collected. It is encouraged to propose any software/technology to use for data collection and analysis. A quality control plan during field work also should be mentioned.

All study subjects should participate on a voluntary basis. Information from the interviews will be analyzed and disseminated ensuring confidentiality and the protection of individual identity.

A risk management plan including prevention and safety plan in the field in case of transmission of Covid 19 or disasters should be proposed in the technical proposal.

Data analysis: technical proposal should provide details on the tools will be used for quantitative and qualitative data analysis, and contents of analysis. The focus of the data analysis process in the baseline study is the identification of evidence. The study team will use a variety of methods to ensure that the results of the data analysis are credible and evidence-based. Triangulation techniques should be systematically applied throughout the study process which means the researchers must double or triple check the results of the data analysis by way of comparing the information obtained via each data collection method and through different data sources (e.g. compare results obtained through interviews with government staff with those obtained from beneficiaries or from statistical data).

The baseline study will use a variety of validation mechanisms to ensure the quality of data and information used for analysis including internal team-based reviews, regular exchanges with the UNFPA Programme Office on Population and Development and the reference group, and focus groups with a relevant audience.

The study team will identify limitations to the study and ways to mitigate them.

7. ACCOUNTABILITIES

7.1 *The selected consultancy institution will:*

- be technically and contractually accountable to UNFPA Country Office for all aspects of the assignment;
- deliver the tasks of this TOR in close consultation and collaboration with the UNFPA Population and Development specialist and Gender Team Leader at all times;
- brief UNFPA and its related Government partners (if needed) on the progress of the baseline study after each milestone set in the timeframe;
- consult UNFPA to address the problems, in case any difficulty happens during the consultancy assignment;
- work with local agencies in control provinces to conduct the baseline in these provinces;

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- be responsible for the quality of the report, expected results and deliverables;
- be responsible for the data security (e.g. safe storage of sensitive personal data, anonymization of personal data) and for providing full access to the raw data sets (quantitative and qualitative data) to allow for proper replication and analysis in the endline survey.

7.2 UNFPA Country Office (CO) will:

- develop a contract for signature between UNFPA and the selected consultancy institution;
- provide necessary background documents relating to the GBSS program in Viet Nam and other GBSS related documents (research reports, policy brief, factsheet, etc.);
- provide necessary logistic arrangements to facilitate the selected institution in completing its assignment, as mentioned in the TOR;
- monitor the progress and quality of the consultancy assignment: Under overall guidance of the UNFPA Assistant Representative, Programme Officer on Population and Development and Gender Team Leader will supervise and monitor the progress and quality of the consultancy assignment;
- provide comments on the study products including detail workplan, tools, outline and draft reports of the consultancy assignment before they are finalized;
- arrange workshops to provide feedback on the study findings.

7.3 Project Management Board of MOLISA and its Co-Implementing Partner (VFU) will:

- Provide necessary arrangement support (if needed) for the contractor to conduct fieldwork at study sites in Bac Giang and Ba Ria-Vung Tau provinces;
- Provide support and monitoring during the fieldwork at study sites (if needed);
- Support in providing relevant documents;
- Provide comments and feedback on the drafts of baseline reports and other study products.

8. PROPOSED WORK PLAN

The institution will conduct the study and deliver relevant products in close consultation with UNFPA and its Government partners as per the following timeframe:

	Task	Deadline
1	Sign the contract	First week of August
2	Prepare and finalize a detailed work plan for the assignment, including desk review of related documents (in English and Vietnamese)	Second week of August 2020
3	Develop and revise (based on UNFPA, MOLISA, CSAGA, and GOPFP comments) survey tools including questionnaires for quantitative survey, interview guidelines (in English and Vietnamese), survey manuals, and training materials (in Vietnamese)	<u>First draft of study's tools:</u> Second week of August <u>Final study tools:</u> First week of September 2020
4	Pre-test of questionnaires	Second week of September 2020
5	Finalize questionnaires (in Vietnamese and English), and prepare survey manuals, training materials and conduct training (in Vietnamese)	Third week of September 2020
6	Fieldtrips in Bac Giang, Ba Ria – Vung Tau and two control	First week of October 2020

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	provinces	
7	Data checking and cleaning, and interview transcribing	Third week of October 2020
8	Outline of the report; data analysis and preliminary results (in English and Vietnamese)	Second week of November 2020
9	Presentation of preliminary results to UNFPA and relevant stakeholders, and revision based on comments (in English and Vietnamese)	Third week of November 2020
10	Writing draft report and sharing with UNFPA and Government partners (in English and Vietnamese)	Third week of December 2020
11	Finalization of baseline report based on comments from UNFPA and Government Partners (in English and Vietnamese)	End of February 2021

Note: During the development of the baseline report, second or third drafts of the may be required based on the quality of the draft report.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The following documents will be provided to the selected institution or the study team:

- The background information on new GBSS program;
- Country profile, factsheet, and related research reports on GBSS, and other relevant documents and materials; list of national and global indicators to monitor and evaluate GBSS.

