

# GEROS Evaluation Quality Assurance Tool

Version: September 2021

## Final evaluation of the "EU and UNICEF for Early Childhood Development in Montenegro"

REPORT RATING SUMMARY			
<b>Overall Rating</b>	78%	Satisfactory	
●●●●●	Exceptional (96% - 100%)	5	
●●●●○	Highly Satisfactory (87.5% - 95.99%)	4	
●●●○●	Satisfactory (62.5% - 87.49%)	3	Meets UNICEF/UNEG standards for evaluation reports and decision makers may use the evaluation with confidence
●●○●●	Fair (35% - 62.49%)	2	
●○○●●	Unsatisfactory (0% - 34.99%)	1	

REPORT DETAILS	
<b>Title of the evaluation report</b>	Final evaluation of the "EU and UNICEF for Early Childhood Development in Montenegro"
<b>Report sequence number</b>	Republic of Montenegro/66/2024/19232
<b>Region</b>	ECAR
<b>Year of report</b>	2023
<b>Office</b>	ECARO
<b>Coverage (countries)</b>	Montenegro, with specific focus on Podgorica, Kotor, Bijelo Polje
<b>ToRs present</b>	Yes
<b>Date of review (dd/mmm/yyyy)</b>	27.09.2024
<b>Name of review firm</b>	IOD PARC

CLASSIFICATION OF EVALUATION REPORT	
<b>Management of evaluation (Managerial control and oversight of evaluation)</b>	UNICEF managed
<b>UNICEF goal areas (Alignment with strategic plan priorities)</b>	
Every child survives and thrives	Yes
Every child learns	No
Every child is protected from violence and exploitation	No
Every child lives in a safe and clean environment	No
Every child has an equitable chance in life	No
Gender equality (cross-cutting)	Yes
Humanitarian action (cross-cutting)	No
<b>Evaluation object</b>	Policy/Norms/Standards
<b>Evaluation type</b>	Summative
<b>Evaluation strategy</b>	Mixed methods
<b>Evaluation design (primary method used)</b>	Non-experimental
<b>Evaluation level</b>	Outcome
<b>Geographic scope</b>	National
<b>Primary SDG(s) covered (number)</b>	3, 4, 5, 16

**EQA Summary:** 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.

This is an evaluation of the 'EU and UNICEF for Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Montenegro' Action. The report meets UNICEF evaluation standards. The main strengths and weaknesses of the report are outlined below along with recommendations for improvement.

**Strengths**

- **Section B: Background** – The Evaluation Report provides a clear description of the context for the evaluation. It also clearly outlines the status and needs of the rights holders/beneficiaries of the intervention.
- **Section C: Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope** – The purpose of the evaluation is clearly described, explaining what its intended use and users are. The latter is clearly presented in Table 1. The objectives and scope are clearly described. The Evaluation Report also provides a visual of the theory of change as well as the logical framework in the Annex of the Report, with an accompanying narrative in the main body. This shows the relationship between the outputs and outcomes, which the evaluation seeks to assess.
- **Section D: Evaluation Design and Methodology** – The evaluation questions are sub-questions are appropriate to meeting the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. There is also a clear line of sight between the questions, evaluation matrix including the indicators, and the data collection tools. Data sources for the evaluation are appropriate, using both qualitative and quantitative. The evaluators also provide the criteria for each of the data collection methods. Ethical considerations are also described and are reflected in the protocols and data collection templates provided in the Annex.
- **Section E: Evaluation Findings** – The findings section is structured systematically. It also makes use of the intervention's logical framework and theory of change. It uses both qualitative and quantitative data. There is sufficient evidence of triangulation.
- **Section G: Recommendations** – The recommendations are practical and aimed at target audience. There is a table provided that identifies groups of duty-bearers responsible, alongside prioritisation rating and timeframe against each recommendation. The process for developing and validating recommendations is described.

**Weaknesses**

- **Section A: Executive Summary** – It is difficult to understand the intervention from the information provided in the ToRs. Evaluators are encouraged to outline key components of the intervention to give the audience a sense of what will be assessed. In addition, the length of the Executive Summary exceeds the 5-paged limit.
- **Section B: Background** – While the duty bearers and key partners are identified, there is no description of what their roles are and the linkages between them. It is also unclear what the breakdown of the financial and in-kind contributions are and who has made them.
- **Section D: Evaluation Design and Methodology** – As the evaluation is described as having elements of a theory of change, the examination of assumptions and causal pathways are not clear from the evaluation framework. It would be helpful if evaluators elaborated on how they would approach this. There is also no explanation for how the evaluation uses a realist approach. In addition, while the evaluation team provide the sampling criteria for each of the data collection methods proposed, it is not clear what the basis is for the number of participants and the information is also not disaggregated.
- **Section E: Evaluation Findings** – Overall, findings are supported by the evidence presented. However, some of the findings are focused on presenting evidence against indicators rather than taking a step back to draw the evidence together in order to answer the main and/or sub-evaluation question directly. An example is provided in 13.ii below. The evaluation also does not discuss assessing the intervention's monitoring systems in the findings section, aside from a brief commentary about the sources of data for some indicators.
- **Section F: Evaluation Conclusion and Lesson Learned** – The lessons are concisely worded but some lessons would benefit from further detail to be useful to an audience who was not involved in the intervention (please see 16.ii below for an example).

