FINAL EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR CHILDREN 2004-15

Report date: 11 April 2016
THE NEPAL NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR CHILDREN, 2004-15

FINAL EVALUATION

Timeframe of the evaluation: October 2015 – February 2016
Location of the evaluation: Kathmandu, Nepal
Final report: 11 April 2016
Names and/or organizations of evaluators: Manolo Cabran, Dilli Joshi

Disclaimer

Any views, opinions and recommendations presented in this report are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Government of Nepal or the office of UNICEF Nepal.
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Manolo Cabran, Dilli Joshi

Kathmandu, 11 April 2016
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<td>ART</td>
<td>Anti-Retroviral Treatment</td>
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<td>BoP</td>
<td>Balance of Payments</td>
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<td>CAAC</td>
<td>Children Affected by Armed Conflict</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Child Club</td>
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<td>CCWB</td>
<td>Central Child Welfare Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDO</td>
<td>Chief District Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFLG</td>
<td>Child Friendly Local Government</td>
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<td>CFVDC</td>
<td>Child Friendly Village Development Committees</td>
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<td>CRO</td>
<td>Child Rights Officer</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>CWIN</td>
<td>Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Center</td>
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<td>CZeP</td>
<td>Children as Zones of Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<td>DCPC</td>
<td>District Child Protection Committees</td>
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<td>District Child Welfare Board</td>
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<td>District Development Committee</td>
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<td>District Health Officer</td>
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<td>DP</td>
<td>Development Partner</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDI</td>
<td>Foreign Direct Investments</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNI</td>
<td>Gross National Income</td>
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<td>GoN</td>
<td>Government of Nepal</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDR</td>
<td>Human Development Report</td>
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<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>HSSDP</td>
<td>Health Sector Strategic Development Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced People</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>INGOs</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>JJCC</td>
<td>Juvenile Justice Coordination Committee</td>
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<td>MDAs</td>
<td>Ministries, Departments and Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MoFALD</td>
<td>Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoHA</td>
<td>Ministry of Home Affairs</td>
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<td>MoHP</td>
<td>Ministry of Health and Population (now Ministry of Health)</td>
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<td>Ministry of Labour and Employment</td>
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<td>MoPR</td>
<td>Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoWCSW</td>
<td>Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTR</td>
<td>Mid Term Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDHS</td>
<td>Nepal Demographic and Health Surveys</td>
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<td>NHRC</td>
<td>Nepal Human Rights Commission</td>
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<td>NMICS</td>
<td>Nepal Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey</td>
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<td>NPA/C</td>
<td>National Plan of Action for Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>National Planning Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPR</td>
<td>Nepali Rupee</td>
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<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official Development Aid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>PBB</td>
<td>Performance Based Budgeting</td>
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<td>PMTCT</td>
<td>Prevention of Mother–to-Child Transmission</td>
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<td>PO</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
<td>Purchasing Power Parity</td>
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<td>School Sector Reform Plan</td>
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<td>Social Welfare Council</td>
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<td>S ZoP</td>
<td>Schools as Zones of Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>ToC</td>
<td>Theory of Change</td>
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<td>ToR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
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<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical And Vocational Education And Training</td>
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<td>UNCRC</td>
<td>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>UNEG</td>
<td>United Nations Evaluation Group</td>
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<td>UNGASS</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly Special Session</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Fund for Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>USD</td>
<td>United States Dollar</td>
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<td>VCPC</td>
<td>Village Child Protection Committees</td>
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<td>VCT</td>
<td>Voluntary Counselling and Treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>VDC</td>
<td>Village Development Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCO</td>
<td>Women and Children Office</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of the evaluation object

In 2004, the Cabinet of the Government of Nepal (GoN) endorsed the ten years National Plan of Action for Children (NPA/C). The plan was developed as a national response to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Children held in New York in 2002 which called for the development of plans of actions for children to boost their rights to education, to health, to protection, and to contribute to the control of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The NPA/C was built around a vision according to which “Children enjoy their rights in a society fit for children, and realize their full potential.” The mission of the NPA/C was to “Ensure the right of each child to improve the quality of life by promoting child-friendly environments and eliminating all forms of exploitation, abuse and discrimination against children.” To achieve this, the NPA/C identified four objectives:

- Promote the rights of every child.
- Eliminate all forms of exploitation, abuse and discrimination against children.
- Promote child-friendly environments, focusing on education, health, nutrition and other sectors.
- Increase the access of children to all basic needs, facilities and services, ensuring quality.

and six pillars:

- Promoting healthy lives
- Providing quality education
- Protecting child rights
- Combating HIV/AIDS
- Child Participation
- Coordination, monitoring and evaluation

The NPA/C is a comprehensive plan for all children of Nepal. This comprehensiveness makes it considerably expensive: its total cost, 125 billion NPR, was equivalent to the 4% of what the GoN spent in the ten years covered by the NPA/C. The NPA/C does not present any logic model and/or the expected results chain. There is not a theory of change, nor a description of the change pathway, nor a logical framework that show the relations between inputs, outputs and outcomes of the object. The M&E plan that was supposed to be developed, was never developed.

The intended geographical coverage of the NPA/C is national; there are not any indications of prioritisation of certain regions, districts or other zones. Similarly, being a national plan for children, the target group the plan intended to serve is all children in Nepal. It takes into consideration a number of cross-cutting issues, such as equity, gender parity, social inclusion, early childhood education and development, child participation and children living with disabilities.

Thirty-three different organisations and MDAs are cited in the plan as responsible agencies in implementing its provisions. Of them, those mostly cited are the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP – now Ministry of Health) and Local bodies; together they sum-up to 82% of all the agencies cited as responsible. The MoWCSW is cited as one of the leading agencies in 2 out of 3 activities, leading by far upon the other ministries in 4 components of the plan out of the six. Despite the burden on its shoulders, the MoWCSW benefitted from only 0.3% of the GoN expenditure over the implementation time.
In 2010, a Mid Term Review (MTR) was conducted to assess the extent of the progress in the implementation to that date. The review showed that despite some limited achievements, the plan was not very well known across the stakeholders, and implementation was hampered by non-compliance from the ministries to adopt the NPA/C in their Annual and Periodic Plans and take responsibility for its implementation, despite the emphasis that was given by the National Planning Commission (NPC) and the policy guidelines and feedback to the government and to the line ministries that were developed.

Evaluation objectives and intended audience

The purpose of the evaluation is to support policy makers and government and non-government sector representatives responsible for children’s rights to analyse the barriers that obstructed progress in implementation of the NPA/C as the Plan has come to an end in July 2015. The evaluation aims to provide practical recommendations to the MoWCSW and all other MDAs involved in fulfilling child rights for enhancing the enabling environment, coordination, monitoring mechanisms and partnerships to ensure rights of children related to survival, development, protection and participation that will inform development and support improved implementation of the next National Plan of Action for Children.

The evaluation focused on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. An equity component has also been added. The evaluation questions were answered through the lenses of the governance analysis, in line with the findings emerged from the inception mission.

Evaluation methodology

Due to the absence of a theory of change, the team developed one specifically to guide the evaluation: “The results for children will be achieved through a combination of technical interventions, aiming at strengthening the provision of services, and of governance interventions, aiming at improving the effectiveness of the systems for children.”

The evaluation team made use of mixed-methods methodology. Qualitative information were gathered through key informants interviews and desk review. Representatives from the following institutions were met: Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and agencies under the ministry, Ministry of Home Affairs including Nepal Police, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, Ministry of Labour and Employment, National Planning Commission, Juvenile Justice Coordination Committee, National Human Rights Commission, Non-Governmental Organisations such as Plan Nepal, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes, World Vision and CWIN. A total of 249 documents were reviewed, including other plans, policies and strategies, studies and reports related to children. Quantitative analysis was conducted by statistical elaboration to assess the budget information and the design of the NPA/C in terms of distribution of leading responsibilities across the major activities.

