

GEROS Evaluation Quality Assurance Tool

Version: February, 2020

EVALUATION OF ESWATINI COUNTRY PROGRAMME 2016-2020

REPORT RATING SUMMARY			
Overall Rating		91%	Highly Satisfactory
• • • • •	Highly Satisfactory (87.5% - 100%)	4	Exceeds UNICEF/UNEG standards for evaluation reports and decision makers may use the evaluation with a high degree of confidence
• • • • -	Satisfactory (62.5% - 87.49%)	3	
• • - - -	Fair (34.76% - 62.49%)	2	
• - - - -	Unsatisfactory (0% - 34.75%)	1	
REPORT DETAILS			
Title of the evaluation report		EVALUATION OF ESWATINI COUNTRY PROGRAMME 2016-2020	
Report sequence number		Eswatini/63/2019/16129	
Region		ESAR	
Year of report		2019	
Office		UNICEF Eswatini	
Coverage (countries)		Eswatini	
ToRs present		Yes	
Date of review (dd/mmm/yyyy)		February 25, 2020	
Name of review firm		AIMS	
CLASSIFICATION OF EVALUATION REPORT			
Management of evaluation (Managerial control and oversight of evaluation decisions)		UNICEF managed	
Unicef goal areas			
Every child survives and thrives		Yes	
Every child learns		Yes	
Every child is protected from violence and exploitation		No	
Every child lives in a safe and clean environment		Yes	
Every child has an equitable chance in life		Yes	
Gender equality (cross-cutting)		Yes	
Humanitarian action (cross-cutting)		No	
Evaluation object		Country Programme	
Evaluation type		Summative and formative	
Evaluation strategy		Mixed methods	
Evaluation design (primary method used)		Theory-based	
Evaluation level		Output & Outcome	
Geographic scope		National	
Primary SDG(s) covered (number)		None mentioned	
EQA Summary: <i>The rater will provide top line issues for this evaluation relevant for feedback to senior management (positive and negative), summarizing how the evaluation report meets or fails to meet all criteria. As relevant, the rater will highlight best practice/added value elements and the level of complexity of the evaluation.</i>			
The report is well written and clearly meets the requirements of UNICEF evaluations. OECD-DAC criteria guided the process which included a theory-based methodology utilizing mixed methods and utilization-focused approaches. The methodology was appropriate but could have been more robustly presented. The findings are well supported, and conclusions and lessons learned address both strengths and areas for improvement including unintended effects (positive and negative). The recommendations are action-oriented, clearly directed mainly to UNICEF as the primary intended users, although the Kingdom of Eswatini and key civil society organizations could be targeted as implementing partners and primary intended users. The evaluation process is notable for the level of engagement with stakeholders. Areas for improvement include providing more clarity on the geographic and beneficiary focus of the Country Programme, a more indepth gender analysis, and a more concise Executive Summary.			
Recommendations for Improvement: <i>The rater will identify topline recommendations that would improve the evaluation, and be specific to the sections of the report where shortcomings were found. Cite resources that may assist evaluation managers in overseeing future evaluations as relevant.</i>			
Although the evaluation is highly satisfactory, there are few areas for improvement. The executive summary is informative, but at 10 pages, it could be more concisely presented to increase the likelihood of being read in full by all intended users. It is recommended that a maximum 5-page Executive Summary be specified in the ToR. It would also be useful for the context section to include a description of intended beneficiaries by type and location. The methodology section could be strengthened by a clear explanation of the sampling strategy and rationale, and of data analysis processes. The analysis of gender issues could have gone further by addressing power imbalances between men and women, particularly as girls and boys are impacted differently by HIV and AIDS, teenage pregnancies, and school drop out.			
SECTION RATINGS			
SECTION A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)		67%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 1.	Can the executive summary inform decision-making?	67%	
i	An executive summary is provided that is of relevant conciseness and depth for primary intended users (Maximum of approximately 5 pages unless otherwise specified in ToR).	No	The executive summary provides a sufficient level of depth to serve as a standalone document for use by its primary intended audience, however it is twice as long as the recommended length.
ii	Includes all necessary elements (overview of the intervention, evaluation purpose, objectives and intended audience, evaluation methodology, key findings, key conclusions, key recommendations) as per the ToR.	Yes	The Executive Summary is well-written, balanced and covers all necessary elements per UNEG Standards. The ToR does not specify reporting requirements.