**Recommendations for Improvement:** The rater will identify topline recommendations to improve the evaluation, and be specific to the sections of the report where shortcomings were found. As relevant, resources will be cited to assist evaluation managers in overseeing future evaluations.

- **Section A: Executive Summary** - Evaluators are encouraged to expand their description of the intervention by, for example, outlining key components of the intervention to give the audience a sense of what will be assessed. Evaluators can also consider consolidating the lessons and recommendations as these are nearly three pages in length.
- **Section B: Background** – It would be helpful if evaluators could, more explicitly, identify the main stakeholders alongside a brief description of their role and contribution and showing any linkages between them. This can be presented as a stakeholder map and/or table. It would also be helpful as a basis for developing a sampling strategy.
- **Section D: Evaluation Design and Methodology** – It would be helpful for evaluators to elaborate on how they utilised the approaches the mention such as realist evaluation. Evaluators can also consider including an explanation for the sample size, noting down limitations, if any. In addition, evaluators are encouraged to disaggregate their sample, as relevant.
- **Section E: Evaluation Findings** – While it is evident that the evaluators have aimed to systematically assess and analyse the data by the judgment criteria presented in the evaluation framework, the evaluation report would benefit from team members taking a step back to reflect to draw the evidence together in order to answer the main and/or sub-evaluation question directly. In addition, evaluators are encouraged to provide an assessment of the intervention's monitoring system in order to support decision-making, if another phase or form of the intervention were to take place.
- **Section F: Evaluation Conclusion and Lesson Learned** – Evaluators can consider sign-posting to relevant sections in the report and provide an explanation for why this is a lesson to take forward to other similar future interventions.

## SECTION RATINGS

SECTION A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)		67%	Comments on Rating
<b>Question 1.</b>	Can the executive summary inform decision-making?		
i	Is clearly presented, serves as a standalone document useful for informing decision making, and is of relevant conciseness and depth for key users (Maximum of 5 pages unless otherwise specified in ToR).	Partially	The Executive Summary is densely presented although it has clear titles and sub-tiles that make it easy to follow. While it can serve as a standalone document, it lacks sufficient detail about how the 'Action' (i.e. the intervention) has been implemented. There is a section titled 1.1 that describes the 'evaluation object'. However, this is limited to the broad aims of the intervention, what the budget is, the main partners and beneficiaries but not about the Action itself. While it is difficult to summarise a large intervention, outlining key components of the intervention will give the audience a sense of what will be assessed through the evaluation. The length of the Executive Summary is six pages, exceeding the five-page limit specified in the ToR. Evaluators can consider consolidating the lessons and recommendations as these are nearly three pages in length.
ii	Includes all necessary elements (overview of the intervention, evaluation purpose, objectives and intended audience, evaluation methodology, key conclusions on findings, lessons learned if requested, key recommendations) as per the ToR.	Yes	The Executive Summary includes all the necessary elements, which includes an overview of the intervention, evaluation purpose, objectives and intended audience. It also includes separate sections on the evaluation methodology, key findings and conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.
iii	Includes all significant information needed to understand the intervention and the evaluation AND does not introduce new information from what is presented in the rest of the report.	Partially	As mentioned above, it does not include sufficient information to understand the intervention. This makes it difficult to understand the key findings and conclusions. Evaluators are encouraged to add more detail here and better consolidate the section on lessons learned and recommendations or draw out key lessons and recommendations for the purpose of an executive summary. The information in the Executive Summary is fairly consistent with what is presented in the main report.
SECTION B: BACKGROUND (weight 5%)		71%	Comments on Rating
<b>Question 2.</b>	Is the object of the evaluation clearly described?		
i	Clear and relevant description of the intervention, including: location(s), timelines, cost/budget, and implementation status.	Partially	<p>A description of the intervention is provided in section 2.1. It provides an overview of what the Action aims to achieve, its objectives and expected results. However, similar to what was said for the Executive Summary, it is difficult to understand the specifics of the intervention. What has helped is the signpost in this section to Annex 2, which provides a logframe and ToC. The activities corresponding to the results are provided.</p> <p>The location of the intervention is mentioned under geographical scope, which says "the data collection process was conducted in Podgorica, Kotor, and Bijelo Polje, selected according to criteria such as level of implementation of the different components of the project and geographical coverage." This suggests that the intervention was not implemented evenly across these locations but there is no information provided to understand what took place where and when.</p> <p>The timeline is provided on p.23, which says that the evaluation covers the period of the Action implementation, which ran from August 2020 until November 2023 (the project had a period of extension from July 2023 until November 2023). The budget is provided on p.18, which is 1m EUR with additional external contribution or prop bono through partners such as foreign universities. This budget is not broken down by activity. The implementation has now come to a close as indicated by the timeline provided.</p>

