

Terms of Reference

UNICEF Evaluation Office

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Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of the Guidance Note of the UN Secretary-General on Child Rights Mainstreaming

Table of Contents

Executive summary	2
1. Background and context	3
2. Purpose, use and scope	5
3. Evaluation questions	6
4. Methodology and approach	6
5. Governance and management arrangements	9
6. Evaluation team composition and requirements	10
7. Evaluation process and deliverables	11

Executive summary

Why this evaluation?

The **Guidance Note of the UN Secretary-General (S-G) on Child Rights Mainstreaming (CRM)** 2023 aims to integrate child rights across all United Nations (UN) activities. It is important therefore to understand the UN system's capacities and readiness to implement the Guidance Note, including the role of UNICEF and OHCHR in supporting coordination and implementation. This evaluability assessment will provide credible evidence in relation to existing mechanisms, actions, capacities, barriers and enablers with the aim of providing actionable insights to strengthen implementation. It will also enhance the evaluability of child rights mainstreaming across the UN system by developing an overarching theory of change, an evaluation framework, and a self-assessment tool and rubric for UN entities to monitor child rights mainstreaming.

What will the evaluation do?

Carried out by the independent UNICEF Evaluation Office at the request of the Office of the Executive Director and the Programme Group, this evaluation will:

1. **Determine the readiness of UN entities to operationalize and implement the Guidance Note's 'Framework for UN Action' (Objective 1).** This includes identifying the current mechanisms, actions, and capacities in place, as well as barriers and enablers, in relation to implementation of the Framework for UN Action (chapter 3 of the Guidance Note).
2. **Enhance the evaluability of child rights mainstreaming across the UN system, in accordance with the Guidance Note's 'Framework for UN Action' (Objective 2).** This includes defining an overarching theory of change, developing an evaluation framework, identifying data and analytical needs, and preparing for a future summative evaluation. The latter comprises the development of a self-assessment tool and rubric for UN entities to monitor child rights mainstreaming and define the requirements for a baseline assessment.

How will it be done?

The evaluation will adopt a theory-based, mixed-methods, and participatory approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data to ensure robust triangulation and credible findings. Data collection will include AI-supported document and literature reviews, monitoring data mapping, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, an online survey, and a piloted self-assessment tool and rubric.

Who will use it?

The primary audience for the EAFE is the Call to Action for Human Rights Inter-Agency Task Team on Child Rights Mainstreaming. UNICEF, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (OSRSG VAC), Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG CAAC), Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), and the Development Coordination Office (DCO) are also primary stakeholders. The secondary audience includes implementing partners, UN member states, and development and humanitarian partners with a special interest in child rights, international organizations with a child rights focus, child rights civil society organizations and children. This exercise will proactively recommend concrete actions to support UNICEF and the UN system's success in child rights mainstreaming, covering both external-facing and internal/operational dimensions, as outlined in the Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on Child Rights Mainstreaming.

When will it happen?

The EAFE will be conducted from January to June 2026.

1. Background and context

Guidance Note of the UN Secretary General on Child Rights Mainstreaming

Children are recognized under international law in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted in 1989, as subjects of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Systematic attention to child rights is necessary for the UN to be fully inclusive and able to deliver on its mandate across all pillars, including upholding “all rights of all people”,¹ achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensuring peace and security.

The S-G of the UN mandates the mobilization of the UN system to collectively strengthen and elevate a shared UN child rights agenda. The Guidance Note of the S-G on Child Rights Mainstreaming (CRM), endorsed by the S-G’s Executive Committee in July 2023, aims to integrate child rights across all UN activities (hereafter referred to as the Guidance Note). The Guidance Note was drafted principally by UNICEF and OHCHR, with the support of the Special Representatives of the Secretary General on Violence against Children and of Children in Armed Conflict, and considered inputs from other UN entities, children, and child rights civil society organizations.