	iii Includes all the necessary information to understand the intervention and the evaluation AND does not contain information not already included in the rest of the report.	Yes	It contains sufficient information on the intervention (scope, results, theory of change, and budget) and evaluation, and reflects what is included in the report.
SECTION B:	BACKGROUND (weight 5%)	83%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 2.	Is the object of the evaluation clearly described?	75%	
	i Clear and relevant description of the intervention, including: location(s), timelines, cost/budget, and implementation status.	Yes	The report provides a clear and relevant description of the Country Programme, a clear timeline for its evolution and key milestones, as well as a cost/budget analysis per programme component, and clear presentation of stakeholders and partners.
	ii Clear and relevant description of intended beneficiaries by type (i.e., institutions/organizations; communities; individuals...), by geographic location(s) (i.e., urban, rural, particular neighbourhoods, town/cites, sub-regions...) and in terms of numbers reached (as appropriate to the purpose of the evaluation).	Partially	Geographic coverage is not clearly indicated although it is presumably the whole country. The intended beneficiaries are mentioned in the executive summary but not explained in the main report.
Question 3.	Is the context of the intervention clearly described?	75%	
	i Clear and relevant description of the context of the intervention (relevant policy, socio-economic, political, institutional, international factors) and how context relates to the implementation of the intervention.	Partially	There is a clear and relevant contextual description of the magnitude and impact of the multiple deprivations faced by children and adolescents, especially those in rural areas and peri-urban areas, and relevant national efforts. This section could be improved by adding appropriate regional and global efforts, especially linking to the SDGs.
	ii Clear and relevant description (where appropriate) of the status and needs of the target groups for the intervention.	Yes	The needs of the children and adolescents are clearly defined in sub-section 1.2 in terms of the full spectrum of deprivations and needs at each stage of a child's life.
Question 4.	Are key stakeholders and their contributions clearly identified?	100%	
	i Identification of implementing agency(ies), development partners, primary duty bearers, secondary duty bearers, and rights holders.	Yes	The stakeholder mapping in Table 3 provides a good summary of the key stakeholders.
	ii Identification of the specific contributions and roles of key stakeholders (financial or otherwise), including UNICEF.	Yes	The specific responsibilities and roles of the key stakeholders are presented in Table 3.
SECTION C:	EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE (weight 5%)	100%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 5.	Is the purpose of the evaluation clearly described?	100%	
	i Specific identification of how the evaluation is intended to be used and to what this use is expected to achieve.	Yes	It is clear the evaluation is intended to inform the design of the next Country Programme.
	ii Identification of appropriate primary intended users of the evaluation.	Yes	Intended users are summarized in Table 4.
Question 6.	Are the objectives and scope of the evaluation clear and realistic?	100%	
	i Clear and complete description of what the evaluation seeks to achieve by the end of the process with reference to any changes made to the objectives included in the ToR (if applicable).	Yes	The purpose and objectives of the evaluation are clearly stated -to support the development of the next UNICEF Country Programme Document (CPD) and to provide accountability to the national stakeholders and the Executive Board.
	ii Clear and relevant description of the scope of the evaluation: what will and will not be covered (thematically, chronologically, geographically with key terms defined), as well as, if applicable, the reasons for this scope (e.g., specifications by the ToRs, lack of access to particular geographic areas for political or safety reasons at the time of the evaluation, lack of data/evidence on particular elements of the intervention).	Yes	The scope is specified in terms of covering the period January 2016 to June 2019 – 3.5 years of implementation of the Country Programme with the main focus on assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Country Programme.
Question 7.	Is the results chain or logic well articulated?	100%	
	i Clear description of the intervention's intended results, or of the parts of the results chain that are applicable to the evaluation.	Yes	Table 2 in Chapter 2 clearly presents the results frameworks in terms of outputs and outcomes.
	ii The causal relationship between outputs and outcomes is presented in narrative and/or graphic form (theory of change, logic model, results chain, evaluation matrix, etc.).	Yes	Figure 1 in sub-section 2.2 clearly presents the causal relationship between outputs and outcomes in the reconstructed theory of change model. The evaluators provide very informative narrative of the potential causality and assumptions in relation to theory of change.
SECTION D:	EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (weight 20%)	79%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)