	ii Clear and relevant description of intended rightsholders (beneficiaries) and duty bearers (state and non-state actors with responsibilities regarding the intervention) by type (i.e., institutions/organizations; communities; individuals...), by geographic location(s) (i.e., urban, rural, particular neighbourhoods, town/cities, sub-regions...) and in terms of numbers reached, with disaggregation by gender, age, disability... (as appropriate to the purpose of the evaluation).	Yes	<p>The duty bearers, and key partners, are identified on p.18. These include UNICEF, EU Delegation, Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MoESI), Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW). The location is not provided as these are national level government ministries. Perhaps it is typing error but the Ministries listed are described as 'main partners and beneficiaries' on the first page of the Executive Summary.</p> <p>On p.23, the main report outlines key stakeholders such as service providers. While no further information is provided here, some service providers are included under 'secondary users' of the evaluation such as "Institute for Public Health, primary health care institutions, hospitals, preschools, other service providers for children until the age of school entry, as well as international partners and civil society organizations (CSOs)" (p.18).</p> <p>The rights holders are identified in Table 1 and they include children aged 0 to 6 and their families, including vulnerable groups. Further detail on the needs of children in Montenegro is provided in the Context section.</p>
<b>Question 3.</b>	Is the context of the intervention clearly described?		
	i Clear and relevant description of the context of the intervention (i.e. relevant policy, socio-economic, political, cultural, power/privilege, institutional, international factors) and how context relates to the implementation of the intervention.	Yes	The context of the intervention is very clearly described. It includes a brief overview of the demographics, political context - including Montenegro's ratification of relevant UN conventions such as CRC, policies and strategies in the area of children's health, education and protection. It also discusses some of the gaps such as gaps in access and coverage of health care among Roma and Egyptian communities and that child development policies and services are not equally developed.
	ii Linkages drawn to the SDGs and relevant targets and indicators for the area being evaluated.	Partially	Links to the SDGs are provided in the Findings section under alignment with national policies and strategies (p.31).
	iii Clear and relevant description (where appropriate) of the status and needs of the rightsholders/beneficiaries of the intervention.	Yes	The status and needs of rights holders are clearly outlined in Section 2.2. For instance, it describes the low level of education attainment when compared to other countries. It also describes the uneven health care access among different groups, issues relating to home visits, challenges in preschool education access for vulnerable groups, issues with social protection systems and more.
<b>Question 4.</b>	Are key stakeholders, their relationships and contributions clearly identified?		
	i Identification of implementing agency(ies), development partners, right holders, and additional duty bearers and other stakeholders; and of linkages between them (e.g., stakeholder map) (if relevant).	Partially	The duty bearers, and key partners, are identified on p.18. These include UNICEF, EU Delegation, Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MoESI), Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW). Service providers identified (as secondary users) include Institute for Public Health, primary health care institutions, hospitals, preschools, other service providers for children until the age of school entry, as well as international partners and civil society organizations (CSOs). Table 1 provides a clear table of who the users are. It is assumed that these are the main stakeholders. However, there is no description of what their roles are and the linkages between them. It would be helpful if evaluators could, more explicitly, identify the main stakeholders alongside a brief description of their role and contribution and showing linkages between them. This would also be helpful to understand the sampling strategy for the evaluation as a stakeholder map or stakeholder table lays the ground work for the sampling.
	ii Identification of the specific contributions and roles of key stakeholders (financial or otherwise), including UNICEF.	Partially	This is not provided in a clear way. There is a part of the Report that speaks to the role of UNICEF but not of all key stakeholders. The financial contribution is mentioned as a contribution agreement from the EU and there is mention of other contributions but it is not clear how much this is and by whom. It does mention the pro bono contributions of certain foreign universities; however, it is unclear what these contributions entail and how they are provided. Evaluators are encouraged to include a separate section identifying the key stakeholders and describing their roles and contribution.
<b>SECTION C:</b>	<b>EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE (weight 5%)</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>Comments on Rating</b>
<b>Question 5.</b>	Is the purpose of the evaluation clearly described?		
	i Purpose of evaluation is clearly defined, including why it was needed at that point in time, its intended use, and key intended users.	Yes	The purpose of the evaluation is clearly defined in Section 3. This is a summative evaluation to assess the extent to which the intervention has succeeded or not in its objectives and desired results, looking at both short-term and long-term effects. While it is summative and is conducted towards the end of the intervention, its findings will help inform future programming in the area of early childhood development (ECD). Its intended use and users are clearly outlined in Table 1, which presents the users in the left-hand column and the corresponding use in the right-hand column.
<b>Question 6.</b>	Are the objectives and scope of the evaluation clear and realistic?		