The Guidance Note provides a framework and sets out specific recommendations on how to strengthen a child rights-based approach in the work of the United Nations. It ensures a coherent approach to integrating child rights across all pillars, entities, and levels. It encompasses UN system actions in external advocacy, policies, and programmes as well as internal operational policies and practices.

Grounded by the principles of the CRC, the Guidance Note identified the following guiding principles:

- Child rights are human rights;
- Child rights are everybody’s business across all three pillars of the UN;
- Children are distinct rights holders with a specific set of rights;
- Child rights are indivisible, interdependent and interconnected;
- All UN action should give primary consideration to the best interests of the child;
- All UN action should promote equality and non-discrimination;
- All UN action should promote and include meaningful child participation; and
- The UN should promote accountability and redress for child rights violations.

Child Rights Mainstreaming

The Guidance Note stipulates that child rights mainstreaming is a strategy for making children’s rights, including their meaningful participation, an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of policies and programmes of the UN system, and for assessing the implications for children of any action taken by the UN.²

Child rights mainstreaming involves a recognition that: (1) children are full-fledged rights holders, with a distinct set of rights requiring distinct UN action; (2) children are experts in their own lives and their meaningful participation is necessary for the adequacy and efficiency of UN action; (3) children face specific obstacles in exercising and claiming their rights because of their status as children; (4) child rights are relevant to all advocacy, policies and programmes of the UN across all three pillars (i.e., peace and security,

¹ The Highest Aspiration, A Call to Action for Human Rights, 2020.

² Guidance Note of the Secretary General on Child Rights Mainstreaming, 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/guidance-note-secretary-general-child-rights-mainstreaming>

human rights, and development) of the UN Charter; and that (5) external and internal UN advocacy, policies and programmes can affect children differently than they affect adults.

Child rights mainstreaming also involves a combination of both integrated and targeted actions as follows: (1) making child rights an explicit, systematic, and sustained consideration in new and established processes and procedures, both across the UN system and within entities; and, (2) employing targeted interventions to address specific constraints and challenges faced by children.³

Framework for UN action

The Guidance Note presents a Framework for UN action and states the UN system should explicitly reflect child rights in both A) external advocacy, policies, and programmes, and B) internal operational policies and practices. The focus areas under Group A include: UN external policies and strategic plans; advocacy and communication; country programmes; data collection and management; child rights impact assessments and evaluations; UN human rights and accountability mechanisms. The focus areas under Group B include internal accountability, due diligence and child safeguarding; child participation; budgeting for child rights; and capacity development.

The Guidance Note does not, however, include supplementary information on the overarching theory of change featuring outcome objectives nor does it identify which focus areas are a priority for short, medium and long-term action.

Mandated responsibilities

The Guidance Note acknowledges that all UN entities, within their respective mandates, have a role to play in supporting the implementation of the CRC as specified in article 45. UNICEF and OHCHR have been jointly entrusted with the responsibility to coordinate the implementation of the Guidance Note, with the support of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.

As the lead United Nations entity mandated to promote and protect human rights for all, OHCHR works with and assists Governments in fulfilling their human rights obligations, speaks out objectively in the face of human rights violations worldwide, provides a forum for identifying, highlighting and developing responses to today's human rights challenges, acts as the principal focal point of human rights research, public information and advocacy activities, and works with a wide range of partners in order to widen the constituency for human rights worldwide. OHCHR's mandate also explicitly addresses human rights mainstreaming.

The centrality of child rights within UNICEF is explicitly expressed through the organization's mission statement: "UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.⁴ UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behavior towards children." UNICEF has a unique role in supporting implementation of the CRC and has responsibility to support implementation of the Guidance Note, including through the sharing of expertise as relevant.

This evaluability assessment and formative evaluation (EAFE) will support the UN system in translating the ambition of the Guidance Note into coherent, actionable steps for all entities. It is situated within the

³ Ibid.

⁴ UNICEF Mission Statement, <https://www.unicef.org/about/mission-statement>

broader UN reform context, including the UN80 Initiative, which seeks to make the UN system more agile, integrated, and responsive to emerging global challenges. This EAFE must therefore be agile and responsive to potential shifts in UN priorities, structures, and mandates, including any related to child rights and the Guidance Note.

