

Call for Tenders for External Evaluation Services & Terms of Reference for External Evaluator

“Hope For Children” CRC Policy Center is requesting quotations for an external evaluator to carry out work necessary for the external evaluation of the EU-funded project **SHIELD – Strengthening Child Protection in Care Facilities to Support the Disclosure of Violence** (CERV-2024-DAPHNE project no. 101195399), which the project consortium is currently implementing. The project commenced on 01/10/2025 and will conclude on 30/09/2027.

Background and context

SHIELD – Strengthening Child Protection in Care Facilities to Support the Disclosure of Violence is a European project that aims to strengthen child protection systems in residential care facilities and contribute to the prevention of every form of violence against children in such facilities. The project aims to ensure an impact on a local, national, and European level, promoting shared standards and coordinated approaches for the protection of minors in care facilities.

Violence against children is a widespread phenomenon on a global scale, and children who live in residential care facilities - who are usually already exposed to various vulnerabilities - face a significantly higher level of risk related to abuse and mistreatment. At the same time, professionals who work with minors daily can find themselves lacking the necessary knowledge and tools to promptly identify and handle risk scenarios or facilitate safe reporting procedures.

The SHIELD project is coordinated by “Hope For Children” CRC Policy Center (Cyprus) and implemented in collaboration with five European partners – Verein für Manner und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark (Austria), The Smile of the Child (Greece), CESIE ETS (Italy), Center for Equality Advancement (Lithuania), and Fundación Digrama Intervención Psicosocial (Spain).

SHIELD targets children and adolescents residing in care facilities, the professionals working in these facilities, the caregivers who assist the children, and the organisations and institutions responsible for their protection. The overall objective of this project is to prevent and combat all forms of violence against children by contributing to the strengthening and harmonisation of child protection systems in residential care facilities in Europe.

The specific objectives of the project are the following:

1. Identify and document the conditions enabling and hindering the disclosure of violence in care facility settings, as well as the needs of children and frontline professionals.
2. Build the capacity of frontline professionals working with children in care facilities to identify violence and support the act of disclosure in their national context.
3. Increase the understanding of children aged 12-18 in care facilities of different types of violence and build their capacity to disclose acts of violence experienced.
4. Raise awareness of best practices in child protection in care facilities and pathways for disclosure of violence among child protection professionals and the public.
5. Develop, implement and engage individuals/networks in advocacy actions.

To accomplish these objectives, SHIELD plans to:

- Analyse safety and participatory conditions of minors and caregivers in residential care facilities through desk research, interviews with care leavers and focus groups/surveys with children and professionals in care facilities, identifying best practices and main challenges.
- Develop a comprehensive multi-agency model for child protection in residential care facilities, and national curricula for the empowerment of children as well as capacity-building of professionals.
- Increase awareness on different forms of violence and safe reporting mechanisms within the target group of children residing in care facilities through workshops.
- Strengthen the capacities of the professionals involved in the care of minors in residential care facilities, providing tools and training to recognise and prevent violence, as well as help support children who disclose experiences of violence.
- Actively involve relevant services, local networks, institutions and organisations in training and awareness-raising events in order to promote a coordinated, sustainable, and child-centered approach to disclosure and prevention of violence in residential care facilities.

The key result will be the multi-agency model for child protection in residential care facilities, adaptable to different local contexts, and meant to be disseminated on a national and European level, to consolidate integrated and effective protection practices. The model will be drafted by Month 14 of the project and updated based on feedback collected from children, frontline professionals, and other stakeholders following capacity-building activities, as well as from the project's Youth Advisory Board.

Evaluation purpose and target audience

The external evaluation is part of the Quality Assurance & Monitoring Framework (QAMF) of the project and will allow the consortium as well as the European Commission as the granting

authority to assess the quality and impact of the project activities as well as the sustainability of the project.

The external evaluator will be required to produce two reports: an interim report and a final report. At the halfway point of the project, the interim report will enable the consortium to reflect on what has worked well as well as lessons learnt and make adjustments to ensure that the project objectives are met. At the end of the project, the final report will enable the consortium and the granting authority to evaluate whether the objectives of the project were met, as well as the impact of the project, and to consider how to ensure the sustainability of the project results.

The target audience of the external evaluation includes project partners included in the consortium, their staff involved in the project, as well as the European Commission as the granting authority.