Consultation with right holders were initially planned but were finally not held in consideration of one of the main findings of the evaluation: the fact that at the national level the NPA/C was not known and used, and the consideration of the top-down approach to planning in the NPA/C made the consultations with regional and district level unnecessary, given the unlikelihood of the Action Plan being known and implemented at the sub-national levels. It is worth mentioning that similar considerations appeared in the MTR where the report says that “There is a lack of orientation and induction of NPA among Women Development Officers and Child Rights Officers and their roles for coordination and monitoring are not clarified. Coordination at the district level seems to be limited to observing Child Rights Days and addressing specific cases of child protection.”
Most important findings and conclusions

The main finding from the evaluation of the NPA/C is that the plan was not implemented as a plan; this fact explains the absence of any monitoring data. Few stakeholders argued that it should be understood as a national framework for children, but the evidence shows that the plan was not widely known and used outside the MoWCSW. Given its non-implementation, it is not possible to ascribe any results for children to the NPA/C, even in consideration of the actual progresses in some indicators for children occurred in the last ten years, especially in the health and education sectors. There is no evidence that the plan was able to influence the policy and planning landscape for children in the country: not even 1 out of ten documents explicitly mention the NPA/C, and such mentions are often incidental in annexes, bullet points or bibliography.

With regards to its multi-sectoral nature, the evaluation showed that: i) the multi-sectoral National Steering Committee was never established; ii) focal points in the different Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) were not appointed; and iii) when implementing their programmes, MDAs other than the MoWCSW followed their own plans and strategies.

Almost all the activities in the NPA/C are duplicated in other plans. Provision for children are replicated in the domains of: health, nutrition and child feeding, iodine deficiency, sanitation and hygiene, breast-feeding, safe motherhood, reproductive health, immunisation, education, school reform, early childhood development (ECD), technical and vocational education and training (TVET), trafficking, child labour, discrimination, violence, social protection, children in armed conflict, HIV/AIDS, disability, adolescents, and internally displaced people (IDPs), gender equality and human rights. This, combined with the absence of any M&E data, makes it impossible not only to attribute any result for children to the plan, but even attribute the activities themselves.

None of the governance bodies that were foreseen by the NPA/C were put in place. The most important absence is the National Steering Committee, a multi-stakeholder platform co-chaired by the MoWCSW and the NPC that should have guaranteed the implementation and monitoring of the plan. This is a shortcoming that affected the coordination of interventions for children across the sectors, the allocation of funds for the NPA/C and led to different understandings of the NPA/C, as a plan or as a framework.

The cost of the NPA/C also proved to be a challenge. On top of its high cost, the plan did not foresee any allocation mechanism, either linked to the Government budget or to the support of development partners. Even in the exceptional case that some interventions have been funded, the absence of M&E data and of any budget tracking mechanism does not allow to establish any link between the interventions themselves and what foreseen by the NPA/C.

Out of the 6 evaluation criteria and their research questions, (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact and equity), it is possible to answer completely only to the relevance and equity, but only for what is related to the design of the plan, not its implementation, for the above-mentioned reasons.

The analysis of the design of the NPA/C combined with the available information from documents describing the situation of children at the time of the development of the plan and of the MTR point to sustain the relevance of the plan. The NPA/C was aligned not only with the international commitments such as the UNGASS on children and the obligations arising from article 44 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children (UNCRC), but also with the national legislation and policy framework at the time.
Equity is a concern that is well captured all through the NPA/C. The plan included, in its design, children who are poor, orphaned, destitute, oppressed, Dalit, unaccompanied, disabled or exploited. Nevertheless, there is no indication of how such groups of children should be prioritised in comparison to other children, for example by deploying services and staffs according to the needs of such target groups.

The main lesson learnt from the evaluation of the NPA/C is that While long-term national plans of action for children were justified based on the knowledge and understanding of the time they have been proposed, i.e. in the early 2000, they are probably not the best planning instruments that are currently needed. This, for the following reasons:

1. National plans of action should tackle problems and not a population, or a population group. Having a common and specific goal increases the chances of cooperation and coordination, and being problem-driven, they are more likely to be addressed in an effective way. Children are not problems.
2. A duration of ten years is nowadays incompatible with the planning processes of governments, usually around three or five years.
3. Targeting a whole population, or one of its sub-sets, with all their different needs, usually makes plans of actions very expensive, increasing the likelihood of budget gaps.
4. National plans of actions are developed according to children’s needs but rarely, if not never, take into account the available capacities to answer to such needs.