2. Purpose, use and scope

The overarching purpose of this independent inter-agency EAFE is to assess the UN system's capacities and readiness to implement the Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming. This formative, forward-looking exercise will identify barriers, bottlenecks, and enablers, providing actionable insights to strengthen implementation. It will promote UN system-wide learning and support the translation of the Guidance Note's ambition into tangible, coherent outcome objectives and focus areas and actions for system-wide attention.

It has the following two concrete objectives:

1. **Determine the readiness of UN entities to operationalize and implement the Guidance Note's 'Framework for UN Action' (Objective 1).** This includes identifying the current mechanisms, actions, and capacities in place, as well as barriers and enablers, in relation to implementation of the Framework for UN Action (chapter 3 of the Guidance Note). This exercise will proactively recommend concrete actions that will support the UN system's success in child rights mainstreaming, including the unique role that UNICEF and OHCHR may play, and covering both external-facing and internal/operational dimensions as framed within the Guidance Note.
2. **Enhance the evaluability of child rights mainstreaming across the UN system, in accordance with the Guidance Note's 'Framework for UN Action' (Objective 2).** This includes defining an overarching theory of change, developing an evaluation framework, identifying data and analytical needs, and preparing for a future summative evaluation. The latter comprises the development of a self-assessment tool and rubric for UN entities to monitor child rights mainstreaming and defining the requirements for a baseline assessment.

Together, these objectives aim to create an enabling environment for child rights mainstreaming and ensure the Guidance Note's evaluability for future accountability and learning. Objective 1 focuses on readiness and actionable steps for implementing the 'Framework for UN Action' as set out in the Guidance Note, while Objective 2 strengthens monitoring and evaluation foundations for assessing its effectiveness.

The primary audience for the EAFE is the Call to Action for Human Rights Inter-Agency Task Team on Child Rights Mainstreaming. UNICEF, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (OSRSG VAC), Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG CAAC), Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), and the Development Coordination Office (DCO) are also primary stakeholders. The secondary audience includes implementing partners, UN member states, and development and humanitarian partners with a special interest in child rights, international organizations with a child rights focus, child rights civil society organizations and children.

This exercise includes all UN entities and is global in scope, with targeted regional representation for validation/pilots. Field missions are out of scope. The EAFE will seek learnings that have arisen since the Guidance Note was endorsed in July 2023, yet will be forward-looking and responsive to current shifts under the UN80 Initiative and any shifts in UN priorities, structures, and mandates. The timeline will also be

forward-looking to capture anticipated developments, needs and opportunities arising from UN entities restructuring and downsizing in response to present funding constraints.

3. Evaluation questions

Evaluation Questions under Objective 1: UN entities' readiness to operationalize and implement the Guidance Note's 'Framework for UN Action'.

- 1.1 What is the current state of system-wide coordination for oversight and implementation of the UN SG Guidance Note on child rights mainstreaming across the UN system, with particular attention to the readiness of UNICEF, to fulfil their roles?
- 1.2 Which focus areas of the Guidance Note's 'Framework for UN Action' should be prioritized for assessment in this EAFE, based on relevance, feasibility, and potential for impact?
- 1.3 What mechanisms, actions, and capacities currently exist across UN entities to support child rights mainstreaming in line with the Framework for UN Action priority focus areas?
- 1.4 What are the key barriers and enabling factors affecting the UN system's ability to mainstream child rights across the priority focus areas?
- 1.5 What concrete actions can be recommended to strengthen coordination and implementation of the Framework for UN Action?

Evaluation Questions under Objective 2: Enhance the evaluability of child rights mainstreaming across the UN system, in accordance with the Guidance Note's 'Framework for UN Action'.

