

## UNICEF PNG Convergence Programme

### Evaluability Assessment

## INCEPTION REPORT - 24 November 2021

### 1 Overview

The inception report responds to the detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Convergence Programme Design - **Evaluability Assessment assignment** and the subsequent approach discussed and agreed upon during zoom meetings and follow up emails in October and November 2021.

#### 1.1 Rationale

To promote readiness for the evaluation of the **new Convergence Programme**, an evaluability assessment needs to be carried out. The recommendations of this evaluability assessment aim to improve the terms of reference (ToR) for a future evaluation of the programme, and improve the design and conduct of the evaluation itself. The findings in themselves will also inform **future revisions to the programme design, and annual work plans**.

#### 1.2 Purpose, objective and use of the Evaluability document

This **Evaluability Assessment** seeks to answer important questions on whether **UNICEF Convergence Programme** is in a condition to be evaluated in terms of programme design, availability of information and institutional context, and whether an evaluation is justified, feasible and likely to provide useful information. The specific objectives of this evaluability assessment as described in the Terms of Reference (TORs) were:

- Through consultative approaches and **review of existing information refine and articulate the convergence programme theory of change** in line with the stated objectives of the programme
- **Take stock of challenges faced** in the evaluation of the country programme convergent outcome areas and identify the threats to the evaluation of the forthcoming convergence programme.
- **Catalogue the information available** as the baseline for the programme, and analyze the completeness and quality of the data, and the adequacy of systems to deliver the information needed to measure the progress and results of the programme
- **Identify and articulate 7 to 9 relevant, specific, realistic evaluation questions** of interest to the programme stakeholders
- Complete an evaluability assessment report, following the template provided (**Annex I**).

The intended users of this **Evaluability Assessment** are the future evaluators and UNICEF PNG Country Office, UNICEF Australia and UNICEF Aotearoa New Zealand. This assessment will be used to develop the scope and evaluation questions so as to ensure that they can be answered through available primary and secondary sources of information. Choices on what will be included and excluded from the evaluation, and on what data-collection methodologies are required and appropriate, should be based on this evaluability assessment.

## 2 Context

### 2.1 UNICEF PNG

**Convergence is a strategy articulated in the UNICEF CPD 2018 - 22 for programme implementation to maximize efficiency and delivery of results for children but to date has not been operationalized.** Recognizing that over the years, what has been made evident is that the decisions made by local governments often determine the well-being of children and adolescents. This is increasingly true with the trends in decentralization. Convergence programming seeks to complement UNICEF's traditional mode of implementing separate sectoral outcomes to deliver results for children. Convergence in a selected geographical location will require focusing and synchronization of resources and services on key flagship UNICEF sectoral programmes and strengthening multi-sectoral and inter-agency coordination and consultation.

To operationalise a Convergence programme strategy, UNICEF PNG initially identified Hagen Central District in 2018 as a focus location for the introduction of convergence programming. However, due to the 7.5 magnitude earthquake that occurred in February 2018, and then the subsequent localised measles outbreak and response critical office resources were channeled to these priorities. This resulted in a number of critical steps that were left unfinished, such as the finalisation of the documentation supporting the design of packages of integrated interventions and the identification of partners able to implement the convergence strategy. The implementation of activities in 2019 were significantly delayed due to weak capacities of implementing partners, confronting security challenges, and limited commitment from local authorities. Further implementation delays were experienced due to COVID-19 in 2020.

Despite the challenges, UNICEF PNG remains committed to demonstrate and evaluate that programme convergence achieves improved results for every child by reducing disparities, barriers to service delivery and vulnerability. Learning from the problematic introduction of the Convergence strategy, it is seen as critical to invest time for the foundational preparatory design work to anchor integrated programme interventions in consultation with local authorities and the participation of adolescents. As such, after careful consideration of the lessons learned of the earlier convergence experience, UNICEF PNG is proposing this current initiative targets two geographic locations to demonstrate, measure and evaluate results **through convergence programming in Nawaeb District, Morobe Province and Bogia District, Madang Province.** As noted, these two geographic locations were chosen based on child deprivation index analysis in addition to additional variables relating to available structures, willing partners and overall operating environment.

As part of the preparatory design work a comprehensive bottle neck analysis was conducted in both selected districts in August and September 2021. The rapid assessment gathered disaggregated data based on sex, age and disability which will assist in making need-based interventions.

**To further promote readiness and implementation of the Convergence Programme it was decided to carry out an Evaluability assessment.** The timing of the Evaluability Assessment is to further improve the project design prior to implementation and prepare for a future evaluation.

### 3 Approach and Methodology

#### 3.1 Methodology

**Framework:** The methodology adopted will use the framework proposed by **Rick Davies to guide this evaluability assessment**<sup>1</sup>. This framework suggests that an evaluability assessment should look at three broad types of issues: **(1) Programme design, (2) Availability of information, and (3) Institutional context**. These issues are aligned with the objectives of this evaluability assessment as outlined in the TORs. The framework's value-added consists in its checklist of relevant questions regarding each of these three criteria, ensuring comprehensive coverage of matters pertinent to evaluability. Answers to these questions, once collated, provide an indication of whether an evaluation can and should be conducted, or not. Relevant questions of this checklist will be reproduced and answered in Section 3 ("findings") of the evaluability assessment.