10. EXPERTISE AND QUALITIFICAITON REQUIREMENTS

UNFPA is looking for a research institution to delivery this assignment. The institution should clearly indicate the activities and deliverables each consultant of their team will be responsible for, and a team leader should be nominated.

10.1 Requirements for the institution:

- An established firm with at least 7 years of practical experience in providing consultancy services in relevant areas in Viet Nam;
- Proven experience in designing and implementation of quantitative and qualitative studies/surveys on gender and development, and social science;
- Organizational capability (having clear governing bodies including organisation chart – staff size for undertaking the consultancy work), coordination and financial management (having appropriate project management capacity including financial management system);
- Experience working with multi-, bilateral programmes/projects, UN agencies, particularly UNFPA and/or other development partners.

10.2. Requirements for key consultants (One team leader and not more than 3 senior consultants, at least one member of the team has strong background and working experiences in designing and conducting research/survey/evaluation of gender issues):

✓ Team leader:

- Advanced PhD degree in demography, statistics or social sciences;
- At least 8 years of working experience in designing and conducting research/survey/ evaluation of the relevant field;

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- Experiences in management and leading quantitative study/survey;
- Understanding cultural, economic and political context related to gender, GBSS and SRB of Viet Nam;
- Very good training, facilitation and presentation skills;
- Excellent English writing skills;
- Excellent IT skills especially with the application of statistical software such as SPSS, STATA.

✓ **Team members:**

- At least master degree, preferably in the field of gender and development and/or social sciences; in depth studies of research methods are an advantage;
- At least 5-years of working experience in quantitative and qualitative analysis methodology on gender, and GBSS;
- Understanding cultural, economic and political context related to gender and GBSS of Viet Nam;
- Experiences in training, coordination and management of data collection at the field;
- Good IT skills especially with the application of statistical software such as SPSS, STATA, and qualitative data analysis software.

11. REVIEW TIME REQUIRED AND PAYMENT TERM

A contract for professional services will be signed between UNFPA Viet Nam and the selected institution.

- Payment will be made in three installments as follows:
 - **The first installment:** Maximum of 25% of the contract value will be transferred to the contractor upon receipt of the final version of study tools including questionnaires, guidelines for interviews, survey and training materials;
 - **The second installment:** Maximum of 25% of the contract value will be transferred to the contractor after completion of the field work;
 - **The third installment:** The remaining of 50% of the contract value will be disbursed after all final products are delivered by the contractor and accepted by UNFPA.
- Payments will be reduced by 10% if the submission of the report of expected outputs is delayed more than 20 days;

If the draft report or products does not meet the quality requirements and needs a major revision, the contract will be terminated and consultancy firm will only receive 50% of the total remuneration.

12. ESTIMATED BUDGET:

The budget range for the overall cost of this baseline study is USD 42,000 – USD 45,000. The costs of the baseline study include all costs as defined in this Terms of Reference.

ANNEXES**ANNEX A. Information of two pilot provinces****1. Demographic and economic information of Bac Giang and Ba Ria -Vung Tau provinces**

	Bac Giang	Ba Ria - Vung Tau
1. Location	<p>Bac Giang province in northeastern Vietnam is situated at the crossroads of major trade routes. This province is in the heartland of SRB imbalances, in the Red River Delta</p> <p>Bac Giang is located adjacent to the key economic triangle Hanoi – Hai Phong – Quang Ninh, 110 km from the Huu Nghi Border Gate with China, 100 km from Hai Phong seaport, and 40 km from Noi Bai international airport. With its growing gross regional domestic product (GRDP), income per capita, trade, and favorable location, the province has started to emerge as an investment destination</p>	<p>Ba Ria - Vung Tau located in the southern key economic zone, is one of the major economies and investment destinations in Vietnam. The region contributes close to eight percent to the national GDP and over 10 percent to the government's revenues. The rapid economic growth in the last decade has led the province to have one of the highest GDP per capita and living standard in Vietnam.</p>
2. Demographic data		
• Population (person)	1 803 950	1 148 313
• Urban population (%)	11.4	58.4
• TFR	2.3	1.87
• SRB in 2019 (male births/female births)	126.3	121.1
• SRB (2009-2014)	112	114.5
• IMR (infant deaths/1000 live births)	14.5	7.7
• U5M	21.8	11.6
• Life expectancy at birth	73.4	76.4
• Net migration rate(nets migrants per 1000)	-15.4	9.2
• Aging index	45.4	42.9
• Proportion of trained labour force	19.0	28.4

