Background

Mission
The mission of the Better Care Network (BCN) is to facilitate active information exchange and collaboration on the issue of children without adequate family care and advocates for technically sound policy and programmatic action on global, regional, and national levels in order to:
- Reduce instances of separation and abandonment of children;
- Reunite children outside family care with their families, wherever possible and appropriate;
- Increase, strengthen, and support family and community-based care options for children;
- Establish international and national standards for all forms of care for children without adequate family care and mechanisms for ensuring compliance; and
- Ensure that residential institutions are used in a very limited manner and only when appropriate.

The BCN is guided by the UNCRC; the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (welcomed by the UN General Assembly in 2009) and the 2003 Stockholm Declaration on Children and Residential Care. The BCN is an interagency network and does not have independent legal status.

Overview and Structure
Recognizing the urgent need for concerted action, the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) and the Africa Bureau for Sustainable Development of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UNICEF, and Save the Children UK, came together to form the Better Care Network (BCN) in 2003. Initially, the BCN functioned as a loose association of organizations and individuals exchanging information through a listserv. As the listserv grew, and more information was exchanged via the network, it became clear that the BCN served a vital role and only a formal, full-time coordinator was required.

In response, in 2005, the organizations mentioned above, together with CARE USA, agreed to form and serve on the BCN Steering Committee. As of September 2012, the members of the Steering Committee are: CARE USA, Firelight Foundation, Save the Children UK, UNICEF, and DCOF and the Office of HIV/AIDS (OHA) of USAID. In August 2005, the BCN secretariat was established with the hiring of a Coordinator, who was provided office space at UNICEF headquarters. An Assistant Coordinator was hired in 2008, and in 2012, this position was upgraded to Project Coordinator. BCN’s Secretariat continues to be based at UNICEF headquarters and operates under the guidance and direction of the Steering Committee. BCN’s activities are undertaken with the financial and technical support of its Steering Committee members, as well as additional resources that they are able to secure for the BCN. Since 2005, BCN has had a technical Advisory Committee, which currently includes 48 key resource people in the area of alternative care. On behalf of the Steering Committee, its co-chairs, currently representatives of Save the Children and DCOF, oversee the formulation and implementation of
strategies, policy decisions, and activities; ensures the effective functioning of the Steering Committee; and oversees and supports the work of the Secretariat. At present, CARE USA is the fiscal agent and supports the human resources of the Secretariat. In 2013, Save the Children will assume this role.

Since becoming fully operational in August 2005, the Better Care Network (BCN) has helped inform and influence global action for children without adequate family care. By connecting and informing an interdisciplinary global network of organizations and individuals, the BCN helps generate momentum towards systemic change. The BCN addresses the on-going need for collaboration on relevant issues by identifying, distilling, and linking practitioners, policymakers, academicians, and others with essential information regarding children without adequate family care and relevant policy and programmatic information. The BCN's active and growing listserv has over 3,000 members globally. The BCN’s website (www.bettercarenetwork.org) is one of the most comprehensive libraries on better care issues globally with over 900 resources. The Advisory Group of committed child care experts plays an active role in identifying information and documents relevant to specific requests made to the secretariat. During the last few years, the BCN’s work has expanded to include provision of technical tools for practitioners, publication of working papers, active engagement in and co-facilitating of working groups, supporting national and regional coordination initiatives, and convening of international and regional alternative care conferences.

**Better Care Network: Three-Year Strategic Plan and Options for Organizational Structure**

In March 2011, the BCN Steering Committee and Secretariat undertook a strategic visioning review. The review consisted of:

1. Brief review and analysis of BCN’s work to date by reviewing BCN documentation and interviewing BCN Steering Committee and Secretariat;
2. One day visioning and strategic review workshop with BCN Steering Committee members and Secretariat;
3. Recommendations on BCN strategic direction based on the discussion at the workshop.

The visioning review identified the following three strategic pillars for the Better Care Network:

1. **Information Exchange**
   
   BCN is committed to its core information exchange function while pursuing opportunities for strategic growth in areas of distilling and guiding the use of information.

2. **Standards setting and technical guidance**
   
   BCN’s strategic priorities include quality development, standards setting and technical guidance through technical products, support and training.

3. **Proactive Leadership/Brokerage**
   
   BCN’s additional core strategic priority is its leadership and brokerage role among the care community and across organizations and stakeholders. This includes building constituency, including with national and regional affiliates, and mobilize and convene

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1 It is expected that by end of May 2013, the agency supporting HR and acting as BCN’s fiscal agent will transition to Save the Children. As highlighted in these terms of reference, the longer-term organizational structure to best support BCN’s Strategic Plan is to be agreed upon and, if different to the upcoming structure, a transition plan will be developed and put in place.
around this agenda across FBOS, CBOS, donors, decision makers, policy makers, practitioners and academics.