Main recommendations

Based on the evaluation findings and conclusion, the evaluation team advances the following recommendations. The first two sets of recommendations are targeting the Government and specifically all the Ministries involved in child rights, the third set is specific to UNICEF.

1) Recommendations for the next phase NPA for Children
   a) The next NPA should be a higher level document that can ensure the multi-sectoral approach that is needed to fulfil child rights. It should be clearly linked with both the Government’s next three year plan and its goals for children, and b) the National Child Policy. It has to have a base of evidence provided by a situation analysis of children and their families. It should be a rolling plan to get closer to the requirements in terms of implementing a Medium Term Expenditure Framework.
   b) Special attention should be given to the governance of the next NPA. Governance will be the engine that keeps the NPA running ensuring its multi-sectoral nature is guaranteed and enhanced. But governance is not only about establishing a coordinating body. Good governance is about assuming responsibilities to ensure the design and implementation of the plan is transparent and participatory, so that stakeholders can be held accountable and responsive to the right holders. It is about performing oversight to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes, and according to the rule of law. It is about reaching consensus without sacrificing equity and inclusiveness.
   c) Planning should be informed and shaped by the following considerations. First, plans should be developed taking into account available budget, available capacities and reasonably expectable results through Performance Based Budgeting (PBB). Second, in developing such programmes, the GoN should adopt a Problem Driven Iterative Approach (PDIA) focusing on solving locally nominated and defined problems in performance, creating an authorizing environment for decision-making that encourages positive deviance and experimentation, embedding this experimentation in tight feedback loops that facilitate rapid experiential learning and engaging broad sets of agents to ensure that reforms are viable, legitimate, relevant, and supportable.

2) Recommendations for results frameworks, monitoring and evaluation plans and systems
a) The development of an **M&E plan should be integral part of the design process**, to make sure indicators at all level can be easily identified, and to act as a checking mechanisms for the logic of the NPA

b) **M&E mechanism should be much leaning towards learning and adaptation** rather than simple reporting. The rolling nature of the plan, and the governance functioning, require a constant flow of information for decision making.

c) The plan should be designed in terms of **SMART goals to be achieved for children**, not in terms of attainments that are too generic to correspond to measurable performances.

3) Recommendations for UNICEF Nepal Country Office

a) UNICEF should support the government by providing **technical assistance** in developing and implementing the next plan for children not just on technical aspects (e.g. education quality, child protection, etc.) but especially on strengthen public finance management, civil service reform and performance base budgeting and management.

b) UNICEF should support the multi-sectoral plans by better **coordinating internally** its interventions for children to reduce the risk of creating capability trap of pre-mature load bearing. At the same time, this support should also aim to bring coherence and avoid duplications or gaps in the pans for children, based on the needs emerged and assessed in the situation analysis.

c) UNICEF should find a way to **track directly its contributions** to national development plans and priorities, or parts of them, in its internal management system.
INTRODUCTION

Context

Nepal ranked 145th in the 2015 Human Development Report (HDR). Nepal’s current population has reached 28,300,081 with an average population growth rate of 1.1% over the last nine years. In 2010, 15% of the population fell under the poverty line at 1.90 USD a day (2011 PPP). The Gross National Income (GNI) reached 2,410 USD in 2014, from 1,600 USD in 2006 (PPP, current international USD), with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 5.4%. The income GINI coefficient was 32.8, showing a not excessive degree of inequality in income distribution. Nepal suffered from high inflation in the last nine years; in 2014, inflation rate was 8.7%, a significantly high figure that contribute to the erosion of the gains obtained in terms of economic growth. Also, in the last ten years, the Nepali rupee depreciated against the dollar from 71 NPR in 2006 to 109 NPR for 1 USD in early 2016. Net Official Development Aid (ODA) has continuously increased to reach 870,590,000 USD in 2014, while Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), as net inflows of the Balance of Payments (BoP), amounted to 74,244,986 USD (current). The National Planning Commission (NPC) expects that the total foreign aid as the proportion of the GDP will increase from 4.3% to 5.9% in the final year of the Thirteenth Plan period. Around 20% of the Government expenditure is expected to be financed by foreign aid, both loans and grants. These figures grow dim when looking at the level of remittances that Nepali people benefitted from their fellow countrymen living and working abroad: 5,769,654,336 USD were sent to Nepal from abroad in 2013, four times the amount sent nine years earlier, and six times and a half of the ODA in 2014.