Question 8.	Does the evaluation provide a relevant list of evaluation criteria that are explicitly justified as appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation? UNICEF evaluation standards refer to the OECD/DAC criteria. Not all OECD/DAC criteria are relevant to all evaluation objectives and scopes. Standard OECD DAC Criteria include: Relevance; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Sustainability; Impact. Evaluations should also consider equity, gender and human rights (these can be mainstreamed into other criteria). Humanitarian evaluations should also consider Coverage; Connectedness; Coordination; Protection; Security.	100%	
	i Clear and relevant presentation of the evaluation framework including clear evaluation questions used to guide the evaluation.	Yes	Annex B presents the evaluation framework including key evaluation questions and clear sources of data and indicators for each criteria. The evaluation questions are summarized in Table 5.
Question 9.	Does the report specify methods for data collection, analysis, and sampling?	75%	
	i Clear and complete description of a relevant design and set of methods that are suitable for the evaluation's purpose, objectives and scope.	Yes	The evaluation uses a theory-based design discussed in sub-section 3.4. Detailed data collection methods are provided in Annex E. The evaluation also uses a utilization-focused approach to ensure that the results of the evaluation would be useful to UNICEF Eswatini.
	ii Clear and complete description of the data sources, rationale for their selection and sampling strategy. This should include a description of how diverse perspectives are captured (or if not, provide reasons for this), how accuracy is ensured, and the extent to which data limitations are mitigated.	Partially	Although not mentioned in the report, it is clear that the evaluation uses purposive sampling to ensure gender parity and diverse voices mainly specific government officials and representatives of civil society organizations that had partnership with UNICEF. The evaluation did not interview children or adolescents due to time and budgetary constraints for the fieldwork. This section could be improved by providing a detailed description of the sampling approach, rationale for evaluation design and multiple sources of evidence.
	iii Clear and complete description of the methods of analysis, including triangulation of multiple lines and levels of evidence (if relevant).	Partially	There is a brief description of methods of data analysis in sub-section 3.4.3. The range of techniques include content and thematic analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. Although it is apparent that triangulation was done, the report does not mention or describe the process.
	iv Clear and complete description of limitations and constraints faced by the evaluation, including gaps in the evidence that was generated and mitigation of bias, and how these were addressed by the evaluators (as feasible).	Yes	The evaluation consultant describes four risks and three limitations faced and mitigation strategies in sub-section 3.4.5. Key constraints included limited time and budget for fieldwork, constant changes in the results framework, and turnover of key political appointees in the ministries after the 2018 elections.
Question 10.	Are ethical issues and considerations described? The evaluation should be guided by the UNEG ethical standards for evaluation. As such, the evaluation report should include:	75%	
	i Explicit reference to the obligations of evaluators (independence, impartiality, credibility, conflicts of interest, accountability).	Yes	Sub-section 3.4.4 describes how ethical considerations were applied in compliance with the UNICEF Evaluation Policies and UNEG Ethical Guidelines. The report mentions how the evaluator maintained independence, impartiality, and avoidance of conflict of interests.
	ii Description of ethical safeguards for participants appropriate for the issues described (respect for dignity and diversity, right to self-determination, fair representation, compliance with codes for vulnerable groups, confidentiality, and avoidance of harm). For those cases where the evaluation involves interviewing children, explicit reference is made to the UNICEF procedures for Ethical Research Involving Children.	Partially	The report is not explicit about how the evaluation ensured ethical safeguarded for participants besides mentioning but not describing confidentiality. This section could be improved with more depth.
SECTION E:	EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 25%)	100%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 11.	Do the findings clearly address all evaluation objectives and scope?	100%	
	i Findings marshal sufficient levels of evidence to systematically address all of the evaluation's questions and criteria.	Yes	The findings are substantiated with relevant evidence presented in text, tables and figures with sources of evidence referenced in the footnotes throughout the report. The findings are systematically organized by evaluation criteria, evaluation questions, and programme components.

