UNICEF UKRAINE
UNICEF UKRAINE **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SERVICES - INSTITUTIONS**

SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

Development, Integration, and Maintenance of an AI-Enabled Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System and Online Feedback Platform for UNICEF Ukraine's Feedback and Complaint Mechanism "Say it as it is"

BACKGROUND

UNICEF Ukraine is committed to strengthening its Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) by ensuring that children, caregivers, and communities have safe, accessible, and responsive mechanisms to express concerns, complaints, and feedback. The "Say it as it is" hotline and online platform maintained by the UCO are central to these efforts.

To improve efficiency and reduce dependence on human resources, UNICEF Ukraine aims to transition the hotline to a technology-enabled system using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Interactive Voice Response (IVR), while also maintaining and integrating the existing online platform. This will ensure 24/7 accessibility, expanded coverage, and seamless user experience across channels.

OBJECTIVE

The key objectives of this assignment include:
- Develop, deploy, and maintain an AI-driven voice assistant and IVR system.
- Ensure full integration with, and ongoing maintenance of, the existing "Say it as it is" online platform.
- Provide a comprehensive, scalable, and secure multi-channel feedback and complaint system operational from October 2025 with maintenance until 31 December 2025, with possible extension for up to 1-year, subject to the successful performance.

SCOPE OF WORK, ACTIVITIES, TASKS, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES

1. Design, development, and deployment of an AI-enabled voice assistant using advanced LLMs and real-time voice recognition, accessible via PSTN, VoIP, and web/mobile apps.
2. Full technical integration and ongoing maintenance of the existing "Say it as it is" online platform currently maintained by UCO with support of the vendor, ensuring continuity, upgrades, and harmonization with the new voice solution.
3. Real-time voice-to-text transcription with user-friendly web access, editing, and export features.
4. Data security and privacy compliance, including encryption, access control, GDPR alignment, and incident recovery.
5. System scalability and reliability, including support for 100+ concurrent calls, 99.9% uptime, and disaster recovery within 4 hours.
6. AI model training and continuous improvement, using user feedback loops to enhance performance.
7. Analytics dashboard with real-time performance reports, conversation tagging, and trends visualization.
8. Training and technical support, including user documentation and 24/7 assistance post-deployment.
9. Language support for Ukrainian and other locally relevant dialects, including handling of code-switching and accent variation.
10. Custom escalation logic, enabling rerouting to human operators for sensitive or unresolved issues.
11. User interface for UNICEF admins, including prompt customization, feedback review, and knowledge base updates.

Activities and Tasks

Activity & Task	Deliverable	Deadline
Develop the inception report	Technical design, system architecture, workplan and risk mitigation strategy	30 September 2025
Develop the prototype demo	Functional prototype with key use cases and sample voice flows	15 October 2025
Ensure full deployment	End-to-end live system including the existing online platform integration	30 October 2025
Provide training to UNICEF AAP focal points	Staff training, admin guide and knowledge transfer	15 November 2025

| Provide maintenance and support | Continuous system upkeep, bug fixing and data monitoring and handling | Until 31 December 2025 |

Technical Requirements

Architecture & Hosting
- Microservices-based architecture with Docker and Kubernetes
- Support for uninterrupted Continuous Integration/Deployment (CI/CD)

Language Models & NLP
- Use of cutting-edge LLMs (e.g., GPT-5, Claude 4, Gemini 2.5)
- Custom model tuning for UNICEF-specific language and terminology
- Intent analysis for adaptive tone

Speech Recognition
- High-accuracy recognition with noise suppression
- Accent and dialect support including Ukrainian "surzhyk"
- Integration with tools like Google Speech-to-Text, Azure, ElevenLabs

Voice Interaction & Routing
- Real-time interaction
- Call routing logic to forward to live operators if needed
- Multi-platform voice interaction (PSTN, VoIP, browser, mobile)

Online Platform Integration
- Seamless maintenance and upgrading of the existing web based "Say it as it is" platform
- Synchronization of voice and online data streams
- Shared admin panel for case management across channels

Transcription System
- Automated transcription with manual correction module
- Filtering by user, topic, time
- Export in .txt, .csv, and .pdf
- Integrated search and tagging system

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Transcription System
- Automated transcription with manual correction module
- Filtering by user, topic, time, and sentiment
- Export in .txt, .csv, and .pdf
- Integrated search and tagging system

Security & Privacy
- ISO 27001, GDPR, TLS/SSL compliance
- 2FA and biometric authentication
- DDoS protection and automatic backup
- Data retention and archival management (min. 6 months)