	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 objectives are clearly outlined on p.22-23, which correspond to what is stated in the ToR. The main Evaluation Questions are the same but evaluators have sub-questions to help clarify and operationalise them. This is explained on p.24. The sub-questions are the same as those presented in the Inception Report (IR).
	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	There is a clear and relevant description of the scope of the evaluation in Section 4. This includes geographic scope, temporal scope, programmatic scope and population groups (i.e. stakeholders).
<b>Question 7.</b>	<b>Is the theory of change, results chain or logic well articulated?</b>		
	i Clear description of the intervention's intended results, or of the parts of the results chain that are applicable to, or are being tested by, the evaluation.	Partially	A logical framework and theory of change is provided in Annex 2. There is a description of it in Section 2.1 (p.18). While it says that the evaluation team 'adapted it', it is not clear what (if any) changes were made. The broader desired changes (e.g. enabling environment, institutional and individual capacity) are well described. However, activities lower down the chain are less clear from the logical framework and ToC (e.g. it is not clear what all the activities entail and who are responsible for delivering them etc.). It would be helpful if the evaluation team considered making these more explicit as the report says the evaluation will aim to "understand how the interventions were implemented and how they led to the planned results and outcomes." (p.25).
	ii Causal relationship between outputs and outcomes is presented in narrative and/or graphic form (e.g., results chain, logic model, theory of change, evaluation matrix).	Yes	The relationship between the outputs and outcomes is clearly presented in the Theory of Change in Annex 2. This is in narrative form. It includes the assumptions, which are also provided in narrative form in Section 2.1.
	iii For theory-based evaluations, the theory of change or results framework is assessed, and if requested in the ToR, it is reformulated/improved by the evaluators.	Yes	This evaluation is said to have 'elements of a theory-based evaluation'. The ToR requests that the theory of change is validated during inception phase. The Inception Report presents the ToC with a note that it was validated during inception based on an initial desk review (p.7 of IR).
<b>SECTION D:</b>	<b>EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY (weight 20%)</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>Comments on Rating</b>
<b>Question 8.</b>	<b>Does the evaluation use questions and the relevant evaluation criteria that are explicitly justified as appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation? <i>UNICEF evaluation standards refer to the OECD/DAC criteria - Relevance; Coherence; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Sustainability; Impact (not all are necessarily relevant for all evaluations). Evaluations should also consider equity and leaving no-one behind, gender and human rights based approach (these can be mainstreamed into other criteria). Humanitarian evaluations should also consider Coverage; Connectedness; Coordination; Protection; Security.</i></b>		
	i Evaluation questions and sub-questions are appropriate for meeting the objectives and purpose of the evaluation. The relevant criteria are specified and are aligned with the questions.	Yes	The evaluation questions and sub-questions are appropriate to meeting the objectives and purpose of the evaluation. The sub-questions were proposed by the evaluation team to help clarify during Inception and there are no changes from those in the Inception Report. The full questions and sub-questions are presented in Annex 1 within the evaluation framework. The questions are structured by OECD-DAC criteria identified in the ToRs and they are aligned with the questions.
	ii In addition to the questions and sub-questions, the evaluation matrix includes indicators, benchmarks, assumptions and/or other processes from which the analysis can be based and conclusions drawn.	Yes	The evaluation matrix includes criteria (column on indicators) against each of the sub-questions from which analysis can be based and conclusions drawn. This is available in Annex I.
<b>Question 9.</b>	<b>Does the report specify adequate methods for data collection, analysis, and sampling?</b>		
	i Evaluation design and set of methods are relevant and adequately robust for the evaluation's purpose, objectives and scope; and are fully and clearly described.	Partially	The evaluation design and set of methods are relevant for the evaluation's purpose and objectives. It utilises a theory-based approach and clearly explains why this is appropriate in section 5 (i.e. to determine the connection between the implemented interventions, short-term effects at the different level, assessing whether and how the ToC has been realised). It also aims to examine the validity of the assumptions made in the project ToC. The examination of assumptions and causal pathways are not clear from the evaluation framework and it would be helpful if evaluators elaborated on how they would approach this. It also mentions that the evaluation 'has characteristics of a realist evaluation' but it does not sufficiently explain how it will go about doing so. There is a footnote number related to the realist evaluation description (p.24) but, unfortunately, no footnotes or endnotes can be seen.

