

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Local and National Mapping of Community Support Structures and Child Protection Services

In Support of SOS CV SL Programme Transition, Reintegration, and Safeguarding Continuity

<b>Assignment Title</b>	Local and National Mapping of Community Support Structures and Child Protection Services
<b>Issuing Organisation</b>	SOS Children's Villages Sierra Leone
<b>Operational Locations</b>	Bo, Makeni, and Freetown (with national-level engagement)
<b>Assignment Duration</b>	25 working days
<b>Budget</b>	Attractive
<b>Reporting Line</b>	Programme Development Manager, SOS Children's Villages Sierra Leone

## 1. Background

SOS Children's Villages Sierra Leone is going through a significant programme transition. The organisation is moving deliberately from residential care models towards family- and community-based care, in line with the SOS Care Promise and international alternative care standards.

This transition affects children and young people directly. Some are being reintegrated into their families or placed in family-like care arrangements. Others are leaving care and moving towards independent living. Each of them depends on functioning community and national systems to remain safe, supported, and able to access the services they need.

The honest reality is that we do not have a full, verified picture of what those systems look like on the ground. We have relationships, we have experience, and we have some existing data. But we do not have a current, systematic assessment of what is available, what is actually functioning, and what is safe enough to receive referrals involving children. That gap is the starting point for this assignment.

SOS CV SL operates across three locations: Bo, Makeni, and Freetown. Each location has its own mix of formal government structures, NGO and INGO actors, community-based organisations, and informal support systems. The quality, reach, and safeguarding standards of these systems vary. Some will be ready to receive referrals. Others will need strengthening or closer supervision before they can take on that responsibility.

At the national level, SOS CV SL engages regularly with the Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs, the Family Support Unit, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, and other child protection stakeholders. These relationships are important. But relationship and capacity are not the same thing. This assignment needs to assess both.

The findings from this work will feed directly into SOS CV SL's safeguarding transition planning, reintegration case management, referral system development, and sustainability strategy. They will also inform how SOS CV SL positions itself in relation to national child protection systems and donor commitments over the next two to three years.

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## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to produce a verified, practical, and operationally usable picture of the community support structures and child protection services available to children, young people, and families in SOS CV SL operational areas.

The output must be more than a list of names and contacts. It must tell us which structures are functional, which are safe, and which are realistically able to absorb referrals during and after programme transition. It must identify where the gaps are, where the risks sit, and what needs to happen to make the referral environment safer and more reliable.

The work will directly support SOS CV SL's ability to:

- Plan and manage reintegration cases with confidence in receiving systems.
- Make referral decisions that are safe and appropriate.
- Demonstrate to donors and auditors that safeguarding continuity has been planned, not assumed.
- Identify where community and government systems need strengthening before SOS reduces its own direct programme footprint.
- Develop a credible sustainability and local partnership strategy for the transition period.

## 3. Objectives

### 3.1 General Objective

To identify, assess, and document the existing formal and informal child protection and community support systems that can realistically support safeguarding continuity, reintegration, referral management, family strengthening, and post-transition sustainability in SOS CV SL operational communities.

### 3.2 Specific Objectives

The consultant will:

1. Map formal and informal child protection structures and community support systems across Bo, Makeni, and Freetown, and at national level.
  2. Assess the functionality, accessibility, safeguarding capacity, referral readiness, and likely sustainability of each identified structure and service.
  3. Identify available services relevant to children and young people across the areas of child protection, psychosocial support, legal aid, health, education, disability, youth development, and emergency response.
  4. Assess which specific actors and structures are safe and appropriate to receive referrals involving children and young people, including children in Family-Like Care, youth leaving care, and reintegrated children.
  5. Analyse existing referral pathways and coordination mechanisms at community, district, and national levels.
  6. Identify service gaps, safeguarding risks, coordination failures, and operational weaknesses that could put children at risk during or after programme transition.
  7. Produce practical recommendations for strengthening safeguarding continuity, referral systems, reintegration support, and local sustainability mechanisms.
  8. Develop a practical operational transition mapping tool that SOS CV SL staff can use to guide referral and reintegration decisions.
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## 4. Scope of Work

### 4.1 Geographic Scope

The assignment will cover the three SOS CV SL operational locations: Bo, Makeni, and Freetown. It will also engage with relevant national-level ministries, departments, agencies, and child protection coordination bodies.

Field work must include direct visits to communities and service providers in all three locations. The consultant cannot complete this assignment through desk work or remote interviews alone.

### 4.2 Target Population

The assessment must specifically consider the needs and circumstances of:

- Children who have been reintegrated from SOS care into family or community settings.
- Children currently in Family-Like Care arrangements.
- Young people leaving care and transitioning to independent or semi-independent living.
- Young people in Supervised Independent Living.
- Foster care cases.
- Children in vulnerable households supported through family strengthening programmes.
- Children with disabilities.
- Street-connected children.
- Children and young people who have experienced violence, abuse, or exploitation.
- Any child or young person who may require a safeguarding referral or post-transition support.