- 2.1 How can the success of the Framework for UN Action in mainstreaming child rights across the UN system be defined and measured?
- 2.2 What high-level outcomes and indicators are most appropriate?
- 2.3 What are the minimum data requirements for monitoring and evaluating progress on child rights mainstreaming across the 10 focus areas?
- 2.4 How can UN entities systematically assess and compare their progress in embedding child rights across the 10 focus areas of the Framework for UN Action?
- 2.5 What design principles and criteria should guide the development and testing of a qualitative self-assessment tool and rubric to support future UN-wide assessment of child rights mainstreaming?

4. Methodology and approach

The evaluation will employ a mixed-methods design, combining qualitative and quantitative data sources to facilitate triangulation and enhance the credibility of the findings. Priority will be given to areas with strong evaluability and high learning potential.

Data collection and analysis

Given the scope and available budget, a prioritization of methods and activities will be agreed upon during the inception phase, but is expected to include the following:

Secondary data should comprise both documents and monitoring data, including:

- **AI-supported document review:** A structured review of strategic, policy, operational, and guidance documents from across the UN system. This includes both publicly available and internal documents, within the scope of the prioritized focus areas. To enhance efficiency and depth, Natural Language Processing (NLP) and AI-based text analysis may be used to identify child rights language, patterns, and gaps. These results will be validated through manual review of a representative sample of documents to ensure accuracy and contextual relevance.
- **Literature review:** A targeted and structured literature review will be conducted to inform the development of the theory of change, the UN-wide benchmarking toolkit, and the self-assessment tool and rubric.
- **Monitoring data mapping:** Organization-level monitoring data from UN entities will be reviewed to help define the minimum data requirements for future monitoring of CRM. No in-depth analysis of monitoring data is required.

Primary data should comprise both quantitative (online survey) and qualitative (KII, FGD, rubrics) data, including:

- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** FGDs with global, regional and country-level child rights focal points and representatives from at least ten UN agencies (one FGD per UN entity). FGDs should be held with personnel from: 1. UNICEF; 2. OHCHR; 3. EOSG, DCO, OSRSG VAC and OSRSG CAAC; as well as 4. the International Labor Organization (ILO, with mandate in child labor and youth employment standards); 5. the United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**, with mandate in governance, institutional capacity building, and human rights); 6. the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**, with mandate in education, inclusion, and cultural rights); 7. the United Nations Environment Programme (**UNEP**, with mandate in environmental determinants of child wellbeing); 8. the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**, with mandate in protection and support for refugee, displaced, and stateless children); 9. the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (**OCHA**, with role in coordinating humanitarian response and protection for children in emergencies and conflict settings); 10. the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (**UNODC**, with role in child trafficking, juvenile justice, and legal protection); 11. the United Nations Population Fund (**UNFPA**, with role/mandate in adolescent health, gender-based violence, and child marriage); 12. **UN Women** (with focus on gender equality and intersectionality with child rights); and 13. the World Health Organization (**WHO**, with role in child health, mental health, and wellbeing).
- **Key informant interviews (KIIs):** Approximately 30 semi-structured interviews with a diverse group of stakeholders, including senior leaders, CRM focal points from OHCHR, UNICEF, EOSG, DCO, OSRSG VAC, OSRSG CAAC (minimum 15 interviews) and selected other UN entities (15 interviews). Interview participants should be aligned to the Framework for UN Action focus areas that have been prioritized for the purpose of this EAFE.
- **Qualitative data analysis:** Qualitative data collected through either KIIs or FGDs should be transcribed into written text to ensure accuracy and facilitate subsequent analysis. Following transcription, data should be coded and analyzed by systematically categorizing and labeling text segments based on themes, concepts, or patterns to identify recurring themes and extract relevant information.
- **Online survey and quantitative data analysis:** An online quantitative survey can be administered to a targeted sample of UN personnel across 10–15 entities. The survey can be used to capture perceptions of readiness, barriers, and enablers from a larger group than can be accessed through KIIs and FGDs. Data should be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to identify trends and relationships.