	ii Data sources are appropriate - these would normally include qualitative and quantitative sources (unless otherwise specified in the ToR) - and are all clearly described.	Yes	The data sources are appropriate. They include both qualitative and quantitative sources. Quantitative data includes secondary data analysis, based on monitoring data and self-reported data (p.25). A list of documents and sources for the secondary data analysis is provided in Annex 4, which includes a number of national and international sources and MICS. There was also a quantitative online survey shared with ECD professionals in the whole country. The data collection provides links to the criteria used for the survey. Qualitative data includes KIIs, FGDs and observations (p.26). The sampling strategy is provided in Annex 5. Overall, the data sources are appropriate although there are some questions about the sampling strategy, which is elaborated on in the next criterion.
	iii Sampling strategy is provided - it should include a description of how diverse perspectives are captured (or, if not, provide reasons for this).	Partially	The sampling strategy is provided for each of the methods used (online survey, KIIs, FGDs and observations). This is included in Annex 5. What this evaluation report does well, which is not always evident in all reports is the clarity of the criteria for selection. This is true for each of the methods mentioned above.  What is less clear is whether they achieved saturation point. For example, the number of key informants interviewed is 21 but it is unclear what the original target was and what was achieved. Similarly, the survey achieved 62 responses but it is unclear what the number of 'the total universe' is. It is difficult to ascertain from the information provided. Limitations do not mention any issues related to primary data collection.  What would also be helpful is for evaluators to include the location of the participants. Table 8 shows their location by 'national' and 'local', it would be good to indicate the locations of the 'local' level participants to understand coverage. In addition, evaluators can also be encouraged to disaggregate.
	iv Clear and complete description of the methods of analysis.	Yes	The method of data analysis is described on p.26. It mentions the use of NVivo and SPSS. It also mentions the use of inductive and deductive approach based on topics from the interview and FGD guides. It would be helpful to show how the evaluation framework was applied. However, the guides provided in the Annexes broadly follow the evaluation framework.
	v Methodology allows for drawing causal connections between outputs and expected outcomes.	Partially	The methodology should allow for drawing causal connections particularly as it employs a theory-based approach. In addition, the questions on effectiveness allow for these connections to be made. However, as mentioned in criterion 9i, the examination of assumptions and causal pathways are not clear from the evaluation framework and it would be helpful if evaluators elaborated on how they would approach this.
	vi 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	There is a short section on risks and limitations alongside mitigating steps (p29). These include steps the evaluation team had undertaken to mitigate the limitations identified in the ToRs such as lack of administrative data. It also provides mitigating steps for evidence gaps identified. While mitigation of bias is not explicitly mentioned, it is partially addressed under the first mitigating step involving wide stakeholder participation and triangulation.
<b>Question 10.</b>	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:		
	i Explicit and contextualized reference to the UNEG obligations of evaluators (independence, impartiality, credibility, conflicts of interest, accountability) and/or the principles in the 2020 revised UNEG Ethical Guidelines (integrity, accountability, respect, beneficence).	Yes	Adherence to UNEG's Norms and Standards and UNICEF's Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis is mentioned in Section 5.4. UNEG Ethical Guidelines are also referenced in the same section.
	ii Description of ethical safeguards for participants appropriate for the issues relevant to methodology and how they are applied (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.	Yes	A description of ethical safeguards is provided in Section 5.4. Their application is outlined on pg.28 in terms of how the interviews and FGDs were conducted. Clear protocols are also outlined in the Interview Guides and FGDs in Annex 6. The consent forms are included in Annex 10. The evaluation team has also provided a copy of their firm's policy on safeguarding in Annex 12. The Annex also includes an IRB approval letter.
<b>Question 11.</b>	Does the evaluation incorporate innovative practice that adds value to the evaluation process?		
	i Innovation practice is used to improve the quality of evaluation process. This could be evident in several ways such as the design of the methodology (i.e. use of technology for data gathering, extensive participatory processes, systematic analysis processes such as collaborative outcomes reporting and incorporation of big data, specific strategies to address complexity such as outcome harvesting, strong child rights focus), or ways of sharing of evaluation results.	No	There are no specific innovative practices used in this evaluation.
<b>SECTION E:</b>	<b>EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 25%)</b>	75%	Comments on Rating
<b>Question 12.</b>	Do the findings clearly address all evaluation objectives and scope?		