### 4.3 Systems and Structures to be Assessed

The consultant must cover both formal and informal systems. Formal structures include, but are not limited to:

- Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MoGCA) and its district-level presence.
- Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education.
- Family Support Units.
- Local councils and their social welfare functions.
- Child welfare committees.
- Schools and education support services.
- Health facilities and psychosocial support services.
- Legal aid organisations.
- Disability support services.
- Social workers in government and NGO settings.
- National and international NGOs and INGOs with child protection mandates.
- Safe homes and emergency shelters.
- Child protection coordination structures and networks.

Informal and community-based structures include, but are not limited to:

- Community-Based Child Protection Committees.
  - Religious leaders and faith-based community structures.
  - Women's groups and associations.
  - Youth groups and peer networks.
  - Community volunteers with child protection roles.
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- Foster families.
- Village Savings and Loan Associations with links to family support.
- Community-based organisations.
- Traditional and community leaders.

## 5. Key Tasks

### 5.1 Inception Phase (Days 1-3)

The consultant will hold inception meetings with the SOS CV SL Programme Development Manager, Safeguarding Coordinator and relevant staff. During these meetings, the consultant must review the assignment scope, confirm priorities, and identify any access or logistical constraints that need to be addressed before fieldwork begins.

The consultant will review key documents provided by SOS CV SL, including existing stakeholder lists, reintegration data, DP3 case data, previous assessments, safeguarding procedures, and relevant national child protection frameworks.

By the end of Day 3, the consultant will submit an inception report that includes a confirmed methodology, a detailed workplan covering all 25 days, and draft data collection tools for review and approval before fieldwork begins. SOS CV SL will review and respond to the inception report within two working days.

### 5.2 Field Data Collection (Days 4-14)

The consultant will conduct field visits across all three locations. The sequence of locations will be agreed during the inception phase.

Data collection methods will include key informant interviews, focus group discussions, community consultations, and direct verification visits to service delivery points. The consultant should not rely on secondary sources alone. Where a service is listed as available, the consultant must verify whether it is actually operational.

Children and young people must be consulted as part of the process, where this is safe and appropriate. Their perspectives on available support, referral experiences, and gaps in services are relevant evidence for this assessment. All consultations with children must follow ethical guidelines and child-safe data collection procedures.

Informed consent must be obtained from all participants. Confidentiality must be maintained throughout. The consultant must have a clear referral procedure in place for any safeguarding concerns that arise during fieldwork and must notify SOS CV SL immediately if a concern is disclosed.

### 5.3 Assessment of Safeguarding Readiness (Ongoing, documented by Day 18)

For each structure and actor assessed, the consultant must make an explicit judgement about safeguarding readiness. This means going beyond a description of what the structure does and assessing whether it is actually safe for SOS CV SL to refer children to it.

The assessment must cover: whether the structure has written safeguarding or child protection policies; whether staff have received relevant training; whether there are confidentiality mechanisms in place; whether procedures are child-friendly and accessible; whether the structure has the case management capacity to follow through on referrals; and whether it applies survivor-centred approaches in responses to abuse.

Where the consultant identifies safeguarding risks associated with a particular structure, these must be documented explicitly in the report. SOS CV SL will not refer children to structures assessed as unsafe or insufficiently prepared, regardless of their formal status or institutional affiliation.

## 5.4 Referral Pathway Analysis (Ongoing, documented by Day 18)

The consultant will map and assess the referral pathways that currently exist between community-level, district-level, and national-level child protection actors. This should cover how referrals are initiated, how they are tracked, and what happens when they break down.

The analysis must identify where referral pathways are functional, where they are weak or inconsistent, where there is duplication, and where there are gaps with no coverage at all. It must also assess escalation mechanisms for urgent or high-risk cases.

## 5.5 National Validation Workshop (Days 19-21)

The consultant will facilitate a one-day national validation workshop in Freetown. The purpose of the workshop is to present the draft findings, test the conclusions against the experience of a wider group of stakeholders, and capture any significant additions or corrections before the final report is written.

Participants should include representatives from MoGCA, MBSSE, the Family Support Unit, Local Councils, Community-Based Child Protection Committees, NGOs and INGOs, community-based organisations, safeguarding actors, youth representatives, and relevant SOS CV SL staff. The consultant is responsible for preparing and distributing draft findings before the workshop, facilitating the session, and producing a workshop report within two days of the event.

