

Requests for Proposal (RFP)

Engagement of an External Technical Agency for Development of a Quality Assurance Framework for Crèches Across Diverse Settings

1. Background

Mobile Creches is a national-level non-profit organisation working to ensure holistic early childhood care, protection, and development for children aged 0–6 years from urban poor, migrant, and marginalised communities. Its crèche models operate across diverse contexts, including worksites, urban settlements, and rural/tribal settings—each requiring context-responsive yet comparable quality standards.

The Government of India's *National Minimum Standards and Protocol for Crèches (2024)* provides a baseline framework for infrastructure, staffing, operations, safety, and care standards. The *Palna Scheme under Mission Shakti* further emphasises provision of quality childcare services for children aged 6 months to 6 years, including safe care, nutrition, health support, growth monitoring, immunisation, and early stimulation. Additionally, the *National ECCE Framework* highlights quality standards, programme assessment, capacity strengthening, and monitoring systems as core pillars of early childhood service delivery.

Against this backdrop, Mobile Creches seeks to engage an external technical agency to develop a comprehensive **Quality Assurance (QA) Framework** for crèches across different operational settings, along with systems and tools for quality monitoring and continuous improvement.

2. Purpose of the Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to develop and design a practical, evidence-based, and scalable Quality Assurance Framework for crèches across worksite, urban, and rural/tribal settings. The framework should define quality standards, establish measurable indicators, and enable systems for regular assessment, supportive supervision improvement planning, risk mitigation and institutionalisation.

3. Objectives

The agency will:

- Develop a standardised Quality Assurance Framework for crèches across different operational settings.
- Align the framework with national standards, including the *National Minimum Standards and Protocol for Crèches (2024)*, the *Palna Scheme*, and relevant ECCE frameworks (National and International).
- Identify and define core quality domains, indicators, benchmarks, and assessment criteria for Safe, inclusive, Child-friendly, developmental and appropriate creche services.
- Develop practical tools and systems for quality monitoring, scoring, reporting, feedback mechanism and improvement planning.

- Incorporate risk assessment and mitigation measures into quality assurance architecture.
- Recommend for strengthen pathways for institutionalising quality assurance across programme, HR, administrative, and financial systems.
- Build a capacity development plan as part of the role of creche staff and supervisory teams to implement and sustain quality standards.
- Support pilot testing and refinement of the framework.
- Develop a roadmap for scale-up planning for the framework.

4. Scope of Work

4.1 Situational Review and Framework Design

- Review existing Mobile Creches quality tools, indicators, monitoring formats, reports, processes, and standards.
- Analyse relevant national and sectoral frameworks and guidelines.
- Consult key internal stakeholders and field teams across project locations (Delhi-NCR, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Karnataka, Haryana and others) to understand programme model and contextuel variation accros worksite, urban, and rural or tribal settings.
- Define a contextual understanding of “quality” across diverse crèche settings.
- Develop a scoring-based QA Framework with defined domains, sub-domains, indicators, benchmarks, and quality standards.

4.2 Quality Domains and Standards

The framework should cover, at a minimum:

- Child safety, protection, health, hygiene, and nutrition
- Early childhood care, stimulation, and age-appropriate learning
- Inclusion, equity, and responsiveness to diverse needs of children and families in diffèrent settings.
- Caregiver and staff capacity, supervision systems, staffing adequacy, and performance support mechanisms
- Infrastructure, materials, daily routine, and child-friendly environment
- Governance, administration, documentation, and compliance systems
- Community and parent engagement, and stakeholder coordination

4.3 Tool and System Development

- Develop quality assessment tools, observation checklists, rating rubrics, and scoring systems.

- Integrate risk management (early warning systems, escalation protocols, audit readiness)
- Develop SOPs for quality monitoring and validation (assessment, review, validation, escalation, and follow-up action).
- Design formats for centre-level improvement plans, reporting and management Dashboard.
- Recommend digital/dashboard-based quality tracking systems (e.g., Red-Yellow-Green status).
- Ensure tools are user-friendly for field teams while maintaining analytical rigour management review, compliance, and audit readiness.

4.4 Pilot Testing and Refinement

- Support pilot implementation of framework across selected crèches.
- Test the feasibility, usability, and contextual appropriateness of the tools and standards.
- Analyse pilot findings to identify gaps and contextual adaptations.
- Refine framework and tools based on learning.

4.5 Institutionalisation and Capacity Support

- Recommend governance and review mechanisms.
- Define roles, responsibilities, and review frequency.
- Conduct orientation/capacity-building sessions.
- Provide recommendations for scale-up across geographies.

5. Key Deliverables

Deliverable	Description	Timeline
Inception Report	Methodology, work plan, consultation plan	Within 3 weeks
Diagnostic Note	Review of systems and quality gaps	Within 6 weeks
Draft QA Framework	Domains, indicators, implementation approach	Within 10 weeks
Draft Tools & SOPs	Assessment tools and monitoring processes	Within 12 weeks
Pilot Report	Field findings and revisions	Within 18 weeks
Final QA Package	Final framework, tools, SOPs	Within 22 weeks
Scale-up Note	Roll-out and capacity-building plan	Within 24 weeks

6. Duration

The assignment will be carried out over a period of **six months** from the date of contract signing.

7. Geographic Scope

The assignment will cover:

- Worksite crèches (Delhi-NCR)
- Urban crèches (Delhi-NCR and Karnataka)
- Rural/tribal crèches (Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra)

The framework must balance contextual flexibility with a unified quality architecture.

8. Methodology

A mixed-method and participatory approach is expected, including:

- Desk review
- Key informant interviews
- Field visits
- Structured observations
- Validation workshops
- Pilot testing and iterative refinement

9. Eligibility Criteria

Agencies should have:

- 7–10 years of relevant experience in ECD/ECCE, childcare systems, or quality assurance
- Proven experience in developing frameworks, tools, or assessment systems
- Experience across diverse socio-economic contexts.
- Strong understanding of Indian policy frameworks related to childcare and ECCE.
- Experience in system strengthening and capacity building.
- A multidisciplinary team

10. Team Composition

Suggested team:

- Team Leader / QA Specialist
- ECCE Expert
- Child Health, Nutrition and Safety Expert

- MEL Specialist
- Systems/Process Expert
- Data/Dashboard Specialist (if applicable)

11. Proposal Submission

A. Technical Proposal

- Organisational profile
- Understanding of assignment
- Methodology and work plan
- Approach to design and institutionalisation
- Team composition with CVs
- Relevant experience

B. Financial Proposal

- Professional fees
- Travel and field costs.
- Consultation and pilot costs
- Technology costs (if applicable)
- Taxes
- Deliverable-linked payment plan

12. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Weightage
Technical Proposal	70%
Financial Proposal	30%

13. Payment Terms

Milestone	Payment
Inception Report	15%
Diagnostic + Draft Framework	20%
Tools & SOPs	20%
Pilot Report	20%
Final QA Package	25%

14. Reporting and Coordination

The agency will report to a designated focal person/committee. Regular review meetings will be conducted to track progress.

15. Confidentiality and Ownership

All outputs will remain the property of Mobile Creches. The agency must maintain strict confidentiality.

16. Submission Details

- Submission deadline: June 10, 2026
- Email: ajanta.k@mobilecreches.org
- Subject: *Proposal for External Agency – Quality Assurance Framework for Crèches*

17. Disclaimer

Mobile Creches reserves the right to accept or reject proposals, modify the scope, or cancel the process at any stage without prior notice.