	i Findings marshal sufficient levels of evidence to systematically address all of the evaluation's questions, sub-questions and criteria.	Yes	The findings are structured by the OECD-DAC criteria. While the sections are not titled by according to the evaluation questions or are in the same order as presented in the Evaluation Report and Evaluation Framework, it is evident that the evaluation questions are addressed. In addition, some of the evidence is presented by the judgement criteria presented in the Evaluation Framework (for example, see 7.3.1 on 'potential for improvement on nurturing care').
	ii Explicit use of the intervention's results framework/ToC in the formulation of the findings.	Yes	The findings section makes explicit use of the intervention's results framework and theory of change in the formulation of findings. This is most evident in the section under 'effectiveness' (section 7.2) where the achievement of changes is structured according to the 'medium term changes' of the ToC. It also assesses the achievements against the indicators outlined in the intervention's logframe.
<b>Question 13.</b>	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.		
	i Evaluation uses credible forms of qualitative and quantitative data. It presents both output and outcome-level data as relevant to the evaluation framework. Triangulation is evident through the use of multiple data sources.	Yes	The evaluation uses both qualitative and quantitative data - this is evident through the findings section. It presents output and outcome related data, relevant to the evaluation framework. Triangulation is evident in the findings section, although this is not consistent. Overall, there is sufficient evidence of triangulation between different sources such as monitoring data, external surveys, survey conducted by the evaluation team, KIIs and FGDs.
	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 as relevant for each question.	Partially	Overall, findings are supported by the evidence presented. They are largely positive although there are areas highlighted that demonstrate weaknesses. While the findings are largely based on clear indicators identified in the evaluation matrix, they could have benefitted from evaluators taking a step back to look at how the different parts (e.g. different indicators and/or assessment criteria) are adding up. The way some of the findings are presented rely on the reader to piece the evidence and/or different parts together. For example, section 7.3.1 does not directly answer the main question or sub-question as it is structured by the indicators identified in the evaluation framework. Therefore, there is a missed opportunity to present an analysis, that draws on the evidence against each of the indicators/assessment criteria in the evaluation framework, to answer the main and/or sub-evaluation question directly.
	iii Causal factors (contextual, organizational, managerial, etc.) leading to achievement or non-achievement of results are clearly identified. For theory-based evaluations, findings also analyse the logical chain (progression -or not- from implementation to results).	Partially	There is an evaluation question that asks ' <i>what were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the Action objectives</i> ' and Section 7.2.3 of the findings addresses this. The section under effectiveness analyses the logical chain but mainly reports on the achievement/non-achievement of indicators for each of the results areas of the logical framework, rather than an analysis of the progression or the assumptions made. This is a missed opportunity to examine and discuss the linkages/causal pathways between the results areas, specific objectives and overall objective.
<b>Question 14.</b>	Does the evaluation assess and use the intervention's Results Based Management elements?		
	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) to support decision-making.	Partially	The evaluation does not discuss assessing the intervention's monitoring systems in the findings section of the report. However, there is a recommendation on the intervention's M&E framework, which says that the findings 'show that there are too many incoherent sources of information for some of the indicators, while for others they are scarce'. This is reflected in the lessons. This recommendation draws from a finding regarding the indicators for 'overall objective, indicator 1' that indicates the finding referred to in the recommendation (p.48). For this reason, it is scored as 'partial' but evaluators can consider drawing out issues related to the monitoring system more holistically if this is a broader issue.
<b>SECTION F:</b>	<b>EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS &amp; LESSONS LEARNED (weight 10%)</b>	63%	Comments on Rating
<b>Question 15.</b>	Do the conclusions clearly present an objective overall assessment of the intervention?		
	i Conclusions are clearly formulated and reflect the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. They are sufficiently forward looking (if a formative evaluation or if the implementation is expected to continue or have additional phase).	Yes	The conclusions are clearly formulated and reflect the purpose and main objective of the evaluation.
	ii Conclusions are derived appropriately from findings, and present a picture of the strengths and limitations of the intervention that adds insight and analysis beyond the findings.	Partially	The conclusions are derived from the findings, presenting mostly the strengths and some limitations of the intervention. However, as the conclusion is structured by the OECD-DAC criteria, similar to the findings, they provide a level of analysis beyond the findings for each criteria but not for the intervention, as a whole.
<b>Question 16.</b>	Are logical and informative lessons learned identified? [N/A if lessons are not presented and not requested in ToR]		