## 5.6 Finalisation (Days 22-25)

The consultant will incorporate validated feedback and submit all final deliverables as outlined in Section 6 below. Final deliverables must be submitted in editable formats unless otherwise agreed.

# 6. Deliverables and Timeline

#	Deliverable	When Due
1	Inception report including proposed methodology, workplan, and data collection tools	End of Day 3
2	Completed stakeholder and service directory with verified contact details and service profiles	End of Day 12
3	Draft mapping and assessment report covering all three locations and national level	End of Day 18
4	Referral pathway mapping report and gap analysis	End of Day 18
5	Safeguarding readiness and capacity assessment of identified actors	End of Day 18
6	National validation workshop facilitated and workshop report submitted	End of Day 22
7	Final comprehensive report incorporating all feedback, with executive summary	End of Day 25
8	Final cleaned Excel database of all structures, services, and contacts	End of Day 25
9	Draft national referral framework and transition recommendations	End of Day 25
10	PowerPoint presentation of findings for SMT and donor use	End of Day 25

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All written reports must be submitted in English. The final comprehensive report should not exceed 80 pages excluding annexes. Annexes may include the full database, data collection tools, the list of consulted stakeholders, and the workshop report.

## 7. Expected Structure of the Final Report

The final report must include the following sections:

- Executive Summary (maximum 4 pages, suitable for donor and management audiences)
- Background and context
- Objectives and methodology
- Scope and limitations
- National child protection context
- Findings by location: Bo, Makeni, Freetown
- National-level stakeholder mapping
- Service mapping and profiles
- Referral pathway analysis
- Safeguarding readiness assessment
- Capacity assessment of structures and actors
- Gap analysis
- Risk analysis
- Sustainability and transition analysis
- Operational recommendations, prioritised and actionable
- Conclusion
- Annexes

The report must be written for a practical audience. Findings should be presented clearly and without unnecessary academic framing. Recommendations must be specific and implementable. Where a recommendation requires resources, the report must say so.

## 8. Methodology Requirements

The consultant will apply a mixed-methods approach that combines desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, community consultations, direct service verification, and a national validation workshop. The methodology must reflect the following requirements:

- Children and young people must be meaningfully consulted where it is safe and appropriate to do so. Their voices should be visible in the findings, not just referenced as a process checkpoint.
  - All data collection must be conducted ethically, with informed consent, with confidentiality protections, and in accordance with SOS CV SL safeguarding standards.
  - The methodology must be gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive. Service accessibility for girls, boys, children with disabilities, and children in specific vulnerability categories must be assessed explicitly.
  - The consultant must triangulate information from multiple sources before making assessments about functionality, safety, or referral suitability. Self-reported capacity from service providers is not sufficient evidence on its own.
  - Service verification visits must physically confirm that services are operating, not just registered or listed.
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## 9. Duration

This consultancy will be conducted over 25 working days, to be completed within an agreed timeframe from the contract start date. The exact schedule will be confirmed during the inception phase. The 25-day allocation is intended to cover: inception and document review (Days 1-3), field data collection across all three locations (Days 4-14), analysis and drafting (Days 15-18), national validation workshop and workshop report (Days 19-21), and finalisation of all deliverables (Days 22-25). The consultant is expected to work to this schedule. Requests for extensions will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and must be submitted in writing before the original deadline passes.

## 10. Institutional Arrangements

The consultant will report directly to the Programme Development Manager, SOS Children's Villages Sierra Leone. Day-to-day coordination will be managed through the Safeguarding Coordinator.

Technical input and review will also involve the SOS CV SL Safeguarding Coordinator and relevant Programme staff. Where findings or concerns touch on case-specific safeguarding matters, the consultant must escalate to the Programme Development Manager immediately and not proceed without guidance. The consultant is not an SOS CV SL staff member. They do not have authority to make commitments on behalf of the organisation, negotiate partnership agreements, or share SOS CV SL documents with third parties without authorisation.

## 11. Support to be Provided by SOS CV SL

SOS CV SL will provide the following support to enable the consultant to carry out this assignment:

- Official introduction letters to government ministries, departments, agencies, and partner organisations.
- Coordination support and facilitation of access to communities, stakeholders, and SOS operational sites.
- Access to relevant programme and safeguarding documents for the desk review.
- Vehicle support for field visits within and between locations.
- Accommodation support during field visits outside the consultant's base location, as agreed.
- Office space where required.
- Facilitation of the national validation workshop logistics.

SOS CV SL will not manage the consultant's workplan or day-to-day schedule on their behalf. The consultant is expected to take responsibility for organizing their own schedule, managing their time efficiently across the 25 days, and flagging any access or logistical issues promptly.

## 12. Budget

The budget covers the consultant's professional fees, accommodation costs during field visits, printing, and the costs of engaging enumerators or data collection support where required. Other logistical support, including vehicle access, and workshop facilitation costs, will be provided directly by SOS CV SL as described in Section 11.