<p>2. Economic information (source: https://www.vietnam-briefing.com/news/bac-giang-emerging-investment-destination.html/)</p>	<p>In 2017, the region's gross regional domestic product (GRDP) growth rate reached the highest ever at 13.3 percent, to 69 trillion VND (US\$ 3 billion). The average GRDP per person also increased in 2017 by US\$174 to US\$1,850.</p> <p><i>Economic structure:</i> In 2017, the industry-construction sector accounted for the majority of the economy at 46.1% percent, while the services sector accounted for 33.3% and the agriculture, forestry and fishery sector accounted for 20.6%.</p> <p><i>Trade:</i> In 2017, the exports revenue was estimated at US\$ 6.2 billion, an increase of 70.8 percent, while import value reached US\$ 6 billion, an increase of 58.1 percent, compared to 2016.</p>	<p>In 2018, the GDP grew by 7.2 percent (excluding oil and gas), the fastest in eight years.</p> <p><i>Economic structure:</i> The industry and construction sector accounted for 57.43 percent of the total economy, followed by the services (24.2) and agriculture, forestry, and fishery (3.08%) sectors. In addition to the aforementioned sectors, BRVT is also a major oil and gas production hub due to its huge reserves. The province accounts for around 93 percent of the country's oil reserve and 16 percent of natural gas reserves. This has led to large-scale investments in industries such as petrochemicals, oil exploration, machinery, power generation, LPG, fertilizer, steel, logistics, and construction materials.</p> <p><i>Trade:</i> Excluding oil and gas, export turnover grew by 13.32 percent in 2018 to US\$4.4 billion, while import turnover increased by 11.97 percent to US\$6.2 billion.</p>
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2. Information of pilot intervention areas

1. Pilot intervention sites	Bac Giang	Ba Ria - Vung Tau
- District	2	2
- Commune/ward in each district	2 or 3	2 or 3
- Fatherhood models	5 models in 5 communes	5 models in 5 communes
3. Reason for select province		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High SRB - High commitment from provincial authorities including father union - Fatherhood program will be piloted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High SRB - High commitment from provincial authorities including father union - Fatherhood program will be piloted
4. Proposed intervention in 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrate GBSS in 5 fatherhood models in two districts - Communication activities (advocacy workshops, gameshow, community dialogues) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrate GBSS in 5 fatherhood models in two districts - Communication activities (advocacy workshops, gameshow, community dialogues)

ANNEX B:

1. Summary of New Global Program: Addressing Gender Biased Sex Selection and related harmful practices in Asia (Period: 2021-2022)

This initiative aims to build on and strengthen evidence-based national policies and programmes to address son preference, low value of girls and gender inequalities resulting in gender-biased sex selection (GBSS) in identified countries of prevalence in Asia in line with SDG 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of women, in particular SDG Target 5.3 on eliminating all forms of harmful practices.

GBSS is a discriminatory practice that is a result of a complex web of factors: deep-seated patriarchal attitudes and beliefs that lead families to value sons over daughters, declining fertility and the desire for small families, and commercialization and misuse of medical technology that enables sex selection. Sex ratio imbalances are expected to have a lasting impact on population dynamics in the affected countries with significant socio-economic consequences, resulting in a ‘marriage squeeze’ and further reinforcing the subordination of girls and women. The issue therefore requires a multi-faceted response.

This new program will be implemented for a 3-year duration from 2020 – December 2022 - and is designed to build on work currently underway to address son preference and gender-biased sex selection, and strengthen the evidence based design and implementation of new country-level initiatives in the region. It will do so by facilitating evidence-based interventions at country level, as well as south-south exchange and collaboration among countries that have long experience in grappling with the problem and those that are now beginning to address its causes and consequences.

The focus countries include Bangladesh, Nepal and Viet Nam: in Viet Nam and Nepal, targeted interventions will be designed to address the causes and consequences of son preference, while Bangladesh will undertake research and data analysis for advocacy and to monitor the changing sex ratio at birth. India and China will be included as technical and capacity development providers, through the south-south collaboration modality. UNFPA HQ (Technical Division will provide overall thought leadership, coordination, and monitoring of the initiative, while UNFPA APRO will facilitate technical assistance, cross-border research and south-south collaboration.

The focus countries have already designed and/or implemented, and in some cases evaluated, various interventions. Therefore, the kind of response, technical expertise and support required by each country is different and must be tailored to its specific socio-economic, political and cultural context. Each country, in turn, can act as both a provider and a recipient of technical assistance and south-south cooperation.