- **Self-assessment tool and rubric:** A self-assessment tool and rubric will be designed and piloted with UNICEF and 1-2 other UN entities. It will serve as a comprehensive evaluation tool to assess the extent to which UN entities and offices integrate child rights across the focus areas of the Framework for UN Action. The participatory self-assessment tool will enable UN entities to systematically evaluate their practices using specific indicators related to child rights mainstreaming. The tool will guide participants to discuss and document their insights, practices and performance against various child-rights focus areas and supporting indicators and criteria. Detailed criteria will enable participants to reliably transform the qualitative data for each indicator into a quantitative score. The rubric component of the tool will aggregate the scores for each indicator to calculate a score for each focus area and then aggregate the scores for each focus area. The aggregated scores will provide an overall rating, thereby providing a standardized process for measuring the integration of child rights within each office. This rating will allow for reliable comparison across different offices and tracking progress over time. The methodology for developing the rubric will involve a literature review and stakeholder engagement with child rights and other specialists to ensure the indicators are relevant, appropriate, valid, acceptable, and feasible. The pilot phase will involve training sessions for participants to ensure consistent application of the rubric, followed by feedback collection to make necessary adjustments. Data should also be collected to test the reliability, validity, transparency, feasibility, scalability and appropriateness of the rubric. The self-assessment tool and rubric will be piloted in UNICEF, as well as in one to two other UN entities that express interest in engagement.

Principles and approach

The evaluation approach and methodological framework shall be in line with UNICEF and UNEG standards and principles on evaluation ethics and quality, as outlined in the [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#), the [UNICEF Adapted UNEG Evaluation Reports Standards](#), the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#), and the [UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis](#).⁵

The following principles will be of utmost importance:

- **Credibility, independence and impartiality:** Credibility will be safeguarded by ensuring a rigorous methodology, a transparent process and robust quality assurance systems. Due care will be taken to avoid conflicts of interest and outside influence, and to ensure that the evaluation conclusions and recommendations are based solely on the evidence generated.
- **Participation:** Participation will be maximized by actively engaging key stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, from planning to implementation and dissemination of findings.
- **Equity and inclusion:** Equitable participation, treatment and representation of people from different genders, ages, abilities and backgrounds will be prioritized.
- **Human rights focused:** Human rights, including child rights and gender equality, will be incorporated by upholding related principles throughout the design and implementation process.
- **Agile, forward-looking and utilization focused:** Agility will be essential to keep abreast of and responsive to ongoing UN-System wide changes under the UN80 Initiative and ongoing restructuring across UN entities. Utility will be fostered by meeting the information needs of stakeholders in a rapidly evolving context and UN-System, and by providing forward-looking, timely and actionable insights and deliverables. Foresight will be an essential component of this exercise.

A risk assessment and data protection plan are expected to be in place before data collection. The UNICEF Evaluation Office will assist with this process. Approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee or Independent Review Board is not required for this evaluation.

⁵ A comprehensive overview of relevant procedures, guidance and resources can be found online in the [UNICEF Evaluation resource center](#).

Anticipated limitations and mitigation measures

Resourcing capacities within other UN entities with a duty to lead the implementation and coordination of the Guidance Note have prevented their active partnering and engagement in this exercise. The timeframe and budget for this EAFE prevent the generation of additional qualitative evidence, such as case studies. Similarly, the budget and timeframe prevent children from actively participating in the design and implementation of the EAFE.