	i Identified lessons stem logically from the findings, have wider applicability and relevance beyond the object of the evaluation.	Partially	The Evaluation Report could provide sign-posting to relevant sections (findings or conclusion) so it is clearer where the lessons stem from. It is clearer in some cases than in others. For example, there is a lesson on monitoring and measurement of outcomes and ensuring indicators are clearly defined. However, it is unclear where indicator measurement is assessed in the findings section. Overall, the lessons have wider applicability beyond the intervention itself.
	ii Lessons are clearly and concisely presented, yet have sufficient detail to be useful for intended audience.	Partially	The lessons are concisely worded but some lessons would benefit from further detail to be useful to an audience who was not involved in the intervention. For example, there is a lesson about the importance of ensuring participation of all stakeholders, at a multisectoral level. However, the supporting description is limited. It says: <i>"The road is long and passes through a change in attitude, motivations, and capacity development in all sectors engaged with ensuring the rights of the children."</i> It is difficult to understand the rationale for the emphasis on stakeholder participation from this alone. It requires further elaboration. Evaluators could consider sign-posting to relevant sections in the report and provide a bit more of an explanation for why this is a lesson to take forward to other similar future interventions.
<b>SECTION G: RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>Comments on Rating</b>
<b>Question 17.</b>	Are recommendations well grounded in the evaluation?		
	i Recommendations align with the evaluation purpose, are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions.	Yes	Recommendations are aligned with the evaluation purpose, focusing on the ECD policy implementation and Action plan development, and also on development of ECD services and quality of services. They are clearly formulated and are broadly derived from the findings.
	ii Recommendations are useful and actionable for primary intended users and uses (relevant to the intervention); guidance is given for implementation, as appropriate.	Yes	The recommendations are practical and aimed at target audience, identified in last column. They are relevant to the intervention. Guidance for implementing recommendations is provided, where relevant.
	iii Process for developing the recommendations is described, and includes the Involvement of duty-bearers, as well as rights holders when feasible (or explanation given for why they were not involved).	Yes	The process for validating recommendations is described at the start of Section 9. It also explains how rights holders have been asked for their suggested recommendations during data collection stage, which the report says were taken into account when developing the recommendations. This is also evident in the interview guides in Annex 8.
<b>Question 18.</b>	Are recommendations clearly presented?		
	i Clear identification of groups or duty-bearers responsible for action for each recommendation (or clearly clustered group of recommendations). Clear prioritization and/or classification of recommendations to support use.	Yes	There is a clear identification of groups of duty-bearers responsible for actions for each recommendation, including those providing support (such as UNICEF). Table 4 also provides prioritisation rating and timeframe against each recommendation.
<b>SECTION H: REPORT STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION (weight 5%)</b>		<b>86%</b>	<b>Comments on Rating</b>
<b>Question 19.</b>	Does the evaluation report include all relevant information?		
	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	The opening pages are complete. They include the name of the evaluated object (intervention), timeframe for the evaluation, data of the report, location of the intervention, name of the evaluation firm, name of the commissioning organisation, table of contents that include figures, graphs, textboxes and tables. The contents page also include the Annexes. The opening pages also provide a list of acronyms/abbreviations and page numbers.
	ii Annexes include: terms of reference, evaluation matrix, list of interviewees, results chain/ToC/logical framework (unless included in report body), 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, information about the evaluator(s), etc.	Partially	The Annex includes the terms of reference, evaluation matrix, logical framework and ToC, data collection instruments (including protocols and consent forms), documentary evidence, IRB approval and other supporting information related to findings (e.g. achievement of expected results against targets). It does not include a list of interviewees or list of site visits. The site visits are mentioned in the main body of the report but it would be helpful to see a disaggregated list of interviewees by gender and location, as mentioned under sampling.
<b>Question 20.</b>	Is the report logically structured?		
	i Structure is easy to identify and navigate (for instance, with numbered sections, clear titles and sub-titles, well formatted).	Yes	The structure is easy to identify and navigate. Each section and sub-section is clearly titled, numbered and included in the Contents page.
	ii Structure accords to UNICEF guidelines for evaluation reports: context, purpose and methodology would normally precede findings, which would normally be followed by conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.	Yes	The structure is in accordance with UNICEF guidelines for evaluation reports with the context, purpose and methodology presented before the findings. The latter is then followed by conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.
<b>Question 21.</b>	Is the report well presented?		
	i Report is of reasonable length; it does not exceed number of pages that may be specified in ToR.	Yes	The report is a reasonable length of 50 pages (excluding the executive summary).
	ii Report is easy to understand (written in accessible way for intended audience) and generally free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors.	Partially	The report is easy to understand. However, there are a number of typos, spelling mistakes and run-on sentences. For example, under 1.1 there is a '.' right before a ':' (p.12). There is also inconsistency with spelling the word 'benefiting' and sometimes 'benefitting'. The footnotes and/or endnotes are missing although there are reference numbers in the text. Evaluators are encouraged to proof-read reports before they are submitted.