	ii	Reference to the intervention's results framework in the formulation of the findings.	Yes	The evaluation used the intervention's outcomes, outputs, and indicators throughout the findings section in framing the key arguments in the report.
Question 12.		Are evaluation findings derived from the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available, objective, reliable and valid data and by accurate quantitative and qualitative analysis of evidence.	100%	
	i	The evaluation clearly presents multiple lines (including multiple time series) and levels (output, outcome, and appropriate disaggregation) of credible evidence.	Yes	The evaluation used multiple lines and levels of credible evidence.
	ii	Findings are clearly supported by and respond to the evidence presented, including both positive and negative. Findings are based on clear performance indicators, standards, benchmarks, or other means of comparison.	Yes	The report is balanced, including both positive and negative findings. The report provided unexpected findings as well. For example, it is noted in the report that adolescents who revealed their HIV status experienced discrimination from others.
	iii	The causal factors (contextual, organizational, managerial, etc.) leading to achievement or non-achievement of results are clearly identified. For theory-based evaluations, findings analyse the logical chain (progression -or not- from implementation to results).	Yes	The evaluation used a theory-based design and utilization-focused approach. Findings were analyzed according to the logic chain, with factors leading to achievement or non-achievement of results articulated.
Question 13.		Does the evaluation assess and use the intervention's Results Based Management elements?	100%	
	i	Assessment of the adequacy of the intervention's monitoring system (including completeness and appropriateness of results/performance framework -including vertical and horizontal logic; M&E tools and their usage).	Yes	Yes, the evaluation assessed the adequacy of the intervention's monitoring system and found it inadequate. The evaluation found data gaps for several indicators and changes to the results framework that were not always documented clearly.
	ii	Assessment of the use of monitoring data in decision making.	Yes	The evaluation found that UNICEF Eswatini has generated a substantial body of evidence since 2016 to inform policies, programming and planning, such as the budget briefs for the health. Education and social sectors have made budgetary allocation and expenditure trends transparent and useful as advocacy tools. It is noted in the report that the results of the analytical work on social protection was used to support the design of a social protection cash plus programme.
SECTION F:		EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED (weight 10%)	100%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 14.		Do the conclusions present an objective overall assessment of the intervention?	100%	
	i	Clear and complete description of the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention that adds insight and analysis beyond the findings.	Yes	The conclusions clearly capture strengths and weaknesses.
	ii	Description of the foreseeable implications of the findings for the future of the intervention (if formative evaluation or if the implementation is expected to continue or have additional phase).	Yes	The conclusions and lessons learned present implications for the design of the next Country Development Programme.
	iii	The conclusions are derived appropriately from findings.	Yes	The conclusions are clearly derived from the findings. References to sections in the report provides traceability about the main conclusions and the findings supporting them.
Question 15.		Are logical and informative lessons learned identified?	100%	
	i	Identified lessons that stem logically from the findings, presents an analysis of how they can be applied to different contexts and/or different sectors, and takes into account evidential limitations such as generalizing from single point observations.	Yes	The lessons learned are derived from the evaluation findings and indicate the relevant evaluation questions and conclusions.
SECTION G:		RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)	100%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 16.		Are recommendations well grounded in the evaluation?	100%	
	i	Recommendations are logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions.	Yes	Recommendations are clearly derived from findings and conclusions; relevant conclusions are referenced.
	ii	Recommendations are useful to primary intended users and uses (relevant to the intervention and provide realistic description of how they can be made operational in the context of the evaluation).	Yes	Operational suggestions are given for primary intended users.
	iii	Clear description of the process for developing recommendations, including a relevant explanation if the level of participation of stakeholders at this stage is not in proportion with the level of participation in the intervention and/or in the conduct of the evaluation.	Yes	This was well done. Recommendations were developed in a consultative process as a result of a participatory workshop held with the Joint Programme, and follow-up rounds of validation.
Question 17.		Are recommendations clearly presented?	100%	
	i	Clear identification of target group for action for each recommendation (or clearly clustered group of recommendations).	Yes	Each recommendation is targeted to a group or intended user for action.
	ii	Clear prioritization and/or classification of recommendations to support use.	Yes	The recommendations are classified by intended user, urgency, impact, and level of difficulty.