Table 1: Risks and mitigation measures

Risk	Risk mitigation measure
Limited participation from UN entities: Incomplete data and participation limits the utilization of findings related to implementation and coordination of the Guidance Note among UN entities.	Other UN entities will be invited to participate in the EAFE as part of the evaluation reference group, and interview participants.
Bias and management of perceptions: Personnel perceive the evaluation as biased or favoring specific individuals or groups.	Adjust the analytical process to augment the number of sources of information or key informants. Present evidence of contribution only when plausible based on the type and reason for UNICEF's contribution.
Resistance and opposition risk: Resistance from personnel and other stakeholders who may fear the evaluation or its implications.	Communicate the purpose and benefits of the evaluation to all personnel. Engage personnel in the evaluation process and seek their input and feedback.
Data accuracy risks: Inaccurate or incomplete data leads to unreliable evaluation findings.	Use multiple data sources and triangulation to cross-verify information. Ensure data collection tools are well-designed and tested. Conduct thorough data validation, verification, and triangulation.
Tokenism: Child rights terms mentioned in key documents could imply child rights mainstreaming yet may not be adequately mainstreamed in practice.	Self-assessment rubric to triangulate extent of child rights mainstreaming.
Ethical concerns and conflicts of interest: Ethical dilemmas or conflicts among team members.	Establish a clear code of conduct in line with UNICEF and UNEG standards.

5. Governance and management arrangements

This EAFE is commissioned and managed by the UNICEF Evaluation Office. **The evaluation's independence is anchored in the Evaluation Office's institutional mandate, which functions as an impartial and independent unit within UNICEF.** The final approval of all deliverables rests with the Director of Evaluation, after review and endorsement by the Senior Evaluation Specialist for Institutional Effectiveness. A formal management response will be required to ensure uptake and accountability.

The UNICEF Evaluation Office is responsible for managing the evaluation process, framing the inquiry, validating final deliverables, and ensuring that findings are credible, evidence-based, and free from undue influence. While external consultants will be engaged to provide technical expertise and additional capacity, the Evaluation Office will maintain full oversight, methodological stewardship, and quality assurance throughout the evaluation process, from framing the evaluation scope and questions to validating the final deliverables.

A Senior Evaluation Specialist within the UNICEF Evaluation Office Institutional Effectiveness Portfolio will serve as **Evaluation Manager**, supervising the conduct of the evaluation and ensuring its impartiality, transparency and quality assurance in line with UNICEF's Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS). Independence rests with the UNICEF Evaluation Office, which hires external evaluation team to bring additional expertise and capacity to support it in the delivery of the evaluation.

The evaluation will follow a blended evaluation management approach, combining external capacity and technical expertise with meaningful involvement from UNICEF Evaluation Office personnel to ensure relevance, credibility, and use. The Evaluation Manager will oversee quality assurance while also contributing to specific aspects of the process, including stakeholder coordination, participation in interviews and other data collection activities, and analytical inputs to data analysis. In addition, two Evaluation Specialists from the Institutional Effectiveness team will work alongside external consultants, supporting implementation through tasks such as document review, data collection, analysis and logistical coordination. This internal engagement will strengthen contextual relevance, facilitate access to key information, and promote the timely use of findings.

An **Evaluation Reference Group** (ERG) will be established to support the evaluation manager and the evaluation team in an advisory capacity at key moments. It will include representatives from the UN agencies who are responsible for mainstreaming child rights in their respective organizations. Child rights experts from other international child rights organizations and academic institutions may be invited to join as well. This model is intended to promote ownership, foster shared accountability, and enhance the likelihood that evaluation findings will meaningfully inform strategic decisions on the future of the child rights mainstreaming in UN agencies.

The ERG will be engaged at three key stages: (i) a first meeting to present and review the draft inception summary and provide strategic input; (ii) a sensemaking session to discuss preliminary findings and inform recommendations; and (iii) a review of the draft evaluation report and co-creation workshop to develop recommendations that are grounded in evidence and shaped by organizational feasibility and readiness for change.

In keeping with the Revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF (2023), UNICEF Evaluation Office quality control protocols and processes will be in place to safeguard the international evaluation principles of independence, credibility, and utility through all the stages of this exercise. The Evaluation Manager will ensure quality assurance of processes and deliverables, and coordinate review and feedback from the ERG and any other stakeholders. The Evaluation Manager has the prerogative to amend deliverables to achieve an acceptable quality level. All correspondence related to the evaluation and key deliverables will be directed to the Evaluation Manager. The final authority to approve the evaluation report and all interim outputs rests with the UNICEF Evaluation Office.