UNFPA seeks to achieve the following results:

1. Knowledge base on sex ratio imbalance expanded through demographic, socio-cultural, operational and policy research and media advocacy at sub-national, national, cross border and regional levels
2. In-country capacities enhanced to recognize and address causes and consequences of GBSS and respond to underlying drivers
3. Evidence-based policies and strategies to enhance the value of girls and to improve the sex ratio strengthened
4. Data-informed advocacy and communications undertaken to address son preference and promote the value of girls

5. Evidence base for intervention design and programming improved through impact evaluation and assessments

Gender-biased sex selection (GBSS) is measured using the **sex ratio at birth**.

Sex Ratio at Birth is a statistical indicator computed as the number of boys born alive per 100 girls born alive. A normal SRB ratio lies between 102-106 boys for every 100 girls and remains quite stable over time.

When more boys are born than girls, i.e. above the normal ratio of 106, it's a sign of sex selection. Ratios of up to 130 boys per girls have been observed in some countries.

Sex ratios are based, wherever possible on national vital statistics. However, since demographic data are incomplete in many parts of the world and vital statistics are either unavailable or unreliable, other sources such as the Census are used as alternative sources of data. In countries like India, where the Census does not readily provide SRB, the child sex ratio (the number of females per thousand males in the age group 0–6 years) is used to understand the extent of gender-based discrimination. It enables capturing both pre-and post-birth discrimination.

The initiative will be coordinated and led by UNFPA HQ, and will be implemented in collaboration with UNFPA APRO and select UNFPA Country Offices (COs). Taking into consideration India and China's several decades of experience in tackling the problem of GBSS from a demographic and a socio-cultural perspective, the India and China COs will serve as technical advice and capacity providers to a regional cluster convened by HQ and APRO, providing technical advice and support to the focus countries and will also support south-south exchange between governments, academic institutions and think tanks, and civil society organizations.

2. Country-specific Progress and Priorities

Country	Activities undertaken to date	Planned interventions
Viet Nam	Data analysis from population-based surveys used to highlight geographical, socio-economical and socio-cultural variables assisting the Government to further understand the phenomenon, and develop policies and interventions to address the issue	Building the evidence base: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – research on in-country regional differences of GBSS, underlying drivers and consequences – assessments of existing interventions
	Engaging men and boys, religious and local leaders, mass organizations in communication activities	Develop/adapt and implement localized coordinated, multi-partner, advocacy and communications strategy and tools
	South-south cooperation and learning opportunities through a study visit to Korea and an international conference on the SRB imbalance	Policy analysis to inform policy and intervention gaps to better respond to GBSS
	Support to the Government to develop and implement national communications campaigns	Advocacy to include gender indicators in the national statistical indicators in line with SDGs and international standards.
	BCC programming with celebrities and high level Government spokespersons in national campaigns on SRB challenging cultural norms, promoting the value of the girl child through social media, exhibitions and contests	Ongoing efforts to strengthen national capacity on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – data use for advocacy, communication; – men’s engagement in behavior change communication related to GBSS – monitoring the trend of SRB and GBSS
	Cross border study with China on cross-border marriage	

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and its consequences

South-south collaboration in evidence development, knowledge sharing and advocacy within Asia

Report on positive behaviours of different groups where GBSS has slowed down

Comprehensive review of GBSS related laws and policies

Capacity building of government and other stakeholders including at sub-national level

Development of country profile and fact sheet

ANNEX C. Ethical Code of Conduct for UNEG/UNFPA Evaluations

Evaluations of UNFPA-supported activities need to be independent, impartial and rigorous. Each evaluation should clearly contribute to learning and accountability. Hence evaluators must have personal and professional integrity and be guided by propriety in the conduct of their business.

Evaluation team /Evaluators:

1. To avoid **conflict of interest** and undue pressure, evaluators need to be **independent**, implying that members of an evaluation team must not have been directly responsible for the policy-setting/programming, design, or overall management of the subject of evaluation, nor expect to be in the near future.
Evaluators must have no vested interests and have the full freedom to conduct impartially their evaluative work, without potential negative effects on their career development. They must be able to express their opinion in a free manner.
2. Should protect the anonymity and **confidentiality of individual informants**. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are **not expected to evaluate individuals**, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
3. Evaluations sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body.
4. Should be **sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs** and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and **address issues of discrimination and gender equality**. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
5. Are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, evidence based findings, conclusions and recommendations.

For details on the ethics and independence in evaluation, please see UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Norms for Evaluation in the UN System <http://www.unevaluation.org/search/index.jsp?q=UNEG+Ethical+Guidelines> http://www.unevaluation.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=21 (UNFPA evaluation policy 2010)