**Building on the findings of this review, the BCN Steering Committee and Secretariat seek the assistance of a consultant or a team of consultants, with extensive experience in strategic planning, organizational and network development and child protection and alternative care, to work in close collaboration with the BCN Steering Committee and Secretariat to develop i) a three-year strategic plan and ii) recommendations regarding appropriate organizational options to best support the implementation of the strategic plan.** The strategic plan will include the priority programmatic areas and related activities agreed upon and how these will specifically contribute to what BCN is aiming to accomplish within the three strategic pillars identified during the visioning review and highlighted above.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the strategic planning and organizational review is to carry out the two tasks identified above:

- Develop a three-year strategic plan building on the recommendations from the visioning review conducted in 2011; and
- Review possible organizational structures and make recommendations on the suitability of different options that will support implementation of BCN’s three-year strategic plan.

While the BCN would ideally prefer to see the two pieces of work conducted by the same consultant(s), the Steering Committee and Secretariat are prepared to consider separate proposals for either of these two tasks.

**Scope of Work**

It is envisaged that the development of the strategic plan and organizational recommendations will ideally take place in three-stage consultative process. *Note that consultants wishing to submit a proposal for only one of the two pieces of work should adapt this scope of work in the light of the specific task that they wish to undertake.*

**Stage One: Data Gathering and Analysis to inform the three-year Strategic Plan and Organizational Options Review** *(This work will be completed prior to the one day meeting described in stage 2)*

- Review relevant documentation of BCN’s work and findings from key evidence reviews including: agreements and recommendations from the visioning and strategic review

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2 General findings and recommendations will be provided by the Secretariat for the following as appropriate: The Way Forward Project; US Evidence Summit and US National Action Plan on Children in Adversity; UNICEF meta evaluations on violence (up-coming); Information from the African Union Consultations; Information from the SRSG on Violence against Children consultations; Information from the Central European and Central Asia Child Care Reform Consultations; Information from Post 2015 discussions; Who is a Vulnerable Child; JLICA (Joint Learning Initiative) Home Truths; Taking Forward the Framework; HIV & Residential Care Study (up-coming); Every Child Scan Results (up-coming); ODI/Child Poverty and Child Protection Survey (up-coming);
exercise conducted in 2011; BCN 2008 assessment conducted by CARE; BCN Guiding Principles; recent work plans; reports and other relevant documents.

- Finalize the set of questions for, respectively, the in-depth interviews with key experts and networks as well as the online survey(s) of other key stakeholders including the BCN Advisory Group, listserv members and selected governments and national actors.
- Conduct in-depth interviews with 15-20 key experts to further identify BCN’s strategic involvement in family strengthening and alternative care and the particular areas of work to focus on.
- Review and summarize data gathered from in-depth interviews; online surveys; and findings from key evidence reviews.
- Findings will then be synthesized by the consultant/team of consultants in a background paper of no more than 15 pages. The background paper will inform and serve as a basis for the development of the three-year strategic plan to be discussed during the workshop to be conducted in Stage 2.
- Review and research literature on organizational structures available for networks and conduct interviews with relevant networks as required. This will build on the findings from and be informed by a Network Exchange Meeting organized in June 2012 and selected findings gathered by BCN as well as the consultant/team of consultants own expertise in organizational development.
- The consultant/team of consultants will develop a paper of no more than 15 pages identifying and assessing the different organizational structures potentially relevant for BCN.
- The consultant/team of consultants will draft an initial outline or overview of a three-year strategic plan of no more than 5 pages informed from the background papers.

Stage Two: One Day Strategic Plan Meeting

- The consultant/team of consultants, following an initial review by the secretariat, will share with the participants the background paper, the organizational options review and the draft outline/overview three-year strategic plan for feedback in advance of the meeting. The focus of the meeting will be to develop and refine the main elements of the three-year strategic plan, review the organizational structure available and determine the most suitable option(s).
- The consultant/team of consultants, in consultation with the Steering Committee and Secretariat, and with their support, will prepare and facilitate the strategic planning meeting, including preparation of the meeting’s objectives and agenda.

Recommendations from Global Wilton Park Conference and the Nairobi 2009 and Dakar 2012 Regional Conferences

3 A Child Rights Network Exchange Meeting was held in New York on July 19 2012. Leaders from 10 networks met to exchange experiences and build further connection and knowledge sharing around governance, management, resource mobilization, program approach and member engagement issues. A report was produced to summarize these exchanges and findings.

4 This includes a review of over 30 networks conducted by the Social Service Workforce Alliance, an organizational options review conducted by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack and the organizational framework used by Together for Girls Partnership to define best organizational structure.
• The consultant/ team of consultants will facilitate a one-day strategic planning meeting incorporating the feedback received prior to the workshop. The workshop participants will include Steering Committee members and the BCN Secretariat.

Stage Three: BCN’s Strategic Plan and Organizational Recommendations
(This work will be completed after the strategic plan meeting)

• Following and incorporating input from the one-day meeting, the consultant/ team of consultants will prepare a full draft of a three-year Strategic Plan of no more than 15 pages, which sets out strategic goals, priority areas, key activities and related indicators. After being reviewed by the secretariat, the draft will be sent to the Steering Committee for review and, following the feedback received, the consultant/ team of consultants will finalize the strategic plan.