Monitoring & Reporting
- Use of Prometheus, Grafana for uptime and health monitoring
- ELK Stack or similar for centralized log management
- Power BI, Tableau, or equivalent for analytics

UNICEF Responsibilities

- Provide current assets and access to the "Say it as it is" platform and hotline content
- Designate focal points for coordination
- Approve all content, scripts, and escalation flows
- Support in user testing and contextual language review

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES

The selected vendor is expected to meet the following criteria:

Professional Experience
- At least 3 years of experience in AI-driven voice assistant development as a company
- Demonstrated experience with NLP and voice interface projects
- Capacity to provide 24/7 maintenance and technical support
- Proven ability to integrate with existing digital systems
- Relevant certifications in cybersecurity and data privacy
- Previous experience working with UNICEF/UN agencies in Ukraine or similar contexts is highly desirable

Skills and Competencies
- Strong analytical skills and ability to synthesize complex user feedback and behavioral insights into actionable recommendations
- Excellent writing, presentation, and reporting skills in Ukrainian and English
- Ability to work independently, manage timelines effectively, and coordinate with multiple stakeholders

Additional Requirements
- **The vendor shall not be a VAT payer**
- Availability to complete all deliverables within the specified condensed timeline (August–December 2025)

CONDITIONS OF WORK

Work modality: Remote, with possible stakeholder calls or in-person meetings. Travel is not envisaged. All expenses related to the assignment shall be included in the price offer.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION - INSTITUTIONS

Proposals shall be evaluated in accordance with the provisions of this RFP and with the following criteria:

Criteria	Maximum points
1. Technical proposal	70
2. Financial proposal	30
Total maximum points to be attributed	100

Minimum technical required score: 70% (49 points). Technical Proposals scoring less than 49 points will be considered nonresponsive, therefore will be rejected.

Weighted scoring evaluation approach
The evaluation criteria will be a split between technical and commercial (price proposal) scores (70/30 split).
Proposals submitted in response to this RFP should include and will be evaluated against the following:

1. Technical evaluation: Terms of reference includes technical evaluation criteria. Total maximum 70 points. Only proposals which receive a minimum of 70% (49 points) will be considered further.
2. Price proposals. The total amount of points allocated for the price component is 30.

The maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest price proposal that is opened and compared among those invited firms/institutions which obtain the threshold points in the evaluation of the technical component. All other price proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price, e.g.: Score for price proposal X = (Max. score for price proposal 30 Points) * Price of lowest priced proposal) / Price of proposal X.

Total obtainable Technical and Price points: 100

The Proposer(s) achieving the highest combined technical and price score will (subject to any negotiations and the various other rights of UNICEF detailed in this RFPS) be awarded the contract(s).

TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA	REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	RATING	SCALING	MAXIMUM SCORE
Company's profile				
1. At least 3 years of experience in AI-driven voice assistant development	Examples of previous projects	3 or more records of implementation of similar work	10	10
		1-2 records of implementation of similar materials	5	
		No record of implementation of similar materials	0	
2. Previous experience collaborating with UNICEF/UN agencies	Examples of previous projects	At least 1 proven record of experience	5	5
		No proven record of experience	0	
Team's experience				
3. Staff experience in designing and implementing similar projects	CVs of staff that will be involved	The team members having combined experience of minimum of 15 years work experience	15	15
		The team members having combined experience of minimum of 10 years work experience	10	
		The team members having combined experience of minimum of 7 years' work experience	5	
		The team members having combined experience of less than 7 years work experience	0	
4. Experience of staff to provide 24/7 maintenance and technical support; proven ability to integrate with existing digital systems; relevant certifications in cybersecurity and data privacy	CVs of staff that will be involved	The team members having combined experience of minimum of 15 years work experience	15	15
		The team members having combined experience of minimum of 10 years work experience	10	
		The team members having combined experience of minimum then 7 years work experience	5	

		The team members having combined experience of less than 7 years work experience	0	
Methodology/Concept				
5. Draft concept and strategy	Technical design, system architecture, workplan and risk mitigation strategy	Strong, innovative, and contextually relevant concept and strategy that fully meets the TOR requirements	25	25
		Partial or underdeveloped concept and strategy that are linked to the TOR	15	
		Low quality methodology or description of activities provided	5	
		No methodology or description of activities provided	0	
TOTAL TECHNICAL SCORE				**70**

Attachments:

Annex D – Financial Proposal Template