Nepal witnessed some important institutional changes in the last twenty years. In 1996, a civil war started that would have lasted for 10 years. The civil war was fought between the Communist Party of Nepal (a.k.a. the Maoist) and the forces of the Royal Nepal Army. The war sparked following a series of requests to replace the royal parliamentary system with a People’s Republic system. The war escalated and reached its peak in 2003 and 2004. On February 1, 2005, King Gyanendra dismissed the entire government and assumed full executive powers in an attempt to suppress the violent Maoist movement. A stalemate then occurred, with the Maoist controlling vast portions of the country side but not the urban context. In September 2005, the Maoists declared a three-month unilateral ceasefire to negotiate. In 2006, a series of political agitations, known as the 2006 Democracy Movement, or Jana Andolan-II (“People’s Movement-II”) forces the King Gyanendra to relinquish sovereign power to the people. After being reinstated in April 2006, House of Representatives declared Nepal a secular state in May and in December 2007, a bill was passed to amend the Constitution and thereby abolishing the monarchy and creating a federal republic. An interim Constitution was adopted in 2007. A new Constitution came into force on 20 September 2015.

Table 1: Summary of progress on the MDGs and selected targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Likelihood of achievement</th>
<th>Status of supportive environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 All data for this section are from the World Bank database, unless otherwise mentioned.
2 Source: [http://www.xe.com/currencycharts/?from=USD&to=NPR&view=10Y](http://www.xe.com/currencycharts/?from=USD&to=NPR&view=10Y)
3 This goal does not take into consideration yet the negative effects on the national economy of the April 2015 earthquake and the fuel crisis occurred at the end of 2015.
4 NPC, Approach paper to the Thirteenth Plan, 2013
6 Source: UNDP Nepal website, last consulted on February 2016.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Likelihood of achievement</th>
<th>Status of supportive environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (a) Reduce extreme poverty by half</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (b) Full and productive employment for all</td>
<td>Potentially Likely</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (c) Reduce extreme hunger</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Lack of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Achieve universal primary education</td>
<td>Potentially Likely</td>
<td>Lack of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Gender equality and empowerment of women</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Reduce child mortality</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Improve maternal health</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (a) Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (b) Achieve universal access to reproductive health</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and TB</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (a) Have halted and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (b) Achieve universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (c) Have halted and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other diseases</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ensure environmental sustainability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (a) Reverse loss of forest</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (b) Reduce Biodiversity Loss</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (c) Halve proportion of people without sanitation</td>
<td>Potentially Likely</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (d) Improve lives of slum dwellers</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Nepal has made progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), there are still key inequities that the NPA/C aimed to address. Stunting rates in the Western mountains and Far-West hills are around 20% and 17% respectively higher than the national average (37%)\(^7\), and are 15% higher in rural than in urban settings. Stunting and underweight have been consistently highest (50%) amongst the Dalit, Muslims and other smaller ethnic/caste groups\(^8\). Almost half of women (49%) were married before the age of 18, 16 percent of them below the age of 15, resulting among others in an early childbearing rate of 16 percent placing them at high risk of complications\(^9\). Although Nepal significantly decreased their maternal...