• Following and incorporating input from the one-day meeting, the consultant/ team of consultants will provide recommendations on the suitability of different options, and recommend (if a change of structure seems necessary) how BCN could transition to a different structure during the next three years to best implement the strategic plan. The recommendations should include the financial considerations associated with the different option(s) proposed.

Over the course of the work, the consultant/ team of consultants will have access to, and get feedback and support from, BCN Secretariat and Steering Committee members. BCN and partner organisations will also facilitate contact with the regional and country offices, as needed, of BCN Steering Committee members. A one day strategic plan meeting is to be conducted as well as a final online or face-to-face meeting to present the final three-year Strategic Plan for approval; review recommended organizational option(s) to support the three-year strategic plan and agree on best way forward. Exact dates and location are to be determined with the Steering Committee and Secretariat.

Outputs
1. Background Paper of no more than 15 pages with findings from review of BCN documentation, informant interviews, online survey results and findings from key evidence scans and reviews;
2. Organizational Options Review Paper of no more than 15 pages;
3. Outline/overview of a three-year Strategic Plan of approximately 5 pages which will be informed by the Background Paper;
4. Preparation and facilitation of 1-day Strategic Planning Meeting;
5. A three-Year Strategic Plan for BCN of no more than 15 pages which will be informed by the background paper and the Strategic Plan meeting;
6. Recommendations of best organizational options to support the three-year Strategic Plan of no more than 5 pages which will be informed by the Organizational Options Review Paper and the Strategic Plan meeting.

Supervision and Liaison
Supervision and facilitation of consultant/ team of consultants supported by Severine Chevrel, Senior Coordinator, Better Care Network
Suggested Timeframe
Detailed briefing received from, and queries dealt with by BCN Secretariat.

- **Stage One:**
  - 3 days to conduct BCN and sector related literature reviews;
  - 1 day to finalize questions;
  - 5 days to conduct informant interviews;
  - 5 days to develop background paper from the analysis of the findings from informant interviews, online surveys and findings from environment scans and reviews to develop background paper;
  - 5 days to review and research literature on organizational structures available for networks and conduct selective interviews with relevant networks as required;
  - 3 days to develop a paper of no more than 15 pages identifying and assessing the different organizational structures potentially relevant for BCN;
  - 2 days to draft an outline/overview of a three-year strategic plan informed from the background documents.

- **Stage Two:** 3 days for workshop preparatory work plus facilitation of a one-day workshop.

- **Stage Three:** 7 days to:
  - Draft the three-year Strategic Plan and incorporate comments/feedback of BCN Steering Committee and Secretariat;
  - Incorporate comments/feedback of BCN Steering Committee and Secretariat on the organizational structures review and draft the recommendations on the structure (and any necessary transition) required to best implement the three-year strategic plan.

The suggested consultancy timeline is 34 days total over a 4 to 5 months period.

It is foreseen to include a one-day meeting and a final online or face-to-face meeting (exact date and location to be determined with the Steering Committee and Secretariat).

**Consultants proposing to undertake only one of the two tasks should adapt this timeframe accordingly and include this amended timetable in their proposal.**

**Consultant Qualifications**
The successful candidate and/or institution will be able to demonstrate skills in the following areas.

**Required**
- Proven experience and expertise in participatory strategic planning and organizational and network development and experience in following up on those plans, particularly for network organisations
- Proven experience and expertise in facilitating high-level meetings for international development practitioners
- Excellent English written and verbal communication and facilitation skills
- Excellent writing and analytical skills relevant to the preparation of strategic plans
- Experience in gathering and analysing complex data from a variety of sources including written documents, interviews, group discussions
• A good working knowledge of (1) current child protection issues and approaches (ideally in the fields of family strengthening and alternative care) and (2) the purpose and form of organizational networks in child protection and development/humanitarian action
• A degree in public administration, NGO development, organisational development or related field or a degree in social science, social policy, international affairs or related field with substantial training, knowledge, skills and experience obtained through other routes in NGO or organizational development

Desirable
• Expertise and experience around social and child protection issues in international context;
• At least five years of operating experience in conducting organisational reviews and implementing the recommendations arising from such reviews, particularly for network organisations;
• Familiarity with US law and federal rules regarding charitable non-profits as described under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
• Additional language skills.

Travel
The preparatory work is to be undertaken at the consultants’ home or institution. Travel to workshop location (to be determined, likely on the east coast of the United States).

Budget
Daily consultancy rate is to be provided. Travel and accommodation costs to workshop location will be covered by contract.

Application
Qualified candidates are requested to submit to severine.chevrel@bettercarenetwork.org by March 22nd 2013 a cover letter, CV along with a suggested methodology and timeline for the assignment. The application should also include an example of a strategic plan conducted by the consultant/ team of consultants. Please indicate your ability, availability and daily rate to undertake the terms of reference above.

Note: While the BCN would ideally prefer to see the two pieces of work conducted by the same consultant(s), the Steering Committee and Secretariat are prepared to consider separate proposals for either of these two tasks. Consultants proposing to undertake only one of the two tasks should adapt the timeframe accordingly and include the amended timetable in their proposal.