

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Project Title: Conducting a Study on Causes of Increased Caesarean Section Rates in Armenia**

**Duty Station:** nationwide

**Start Date:** 15 July 2022

**Duration:** 5 December 2022

**Funding Source**: ARM04SRH

1. **Background**

Caesarean section (caesarean delivery) is a surgical procedure used to deliver a baby through incisions in the abdomen and uterus. As per the World Health Organization, the ideal rate for caesarean sections (CS) is considered to be between 10% and 15%. At population level, caesarean section rates higher than 10% are not associated with reductions in maternal and newborn mortality rates.[[1]](#footnote-1)

During the recent years caesarean sections have become increasingly common in both developed and developing countries. When medically justified, a caesarean section can effectively prevent maternal and perinatal mortality and morbidity. However, there is no evidence showing the benefits of caesarean delivery for women or infants who do not require the procedure. As with any surgery, caesarean sections are associated with short and long term risk which can extend many years beyond the current delivery and affect the health of the woman, her child, and future pregnancies.

According to research from the World Health Organization (WHO), caesarean section use continues to rise globally, now accounting for more than 1 in 5 (21%) of all childbirths. The same tendency is evident also in Armenia. As per the official data from the Ministry of Health, the CS rate increased from 7.2% in 2000 to 36.0% in 2020. Taking into account the rapidly increasing CS rates in Armenia, the Ministry of Health is keen to investigate the main factors that contributing to this tendency and to take measures aimed at reducing and/or preventing the increase of rates form CS to meet the World Health Organization recommendation.

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of the assignment is to conduct quantitative and qualitative studies and investigate the potential causes (factors) contributing to increasing CS rates in Armenia (field work, targeted focus-group discussions, in-depth interviews, data analysis and reporting), analyse trends and develop recommendations package (Concept note) aimed at reducing of unnecessary C-sections.

1. **Scope of Work**

The Service Provider under the overall guidance of the UNFPA SRH Programme Analyst and in close collaboration with the relevant department of the Ministry of Health will be responsible for ensuring timely and proper implementation of the following activities:

* **Develop a methodology for conducting a study, conduct a field work:**
* Contracting,
* Development of the Implementation plan (Field work plan preparation, etc.),
* Recruitment and training of the interviewers, fieldwork coordinators and field work quality controllers,
* Targeted Focus Group Discussions (FGD) in Yerevan and marzes of RA (Field work),
* In-depth interviews;
* F2F (Field work) quality control,
* Submitting the field work report to UNFPA
* **Data analysis, preparation of the Report:**
* Data processing
* Analysis of processed data and preparation of the draft report
* Submitting the draft report to UNFPA
* Development of the final version of the report
* Development of a draft Concept Note aimed at decreasing CS rate in Armenia
* Submitting the final report to UNFPA
* Presentation of final report to UNFPA and other stakeholders using PPT and infographics
* Report should include, but is not limited, to the following parts:
* Executive summary
* Background
* Methodology
* Main findings
* Summary
* Recommendations

**Expected Deliverables and Timing**

* Development of methodology and questionnaires (including, but not limiting for healthcare providers and women (pregnant and already delivered ones)) - by August 5, 2022
* Field work – by October 30, 2022
* Draft report and draft Concept note – by November 23, 2022
* Final report – by December 5, 2022.

1. **Payment**

The payment will be made in AMD upon timely submission and approval of the final report.

UNFPA’s policy is to pay for the performance of contractual services rendered or to effect payment upon the achievement of specific milestones described in the contract. UNFPA’s policy is not to grant advance payments except in unusual situations where the potential contractor specifies in the financial proposal that there are special circumstances warranting an advance payment. UNFPA will normally require a bank guarantee or other suitable security arrangement.

Any request for an advance payment is to be justified and documented, and must be submitted with the financial proposal. The justification shall explain the need for the advance payment, itemize the amount requested and provide a time schedule for utilization of said amount Further information may be requested by UNFPA at the time of finalizing contract negotiations with the awarded organization.

1. **Qualifications and Experience Requirements**

* Organization registered and operating in the Republic of Armenia;
* At least 7 years’ experience in research and conducting nation-wide surveys in social sector;
* Proven experience of working in area of reproductive and maternal health is an asset;
* Working experience with international organizations and UNFPA or other UN Agencies is an asset.

1. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/161442/WHO\_RHR\_15.02\_eng.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)