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mortality by 76 percent between 1990 and 2013\textsuperscript{10}, only 11% of births among the poorest are attended by a skilled birth attendant, compared to 82% among the richest\textsuperscript{11}. Neonatal mortality has scarcely reduced in 5 years and key childhood diseases remain a threat to those most disadvantaged populations where care-seeking practices and community and facility-based care and treatment is inadequate. Among all human trafficking cases registered in 2012, 55.1% of victims were children. Similarly, 40.6% of victims of all rape and attempted rape cases are children. Birth registration for children under five remains low at 58 percent. Additionally, 37% of children aged 5 to 17 are involved in child labour. Attendance of Early Childhood Education programs is low at 51%, while access to these programs for children from lower quintiles still remains a challenge\textsuperscript{12}. Although there are challenges in defining the concept and in collecting data on Out of School Children, the Nepal Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey 2014 (NMICS) data suggests that 23% of primary school age children were out of school, although this is primarily due to a low attendance rate (68 percent) for children aged five years at the beginning of the school year, who appear to be starting school late, as seen by the relatively high percentage attending preschool. The primary school net attendance ratio did not differ by gender. Regionally, it was highest in the Western Hills (95 percent) and lowest in the Central Terai (75 percent)\textsuperscript{13}. Children with disabilities consist of 1.3 percent of total enrollment (53,681 children).\textsuperscript{14} Disability and poverty are strongly interlinked, with the most disadvantaged regions of Mid and Far Western districts with the highest Human Poverty Index, showing the highest percentages of enrollment of disabled children (3.7%). Disabled children from poor families are more likely to suffer lasting consequences and disability is likely to exacerbate and deepen poverty\textsuperscript{15}.

Nepal has achieved considerable successes in the human and social development of its people. Error! Reference source not found. here below presents a snapshot of the change occurred in the last none years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH, TOTAL (YEARS)</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>69.2\textsuperscript{17}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FERTILITY RATE, TOTAL (BIRTHS PER WOMAN)</td>
<td>3.151</td>
<td>2.292\textsuperscript{18}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIRTHS ATTENDED BY SKILLED HEALTH STAFF (% OF TOTAL)</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>36\textsuperscript{19}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORTALITY RATE, UNDER-5 (PER 1,000)</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREVALENCE OF UNDERWEIGHT, WEIGHT FOR AGE (% OF CHILDREN UNDER 5)</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>29.1\textsuperscript{20}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{14} Shiba Prasad Rijal, \textit{Enrollment And Distribution Of Disabled At Primary Schools In Nepal}, \textit{The Third Pole: Journal of Geography Education, Vol. 11-12 (2012)}.


\textsuperscript{16} Source: World Bank Database, last consulted on February 2016.
The Government of Nepal (GoN) is currently implementing the Thirteenth Plan, covering fiscal years 2013/14 – 2015/16. The Thirteenth Plan is a three-year plan which long-term vision is to “upgrade Nepal from a least developed to a developing country by 2022” by bringing about “a direct positive change in the living standards of the general public by reducing the economic and human poverty prevalent in the nation. The plan builds on the situation present at the expiry of the previous three-year plan. When it came to the situation of women and children, the GoN acknowledges that “Although the TYP (i.e. the Twelfth Plan) focused on the protection and promotion of the rights of women, persons with disabilities, children, and senior citizens, the expected progress has not been made because policy measures have not been effectively implemented, disaggregated data for use in mainstreaming gender in Nepal’s macro-economic framework is insufficient, and gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation is not conducted. The NPC acknowledges also that “The Ten-Year Children’s National Action Plan is being implemented to protect and promote the four key rights of children, survival, protection, development and meaningful participation. Despite the interventions and achievements, some problems persist, primarily the desultory implementation of child-related programmes and lack of notable progress in the areas of child labour eradication and control of trafficking.” To address these shortcomings, the Thirteenth Plan identifies the following objectives for children and adolescents:

1. To protect and promote the overall rights of children.
2. To eradicate all forms of violence and abuse against children and adolescents, and
3. To eradicate all forms of child labour.
The NAP/C is underpinned by the following legal instruments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International instruments</th>
<th>National instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declarations of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on reduction of infant and child mortality rates, reduction of malnutrition among under-fives, reduction of maternal mortality rate, raising the age of consent for marriage, reduction of gender inequality, protection of children in difficult circumstances in general and protection of children in extreme social environments, access for children to primary education, increase in school enrolment and elimination of child labour.</td>
<td>Three-Year Plan 2010/11–2012/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO Conventions No. 182 and 138 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999</td>
<td>Children’s Act 1992,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of Millennium Development Goals, 2000</td>
<td>Labour Act 1992,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijing +5 Declaration, 1995</td>
<td>Local Self Governance Act 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Second Long-Term Health Plan (1997–2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Health Sector Strategy: Programme for Reforms, 2002/03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (2006–2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation Plan for the Health Sector Programme (2004–2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second Phase of Implementation Plan for Health Sector Programme (2010–2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long-Term Plan on Population (2010–2031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Plan of Action on Beijing +5,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
International instruments | National instruments
---|---
Education Act |  
School Sector Reform Plan (and its extensions)