6. Evaluation team composition and requirements

The evaluation team is expected to include two external independent specialists recruited under these Terms of Reference, and two internal UNICEF Evaluation Office personnel, each with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and time allocations. The external evaluation team must include a Team Leader and a technical child rights specialist, together bringing both child rights and evaluation expertise. Each position will be advertised individually. Candidates may apply independently or coordinate with a counterpart to submit a joint application, but selection will be based on the individual merit and complementarities of the two profiles. The two consultants will bring **complementary expertise and experience**, and are expected to collaborate closely to ensure coherence, methodological rigor, and high-quality deliverables throughout the process.

One consultant will serve as the **Team Lead and Senior Evaluation Specialist**, with at least 10 years of experience leading and managing evaluations, including in international and multilateral organizations. This role will be responsible for ensuring methodological rigor, coordinating team inputs, and managing the timely delivery of high-quality outputs. The Senior Evaluation Specialist will submit all drafts and final deliverables to the Evaluation Manager for quality assurance and revise them as needed to meet UNICEF quality standards and expectations.

The second consultant will serve as the Child Rights Specialist, bringing expertise on child rights and child rights mainstreaming, including to inform policy, programmes and evaluations in international and development contexts for multilateral or international organizations. This role will support data collection and analysis, working with technical leadership on child rights mainstreaming, ensuring alignment of all activities and deliverables with the UN Secretary-General's UN on Child Rights Mainstreaming.

Collectively, the evaluation team members should demonstrate the following qualifications and experience:

- Designing and conducting large, complex, mixed-methods evaluations, including evaluability assessments, formative evaluations, policy evaluations* and baseline assessments;
- Conducting research or evaluation in the field of child rights*, particularly in international development and humanitarian contexts;
- Conducting research or evaluation for multilateral or international organizations (e.g. UN agencies, IFIs, INGOs);
- Developing and testing self-assessment tools and rubrics*;
- Developing implementation guidance, as relevant to the UN Benchmarking toolkit, self-assessment tool and rubric*;
- Qualitative data analysis and document review using Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing*;
- Conducting ethical and inclusive evaluations that meet the UNICEF and UNEG guidelines, standards and principles, including integrating gender and human rights in evaluations;
- Managing and coordinating a range of stakeholders*;
- Fluency in English and strong written and verbal skills in communicating technical and/ or complex findings to non-specialist audiences (especially report writing and presentation skills); and
- A track record of open, collaborative working with clients.

**The two external consultants will have proven expertise in team leadership and child rights. They must also balance the internal UNICEF team members by bringing expertise in the responsibilities assigned above.*

7. Evaluation process and deliverables

The evaluation is planned from January to June 2026 and will include the following stages, key activities and deliverables:

Inception phase

Key Activities

- Induction and weekly meetings with the Evaluation Manager.
- Orientation session with the Evaluation Manager, EMT and key stakeholders to align expectations, clarify initial priorities, and initiate collaboration.
- Develop detailed work plan and internal milestone calendar.
- Document review, literature review and inception interviews.
- Refine evaluation questions and methodology.
- Develop the overarching theory of change and evaluation framework, and prioritization criteria, in order to identify which priority focus areas within the Framework for UN Action will be prioritized for the purpose of this EAFE.
- First round of meetings with the ERG and other key stakeholders to review the draft inception note and provide strategic input.

Deliverables

- **Weekly progress reports** to Evaluation Manager.
- **Stakeholder matrix** in Excel format (template provided), kept up to date.
- **PowerPoint presentation** outlining refined evaluation questions and methodology for the Management Team and Reference Groups.
- **Draft inception note** (PowerPoint, max 50 slides, excluding annexes) and annexes (Word format) presenting the evaluation purpose and objectives, refined scope and questions, methodology and tools, draft data collection instruments, limitations and risks, ethical considerations and consent, stakeholder engagement plan, timeline and deliverables, and a summary of inception stage findings.
- **Final inception note** and annexes incorporating feedback received, and the feedback comment matrix.
- **Overarching theory of change and evaluation framework** for the Framework for UN Action, with high-level outcomes and core indicators mapped to the ten focus areas.
- **Prioritization criteria and decision tool** to guide selection of focus areas for deeper evaluation. Includes criteria such as strategic relevance, existing momentum, and potential for system-wide learning.