SECTION H:	EVALUATION STRUCTURE/PRESENTATION (weight 5%)	100%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 18.	Does the evaluation report include all relevant information?	100%	
	i Opening pages include: Name of evaluated object, timeframe of the evaluation, date of report, location of evaluated object, names and/or organization(s) of the evaluator(s), name of organization commissioning the evaluation, table of contents -including, as relevant, tables, graphs, figures, annexes-; list of acronyms/abbreviations, page numbers.	Yes	All relevant information is provided on the opening pages of the report.
	ii Annexes should include, when not present in the body of the report: Terms of Reference, Evaluation matrix, list of interviewees, list of site visits, data collection instruments (such as survey or interview questionnaires), list of documentary evidence. Other appropriate annexes could include: additional details on methodology, copy of the results chain, information about the evaluator(s).	Yes	Annexes includes all relevant information and documents.
Question 19.	Is the report logically structured?	100%	
	i The structure is easy to identify and navigate (for instance, with numbered sections, clear titles and sub-titles).	Yes	The structure is easy to follow and the sections and subsections are numbered.
	ii Context, purpose and methodology would normally precede findings, which would normally be followed by conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.	Yes	The report conforms to the standard order of an evaluation report.
Question 20.	Is the report well presented?	100%	
	i Report is easy to understand (written in accessible way for intended audience) and generally free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors.	Yes	The report is accessible.
SECTION I:	EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 10%)	79%	Comments on Rating (include explanations for any criterion not rated)
Question 21.	Did the evaluation design and style consider incorporation of the UN and UNICEF's commitment to a human rights-based approach to programming, to gender equality, and to equity?	83%	
	i Reference and use of rights-based framework, and/or CRC, and/or CCC, and/or CEDAW and/or other rights related benchmarks in the design of the evaluation.	Yes	The rights-based framework such as CRC, rights of people living with disabilities, and gender equality are used in the description of contexts, methodology, and key findings.
	ii Clear description of the level of participation of key stakeholders in the conduct of the evaluation, (for example, a reference group is established, stakeholders are involved as informants or in data gathering).	Yes	The participation of key stakeholders in the reference group meeting is mentioned.
	iii Stylistic evidence of the inclusion of these considerations which can include: using human-rights language; gender-sensitive and child-sensitive writing; disaggregating data by gender, age and disability groups; disaggregating data by socially excluded groups.	Partially	The report uses human-rights language, as well as gender-sensitive and child-sensitive writing. However, the list of persons consulted is neither disaggregated by gender, institution, or country nor are the findings disaggregated accordingly.
Question 22.	Does the evaluation assess the extent to which the implementation of the intervention addressed gender, equity & child rights?	75%	
	i Identification and assessment of the presence or absence of equity considerations in the design and implementation of the intervention (such as the involvement in the intervention of right holders, duty bearers, and socially marginalized groups, and the differential benefits received by different groups of children).	Yes	The report uses a rights-based frameworks in the design and in discussing contexts, relevance, effectiveness, and recommendations.
	ii Clear proportionality between the level of participation in the intervention and in the evaluation, or clear explanation of deviation from this principle (this may be related to specifications of the ToRs, inaccessibility of stakeholders at the time of the evaluation, budgetary constraints, etc.).	Partially	The report mentions but does not describe in detail the participation of key stakeholders in the design and implementation of the evaluation. Furthermore, it is noted that almost equal numbers of women and men were interviewed. However, the report does not provide many quotes to give voices to the men and women interviewed.
Question 23.	Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators? (Note: this question will be rated according to UN SWAP standards)	78%	
	i GEEW is integrated in the Evaluation Scope of analysis, and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data will be collected.	Satisfactorily integrated	GEEW is clearly integrated in the evaluation scope of analysis. The evaluation questions and indicators include gender considerations but could go further by addressing power imbalances between men and women, particularly as girls and boys are impacted differently by HIV and AIDS, teenage pregnancies, and school drop out.
	ii A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.	Fully integrated	The methodology notes that equitable representation of men and women was an aim of the sample. Evaluation participants were gender disaggregated. Ethical issues were considered.

iii	The evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations reflect a gender analysis.	Satisfactorily integrated	Despite including gender specific evaluation questions and indicators, the report does not provide explicit analysis of gender differences between men and women or boys and girls. Overall, although considered under Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations, gender analysis could be more indepth.
SWAP Rating Guidance			
i	GEEW is integrated in the Evaluation Scope of analysis, and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data will be collected. a. Does the evaluation assess whether sufficient information was collected during the implementation period on specific result indicators to measure progress on human rights and gender equality results? b. Does the evaluation include an objective specific to assessment of human rights and gender equality considerations or was it mainstreamed in other objectives? c. Was a standalone criterion on gender and/or human rights included in the evaluation framework or mainstreamed into other evaluation criteria? d. Is there a dedicated evaluation question or sub-question regarding how GEEW was integrated into the subject of the evaluation?		
ii	A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected. a. Does the evaluation specify how gender issues are addressed in the methodology, including: how data collection and analysis methods integrate gender considerations and ensure data collected is disaggregated by sex? b. Does the evaluation methodology employ a mixed-methods approach, appropriate to evaluating GEWE considerations? c. Are a diverse range of data sources and processes employed (i.e. triangulation, validation) to guarantee inclusion, accuracy and credibility? d. Does the evaluation methods and sampling frame address the diversity of stakeholders affected by the intervention, particularly the most vulnerable, where appropriate? e. Were ethical standards considered throughout the evaluation and were all stakeholder groups treated with integrity and respect for confidentiality?		
iii	The evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations reflect a gender analysis. a. Does the evaluation have a background section that includes an intersectional analysis of the specific social groups affected by the issue or spell out the relevant normative instruments or policies related to human rights and gender equality? b. Do the findings include data analysis that explicitly and transparently triangulates the voices of different social role groups, and/or disaggregates quantitative data, where applicable? c. Are unanticipated effects of the intervention on human rights and gender equality described? d. Does the evaluation report provide specific recommendations addressing GEWE issues, and priorities for action to improve GEWE or the intervention or future initiatives in this area?		