	iii Frequent use of visual aids (such as infographics, maps, tables, figures, photos) to convey key information. These are clearly presented, labelled, and referenced in text.	Yes	The report is relatively text heavy but it does incorporate some tables and figures to convey key information. As the report is under the maximum page limit, evaluators can consider adding more visuals or increasing the size of visuals in the report. They can also look at formatting changes to help break down the density of the text. However, this suggestion does not affect the score as it meets the criteria to include visual aids. These are also clearly presented, labelled and referenced in the text.
<b>SECTION I: EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 10%)</b>		71%	Comments on Rating
<b>Question 22.</b>	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?		
	i Reference and use of rights-based framework, and/or CRC, CCC, CEDAW and/or other rights related benchmarks in the design of the evaluation.	Partially	CRC and CRPD are referenced in the context section of the evaluation report. While, it is not clear if and how these frameworks were incorporated into the design of the evaluation, there is a section on findings that focuses on the government's alignment with children's rights.
	ii Clear description of the level of participation of key rights holders and duty bearers 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 rights holders and duty bearers is described in the report, through document collection, development of recommendations and validation.
	iii Language is empowering and inclusive, avoiding gender, heterosexual, age, cultural and religious bias, among others; use terminology of rights holders and duty bearers; data is disaggregated by marginalized group; differential results are assessed (distribution of results across different groups).	Partially	The language is empowering and inclusive, for instance, using the terminology of rights holders and duty bearers. There are no concerns about bias based on gender, age, cultural and religious bias. However, data is not always disaggregated. While some of this is explained as a limitation in sources available, the evaluators do not provide disaggregated information on their sample.
	iv Evaluation assesses the extent to which the implementation of the intervention addresses child rights and Leave No-one Behind (gender and other excluded and marginalized groups). It is disability inclusive.	Yes	The evaluation assesses the extent to which the implementation of the intervention addresses child rights and leave-no-one-behind, particularly as this is one of the primary objectives of the intervention (i.e. 'young children aged 0-6 years, including children with disabilities, have improved health and development in order to reach their full human potential'). It is disability inclusive.
<b>Question 23.</b>	Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators? (Note: this question will be rated according to UN SWAP standards with detail provided below)	6	
	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.	Fully integrated	GEEW is integrated into the evaluation scope of analysis as there is an evaluation question on human rights and promotion of gender equality as main evaluation questions. There are corresponding criteria on gender equality for both questions. Gender is also a consideration mentioned in the objectives.
	ii A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.	Satisfactorily integrated	A description of a gender-responsive methodology is limited. However, there is mention of gender consideration in the analysis (p.26). There are diverse data sources used to triangulate information. The sampling frame does not disaggregate by gender, which would be recommended. Ethical standards were considered for how all stakeholder groups would be treated including respect for confidentiality.
	iii The evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations reflect a gender analysis.	Partially integrated	The evaluation findings reflect a gender analysis. This is less apparent in the conclusions and recommendations.

### SWAP Rating Guidance

<p><b>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.</b></p> <p>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?</p> <p>b. Does the evaluation include an objective specific to assessment of human rights and gender equality considerations or was it mainstreamed in other objectives?</p> <p>c. Was a standalone criterion on gender and/or human rights included in the evaluation framework or mainstreamed into other evaluation criteria?</p> <p>d. Is there a dedicated evaluation question or sub-question regarding how GEEW was integrated into the subject of the evaluation?</p>
<p><b>ii A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.</b></p> <p>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?</p> <p>b. Does the evaluation methodology employ a mixed-methods approach, appropriate to evaluating GEWE considerations?</p> <p>c. Are a diverse range of data sources and processes employed (i.e. triangulation, validation) to guarantee inclusion, accuracy and credibility?</p> <p>d. Does the evaluation methods and sampling frame address the diversity of stakeholders affected by the intervention, particularly the most vulnerable, where appropriate?</p> <p>e. Were ethical standards considered throughout the evaluation and were all stakeholder groups treated with integrity and respect for confidentiality?</p>
<p><b>iii The evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations reflect a gender analysis.</b></p> <p>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?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>c. Are unanticipated effects of the intervention on human rights and gender equality described?</p> <p>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?</p>