**Sources of Information:** This evaluability assessment relies on two principal sources of information:

**Documents shared** by UNICEF PNG CO including; country office annual reports; the 2018 - 2022 Country Programme Document (CPD); Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP); Programme Strategy Notes for each outcome; data extracted from Results Assessment Modules (RAM); draft Programme Convergence design document (and previous preparation documents); draft bottleneck analysis reports for Bogia and Nawaeb prepared by World Vision PNG as well as other relevant sectoral reports and UNICEF Head Quarters (HQ) documents such as the new 2022-2025 UNICEF Strategic Plan and other guidance notes.

**Consultations will be undertaken with UNICEF PNG CO colleagues, UNICEF Aotearoa NZ, UNICEF Australia, the Multi-Country Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Pacific and where feasible, other partners from relevant Government Ministries and Development Partners.** The aim of these consultations is to clarify expectations, understand the programme structure, access and communicate existing and missing information, discuss methodological options and logistics for data-collection, and build ownership of any future evaluation process. In particular, the consultant will consult with section chiefs and/or officers in charge, sector specialists of each of the five sectors to be evaluated.

#### 3.2 Draft and finalize the Evaluability assessment report document

This deliverable will include the following:

- Draft all narrative parts and annexes of the Evaluability assessment document as per the ToR and in compliance with the guidance, in close consultation with, and with input as appropriate from: the Multi-Country Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Pacific, UNICEF PNG; UNICEF Australia; UNICEF New Zealand, World Vision PNG and other stakeholders as directed.
- Finalize draft incorporating all timely comments received.

The document will seek to be concise, up to 17 pages (7,000 words), excluding annexes.

### 4 Limitations and challenges

The scope and reach of the evaluability assessment will be limited due to COVID-19 restrictions to **a desk review and discussions with the Multi-Country Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Pacific,**

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<sup>1</sup> *Planning Evaluability Assessments. A Synthesis of the literature with recommendations. Report of a study commissioned by the Department for International Development. Working Paper 40, October 2013*

UNICEF PNG CO colleagues, UNICEF Australia and UNICEF Aotearoa NZ and where feasible, other partners from relevant Government Ministries and Development Partners, in developing its findings and recommendations.

The challenging operating environment of the escalating humanitarian crisis in PNG due to COVID-19 means UNICEF colleagues and other Development Partners may not be in a position to prioritize the evaluability exercise and more broadly Programme Convergence preparation due to competing and more urgent priorities. This has been mitigated by using opportunities for discussions of the convergence programme design to also consult with colleagues and donor partners about its evaluability, since design of the future evaluation of the programme is a critical part of the design of the pilot programme itself. By reaffirming the importance of a summative evaluation of the programme for accountability purposes also prioritised the evaluability exercise.

## 5 Schedule, deliverables, and responsibilities

### 5.1 Schedule and deliverables of consultant

Deliverables/Outputs	Target Due Dates
Output 1: <u>Inception report</u> , detailing the methodology for developing the scope, structure and the contents of the Evaluability assessment document for review and comments by PME	<b>5 November 2021</b>
Output 2: Refine and articulate the <u>convergence programme theory of change</u> in line with the stated objectives of the programme (Theory of Change document, following UNICEF guidelines)	<b>26 November 2021</b>
Output 3: <u>Catalogue the information available</u> as the baseline for the programme, and analyse the completeness and quality of the data, and the adequacy of systems to deliver the information needed to <u>measure the progress and results of the programme</u> .	<b>26 November 2021</b>
Output 4: <u>First draft</u> of the Evaluability assessment document, for review and comments by UNICEF PNG Section Chiefs, through the Multi-Country Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Pacific Islands. This will include articulation of 7 to 9 relevant, specific, realistic evaluation questions of interest to the programme stakeholders.	<b>3 December 2021</b>
Output 3: <u>Final Evaluability assessment document</u> taking into consideration the feedback provided by UNICEF PNG on the first draft	<b>10 December 2021</b>

### 5.2 Institutional Arrangements

Work is being undertaken under the overall guidance of the Multi-Country Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Pacific, and managed on a day-to-day basis by the office of the PME Specialist PNG in close co-operation with the Programme Management Team (PMT) PNG.

**Annex I: Working outline for Evaluability assessment document**

**An Evaluability Assessment checklist**

This checklist has been extracted from pages 19-23 of the following report:

Davies, R., 2013. *Planning Evaluability Assessments: A Synthesis of the Literature with Recommendations*. Report of a Study Commissioned by the Department for International Development. Available on at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/248656/wp40-planning-eval-assessments.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248656/wp40-planning-eval-assessments.pdf)

Please refer to that report for information on the origins and rationale for this checklist.