Table 3: International and national legal instruments

Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to support policymakers and government and non-government sector representatives responsible for children’s rights to analyse the barriers that obstructed progress in implementation of the NPA/C as the Plan has come to an end in July 2015. The evaluation aims to provide practical recommendations to the MoWCSW and all other MDAs involved in fulfilling child rights for enhancing the enabling environment, coordination, monitoring mechanisms and partnerships to ensure rights of children related to survival, development, protection and participation that will inform development and support improved implementation of the next National Plan of Action for Children.

The evaluation focused on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. An equity component has also been added. The evaluation questions were answered through the lenses of the governance analysis, in line with the findings emerged from the inception mission. Despite the Terms of Reference mention that “Impact will not be included in this evaluation due to limited availability of impact indicators and lack of available information to determine attribution”\(^{36}\), the 5 November meeting of the technical committee, asked the consultants to try to maintain “a flavour of impact”. This proved to be challenging mainly due to “limited availability of impact indicators and lack of information to determine the attribution”\(^{37}\) (see more in detail limitations and risks). The following research questions were investigated:

**Relevance**\(^{38}\): How relevant is the design of NPA for Children to the Nepal economic, social and political context relating to children? To what extent does it address major challenges that exist in child rights in Nepal? To what extent was the NPA for Children (i) adapted to the evolving needs of the population, in particular vulnerable groups and the extent to which the NPA has proved flexible in responding to changing needs, particularly considering the evolving political situation; (ii) and in line with the priorities set by the international and national legal/policy frameworks?

**Effectiveness**\(^{39}\): How effective has the NPA for Children been in strengthening the enabling environment that promote the rights of children, child friendly services and access to basic needs and services including from the perspectives of government at national and sub national levels, civil society, communities and other stakeholders? To what extent were the objectives of the NPA for Children achieved, particularly in relation to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups? What has been the added value of the NPA for Children to

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\(^{36}\) Terms of reference, page 4. It has to be noted that there is a contradiction in the ToR regarding this aspect: the objectives mention impact, while the scope excludes impact.


\(^{38}\) The extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor. OECD/DAC, 2009

\(^{39}\) A measure of the extent to which an activity attains its objectives. OECD/DAC, 2009
establishing legal/policy frameworks, systems, interventions and agencies and in raising awareness on the rights of children? What unintended outcomes, positive as well as negative, have resulted from the NPA for Children in Nepal?

**Efficiency**\(^{40}\): To what extent have appropriate human, financial and technical resources been used to achieve the biggest possible positive change in a timely manner and to pursue the achievement of the objectives of the NPA for Children? To what extent meaningful partnerships or coordination mechanisms were established with other key actors not involved in NPA, e.g. government at national and local levels, civil society, academia, etc., that avoid duplication of efforts, miscommunication and ensure clearer accountabilities?

**Sustainability**\(^{41}\): What are the enabling and constraining factors that influence sustainability and success of the NPA? To what extent have the partnerships and coordination mechanisms established allowed the Government to make use of the comparative strengths of its partners, while, at the same time, safeguarding and promoting its national ownership of supported interventions, programs and policies?

**Impact**\(^{42}\): What has happened as a result of the NPA for Children? What real difference has the activities made to the beneficiaries? What changes did the NPA for Children produce on the enabling environment for children in Nepal?