Evaluation objectives and scope

The objectives of the external evaluation are to:

- Assess the efficiency of the leadership by the project coordinator and work package leaders
- Assess the quality of the collaboration between partners
- Ensure that the implementation of the project tasks is aligned with the project objectives
- Identify lessons learnt and put forward recommendations for future action
- Assess the impact and sustainability of the project

The project coordinator, “Hope For Children” CRC Policy Center (HFC), will monitor the progress of the implementation of the tasks under each work package, as well as the completion of the deliverables. It will also monitor the achievement of quantitative KPIs (e.g. number of participants in field research, capacity-building, and awareness-raising activities) and collect feedback from partners about the in-person consortium meetings, and provide the data, along with the project deliverables, to the external evaluator for assessment.

While the above monitoring activities under the QAMF are to be conducted by the project coordinator, the evaluation of the quality and impact of the project will be carried out by the external evaluator. The approach and tasks are specified below.

Evaluation tasks, approach and methodology

The external evaluation has two dimensions:

1. Evaluation of project management and coordination, based on methodology proposed by the selected external evaluator.
2. Evaluation of project activities, deliverables, and results, to be carried out using quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques proposed by the selected external evaluator. Evaluation activities should include assessment of the capacity building program pre- and post-workshops for both children and professionals in residential care facilities, and should enable the measurement of the following qualitative KPIs: % of professionals and other relevant stakeholders responding their knowledge is improved as a result of the workshops; % of professionals and other relevant stakeholders reporting improved capacity to support children in care facilities as a result of the workshops; % of minors responding their knowledge has improved as a result of the workshops.

The external evaluator is expected to evaluate, based on the data and deliverables provided by the project coordinator and the methodology proposed by the external evaluator in their tender, the:

- Quality of project management and cooperation
- Quality of project implementation
- Quality of project deliverables
- Alignment of the implementation with the project objectives
- Impact and sustainability of the project

The external evaluator should also provide recommendations for future action.

The tenderers are expected to propose a methodology for carrying out the above tasks. The methodology proposed by the tenderer selected as the external evaluator will be included in the QAMF of the project.

Timing and deliverables

The expected deliverables, with respective timing, are as follows:

- An interim external evaluation report to be delivered in October 2026
- Presentation of the results of the interim evaluation to the partners in a consortium meeting in October 2026 (online)
- A final external evaluation report to be delivered in September 2027

Both reports are to be in electronic format, in English, and approximately 10-15 pages long.

Evaluation team composition and required competences

We welcome tenders from individual evaluators and evaluation teams. The selected evaluator(s) shall:

- Have a full working proficiency in English (other languages of the project partner countries are an asset)
- Be familiar with the fields of child protection, migration, social inclusion, and training or education
- Demonstrate experience in evaluating social impact projects funded by the European Commission's (preferably under the CERV program)

The evaluation of the tenders will consider the following selection criteria: professional quality/experience of tenderer; ability to communicate effectively; specific/relevant knowledge of the project theme; evidence of understanding of requirements and tasks; feasibility and appropriateness of methodology proposed; risk assessment and management; knowledge of languages of the partners; and price/value for money.

Management arrangements

The party responsible for the external evaluation on behalf of all project partners is the project coordinator – “Hope For Children” CRC Policy Center. The person in charge of the coordination is Dr Emma Mesikämnen, Director of the Research & Development Division.

Budget and payments

The budget for the external evaluation is 8.000 € gross, including VAT/any other tax and any other financial surcharges related to the way of payment. The budget for the external evaluation services provided must include all the fees, as well as necessary material, travel, and subsistence costs related to implementation of the evaluation activities.

The tenderer subcontracted to carry out the external evaluation of the SHIELD project is solely responsible for the payment of all income and other taxes, as well as social and health insurance contributions related to or incidental to the payment for the external evaluation services.

Tenderers are expected to propose a breakdown of the cost for the external evaluation services within the total budget outlined above, including budget lines and amounts that will allow them to carry out a thorough evaluation and produce the expected deliverables.

The payments will be arranged as follows:

- 20% upon signature of the service agreement
- 40% upon delivery of the interim external evaluation report
- 40% upon delivery of the final external evaluation report

The external evaluator may be asked to update the final evaluation report after receiving the final payment, depending on the European Commission's assessment of the deliverable.

Submission of tenders

Interested parties should complete the template in Annex I and include the following in their tender:

- CV(s) of the evaluator(s)
- A sample of previous work, similar in scope and approach
- Indicative budget with a breakdown of the total cost outlined in Annex I

Please send your tender consisting of completed Annex I and the required attachments to Dr Emma Mesikämnen by email at mesikammen.e@uncrcpc.org by **17 December 2025 at 23:59 CET**.