<b>. Project Design</b> (as described in a Theory of Change, Logical Framework or narrative)	
<b>Clarity?</b>	Are the long-term impact and outcomes clearly identified and are the proposed steps towards achieving these clearly defined?
<b>Relevant?</b>	Is the project objective clearly relevant to the needs of the target group, as identified by any form of situation analysis, baseline study, or other evidence and argument? Is the intended beneficiary group clearly identified?
<b>Plausible?</b>	Is there a continuous causal chain, connecting the intervening agency with the final impact of concern?  Is it likely that the project objective could be achieved, given the planned interventions, within the project lifespan? Is there evidence from elsewhere that it could be achieved?
<b>Validity and reliability?</b>	Are there <i>valid</i> indicators for each expected event (output, outcome and impact levels)? I.e. will they capture what is expected to happen? Are they <i>reliable</i> indicators? I.e. will observations by different observers find the same thing?
<b>Testable?</b>	Is it possible to identify which linkages in the causal chain will be most critical to the success of the project, and thus should be the focus of evaluation questions?
<b>Contextualised?</b>	Have assumptions about the roles of other actors outside the project been made explicit? (both enablers and constrainers) Are there plausible plans to monitor these in any practicable way?
<b>Consistent?</b>	Is there consistency in the way the Theory of Change is described across various project multiple documents (Design, M&E plans, work plans, progress reports, etc.)
<b>Complexity?</b>	Are there expected to be multiple interactions between different project components? [complicating attribution of causes and identification of effects] How clearly defined are the expected interactions?
<b>Agreement?</b>	To what extent are different stakeholders holding different views about the project objectives and how they will be achieved? How visible are

	the views of stakeholders who might be expected to have different views?
<b>Information availability and adequacy of systems to deliver the same</b>	
<b>Is a complete set of documents available?</b>	...relative to what could have been expected? E.g. Project proposal, Progress Reports, Evaluations / impact assessments, Commissioned studies
<b>Do baseline measures exist?</b>	<p>If baseline data is not yet available, are there specific plans for when baseline data would be collected and how feasible are these?</p> <p>If baseline data exists in the form of survey data, is the raw data available, or just selected currently relevant items? Is the sampling process clear? Are the survey instruments available?</p> <p>If baseline data is in the form of national or subnational statistics, how disaggregated is the data? Are time series data available, for pre-project years?</p>
<b>Is there data on a control group?</b>	Is it clear how the control group compares to the intervention group? Is the raw data available or just summary statistics? Are the members of the control group identifiable and potentially contactable? How frequently has data been collected on the status of the control group?
<b>Is data being collected for all the indicators?</b>	Is it with sufficient frequency? Is there significant missing data? Are the measures being used reliable i.e. Is measurement error likely to be a problem?
<b>Is critical data available?</b>	Are the intended and actual beneficiaries identifiable? Is there a record of who was involved in what project activities and when?
<b>Is gender disaggregated data available?</b>	In the baseline? For each of the indicators during project intervention? In the control group? In any mid-term or process review?
<b>Is disability data available?</b>	In the baseline? For each of the indicators during project intervention? In the control group? In any mid-term or process review?
<b>If reviews or evaluations have been planned...</b>	Are the reports available? Are the authors contactable? Is the raw data available? Is the sampling process clear? Are the survey instruments available?
<b>Do existing M&amp;E systems have the capacity to deliver?</b>	Where data is not yet available, do existing staff and systems have the capacity to do so in the future? Are responsibilities, sources and periodicities defined and appropriate? Is the budget adequate?

<b>3. Institutional context</b>	
<b>Practicality</b>	
<b>Accessibility to and availability of stakeholders?</b>	Are there physical security risks? Will weather be a constraint? Are staff and key stakeholders likely to be present, or absent on leave or secondment? Can reported availability be relied upon?
<b>Resources available to do the evaluation?</b>	Time available in total and in country? Timing within the schedule of all other activities? Funding available for the relevant team and duration? People with the necessary skills available at this point?
<b>Is the evaluation timing right?</b>	Is there an opportunity for an evaluation to have an influence? Has the project accumulated enough implementation experience to enable useful lessons to be extracted? If the evaluation was planned in advance, is the evaluation still relevant?
<b>Coordination requirements?</b>	How many other donors, government departments, or NGOs need to be or want to be involved? What forms of coordination are possible and/or required?
<b>Utility</b>	
<b>Who wants an evaluation?</b>	Have the primary users been clearly identified? Can they be involved in defining the evaluation? Will they participate in an evaluation process?
<b>What do stakeholders want to know?</b>	What evaluation questions are of interest to whom? Are these realistic, given the project design and likely data availability? Can they be prioritised? How do people want to see the results used? Is this realistic?
<b>What sort of evaluation process do stakeholders want?</b>	What designs do stakeholders express interest in? Could these work given evaluation the questions of interest and likely information availability, and resources available?
<b>What ethical issues exist?</b>	Are they known or knowable? Are they likely to be manageable? What constraints will they impose?
<b>What are the risks?</b>	Will stakeholders be able to manage negative findings? Have previous evaluation experiences prejudiced stakeholder's likely participation?