2. Data set-up and collection phase

Key Activities

- Continued document and literature review.
- Draft the indicator reference sheet to inform the self-assessment tool and rubric.
- Finalize all data collection tools and instruments, including the self-assessment tool and rubric.
- Pilot data collection tools (survey and interview guides).
- Set up primary data collection activities, including interview schedules and self-assessment tool instruction and piloting.
- Conduct KIIs, FGDs and online survey.

Deliverables

- **Weekly progress reports** on data collection.
- **All anonymized raw data, transcripts, interview notes and consent forms** securely encrypted and stored
- **All analytical outputs**, including databases, code and tables.
- **Draft indicator reference sheet** specifying minimum requirements for a future UN-wide baseline assessment of child rights mainstreaming across the 10 areas above.
- **Draft self-assessment tool and rubric**, co-designed with UN entities and piloted for usability, that enables entities to assess their integration of child rights across the 10 areas. Includes scoring criteria, guidance notes, and validation protocols.

- Conduct monitoring data mapping.
- Conduct pilot of self-assessment tool in test offices.

3. Analysis and reporting

Key Activities

- Analysis and triangulation of data to develop preliminary findings.
- Second round of meetings with the ERG and other stakeholders to validate the findings and preliminary conclusions.
- Draft the evaluation report, based on triangulated evidence, workshop insights, and validated findings and conclusions.
- Finalize the indicator reference sheet, self-assessment tool and rubric.
- Draft the UN-wide CRM benchmarking toolkit.

Deliverables

- **PowerPoint presentation** to facilitate the validation of findings, preliminary conclusions and suggested areas for actions/recommendations by the Evaluation Reference Group, and other key stakeholders.
- **Draft Evaluation Report*** using the provided template. The evaluation report should not exceed 40 pages or 35,000 words, excluding a five-page executive summary and annexes.
- **Final indicator reference sheet.**
- **Final Self-Assessment Tool and Rubric.**
- **Draft UN-wide CRM benchmarking toolkit** with guidance on self-assessment, peer review, and comparative analysis across entities, regions and offices.

4. Finalization and communication

- Third and last round of meetings with the ERG and other stakeholders to validate and co-create the evaluation recommendations.
- Finalize the evaluation report and UN-wide CRM benchmarking toolkit.
- Develop evaluation brief.

- **PowerPoint presentation** to support conducting participatory workshops to co-create evaluation recommendations.
- **Final evaluation report**, incorporating feedback from the Evaluation Reference Group, other key stakeholders, and quality assurance by the Evaluation Office.
- **Comment matrix**, with a response to how all stakeholder feedback and comments were addressed.
- **Evaluation brief** (maximum five pages), synthesizing key insights in a user-friendly format.
- **Final presentation deck** (maximum 20 slides), offering a clear, visually engaging summary of the EAFE's purpose, methodology, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Additional requirements for deliverables: All deliverables must be resubmitted at the end of the contract with a summary handover note describing the package's structure and contents, including any instructions or caveats for future reference. All deliverables must meet UNICEF Evaluation Office quality standards, comply with the UNICEF Style Book and Brand Book, and be submitted in editable formats (e.g., Microsoft Word, PowerPoint). All graphs, charts, maps, and other visual elements must likewise be provided in editable formats.

Review processes: The evaluation manager will need 72 hours to review each deliverable. The EMT and ERG will need at least two weeks to comment on the draft inception note and the draft evaluation report.

Public disclosure: Key final products – such as the evaluation report, management response, evaluation brief, and presentation deck – will be made publicly available in line with UNICEF’s Evaluation Policy (2023) and Information Disclosure Policy (2010).