The financial proposal must show a clear breakdown of how the total budget is allocated. Proposals that do not provide a clear cost breakdown will not be considered. The financial proposal will be assessed for realism and competitiveness, not simply the lowest figure submitted.

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## 13. Required Qualifications and Experience

### 13.1 Education

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The consultant should hold an advanced degree in Social Work, Child Protection, Development Studies, Psychology, Sociology, Human Rights, Safeguarding, or a related discipline. Equivalent professional experience may be considered where it is directly relevant and well-evidenced.

### 13.2 Essential Experience

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The consultant must demonstrate a minimum of seven years of directly relevant professional experience. This experience must cover at least some of the following areas:

- Child protection systems mapping and assessment.
- Safeguarding assessments and child protection capacity reviews.
- Alternative care, reintegration, or family strengthening programming.
- Community-based child protection systems.
- Referral systems design and analysis.
- Social work and case management.

The consultant must demonstrate a strong working knowledge of the child protection landscape in Sierra Leone. Applications claiming general West Africa experience without specific Sierra Leone knowledge will not be scored favourably.

### 13.3 Desirable Experience

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Experience in any of the following will be considered an advantage:

- Safeguarding transition planning or post-conflict/post-crisis child protection systems strengthening.
- Programming aligned with the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.
- Facilitating national-level validation workshops and multi-stakeholder consultations.
- Working with SOS Children's Villages or similar alternative care organisations.
- Engagement with MoGCA, FSU, MBSSE, or other key national child protection actors in Sierra Leone.

### 13.4 Technical Skills

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The consultant must demonstrate strong analytical and report-writing skills. Reports submitted as evidence of previous work should be of a standard suitable for donor or audit review. The ability to produce clear, practical, and well-structured documentation is non-negotiable for this assignment.

Experience facilitating workshops and conducting stakeholder consultations in Sierra Leone or comparable contexts is required.

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## 14. Safeguarding and Ethical Requirements

This assignment involves direct engagement with children, young people, and communities. Safeguarding is not an administrative box to be ticked. It is a core requirement of the work.

The selected consultant must:

- Sign SOS CV SL's safeguarding declaration and confidentiality agreement before commencing any work.
  - Attend a safeguarding orientation session with SOS CV SL before field visits begin.
  - Comply fully with SOS CV SL safeguarding policies and procedures throughout the assignment.
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- Ensure that informed consent is obtained from all participants, including parents or guardians where children are involved.
- Follow ethical standards in all engagements with children, young people, and communities.
- Maintain confidentiality of all case-specific information and personal data encountered during the assignment.
- Have a clear plan in place for responding to safeguarding disclosures during fieldwork, and notify the SOS CV SL Programme Development Manager immediately if a concern arises.

Failure to comply with SOS CV SL safeguarding standards at any point during the assignment may result in immediate termination of the contract. There will be no exceptions to this requirement.

The consultant must also ensure that their data collection and storage practices are consistent with data protection principles. Personal information about children and families must not be stored in unsecured formats or shared with third parties without authorisation.

## 15. Application Requirements

Interested consultants or consultancy firms should submit the following:

9. A technical proposal of no more than 10 pages, setting out the proposed methodology, understanding of the assignment, workplan, and team structure where relevant.
10. A financial proposal with a clear cost breakdown. The financial proposal must be submitted as a separate document.
11. An updated CV or team profiles, as applicable. CVs must clearly evidence the experience requirements set out in Section 13.
12. Evidence of at least two similar previous assignments, with a brief description of each assignment, the client, the year, and the key outputs produced.
13. At least three professional references from previous clients or supervisors, with current contact details.

Incomplete applications will not be assessed. Applications that do not address the requirements set out in this ToR will be rejected at shortlisting stage.

## 16. Submission Details

**Email:**

**Subject line:** Consultancy Application: Community Support Structures and Child Protection Mapping

**Deadline:**

Late applications will not be considered. SOS CV SL is not obligated to respond to every application or to select any of the candidates submitted. The organisation reserves the right to cancel this process at any stage.

## 17. Selection Criteria

Selection Criterion	Weight
Technical quality and clarity of the proposed methodology	30%
Demonstrated experience in child protection systems mapping and safeguarding assessments in Sierra Leone or comparable contexts	25%
Understanding of alternative care, reintegration, and safeguarding transition	15%
Financial competitiveness and budget realism	15%

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Selection Criterion	Weight
Quality of previous similar work (evidence required)	10%
Safeguarding knowledge and commitment to child-safe practice	5%

SOS CV SL may conduct interviews or request clarifications from shortlisted applicants before a final decision is made. The decision of SOS CV SL is final.

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