**Equity**\(^{43}\): How equitable has the NPA for Children been in its design and implementation in Nepal to specifically target marginalised and vulnerable groups such as child workers, children living in institutions, children from disadvantaged ethnic groups, among others? To what extent has the NPA for Children reached the most vulnerable children (i.e. establish what specific models or approaches were applied to effectively reach these groups?) How does the current the NPA for Children address gender inequalities and the empowerment of marginalised girls in the country?

This evaluation has primarily included a process analysis to provide guidance on measures for improving programme effectiveness in future and will focus on evaluation questions of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and equity to address how the NPA/C sought to strengthen the application of an equity approach and mainstream gender. The evaluation process has involved only duty bearers and not right holders. The opinions and perceptions of children, parents and caregivers, that were initially planned, could not happen (see section on the methodology for further details). The opinions of service providers and policy makers constitute the main evidence for the findings and the recommendations in this report.

The evaluation team has adhered to the following research principles towards participants:

- **Rights-based**: standards set in the international treaties, covenants, and protocols, and intended to promote and protect human rights.
- **Dignity and diversity**: Respect of differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity, and their potential implications of these differences

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\(^{40}\) Measures of the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs. OECD/DAC, 2009

\(^{41}\) Measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after funding has been withdrawn. OECD/DAC, 2009

\(^{42}\) Measuring the positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. OECD/DAC, 2009

\(^{43}\) All children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential without discrimination, bias or favouritism. UNICEF, 2009
- **Participatory**: encouraging and enabling service providers and all CP stakeholders to make their views known on the issues that affect them.
- **No harm**: No discrimination between consulted people, creating or exacerbating degradation, conflicts and insecurity and will take into account the special needs of the most vulnerable groups of children and women.
- **Child centred**: children’s rights and needs are the primary focus for development, and are compounded by their family, community, culture and country.
- **Confidentiality**: people’s right to provide information in confidence and to awareness of the scope and limits of confidentiality.
- **Transparency**: open and constant dialogue and to give access to all information on all the matters involved in the analysis that are not open for disclosure for privacy and security reasons.

The evaluators have given the appropriate space to include the views of women, but could not involve directly representatives from girls, minorities, marginalised or socially excluded groups such as the Dalits, since the consultation with right holders could not happen.

The evaluation team faced a complete absence of any monitoring data on the implementation of the NPA/C. A proper impact analysis was therefore impossible to be included in this evaluation, also in consideration of the limited availability of impact indicators and lack of available information to determine attribution.

The evaluation has covered the entire implementation phase of the NPA from government endorsement on 18 November 2004 until its end on 15 July 2015.

The evaluation process has been participatory and has included stakeholders in line ministries and development partners (UN agencies, I/NGOs) (See ANNEX 2 - List of persons interviewed and sites visited. for the list of key informants and their agencies of belonging). Consultations in the regions and in the districts could not happen (see the section on limitations under the methodology).

The evaluation team has committed to guarantee and maintain:

- their independency in exercising their judgements
- their impartiality in presenting both strengths and weaknesses of the NPA
- their credibility by using all evidence that it will be possible to collect
- the absence of possible conflicts of interest
- their honesty and integrity during the whole evaluation process
- their accountability for the completion of the evaluation as agreed with UNICEF Nepal

The inception phase indicated that the NPA/C was not widely known and used outside the MoWCSW, and to some limited extent within it. For this reason, the performance standards chosen by the evaluation team focused on establishing the level of matching of activities in the NPA/C with other plans and strategies, and on anecdotal evidence on the implementation of the NPA/C in terms of budget execution, activities and services provided to children and their families, and management of the plan.

The NPA/C does not provide with any theory of change (ToC) to illustrate how the expected results will be achieved given the initial context and through the planned activities. A national plan of action of the nature and ambition of the NPA/C should present a ToC structured along this sample:
The NPA/C does not have anything similar to this to guide the evaluation. To address this, the evaluation team has developed a ToC that will guide the evaluation. The ToC presented below, is based on the information gathered from the analysis of the NPA/C, the initial desk review, and the preliminary findings from the inception mission. Based on this, the ToC for the evaluation is the following:

“"The results for children will be achieved through a combination of technical interventions, aiming at strengthening the provision of services, and of governance interventions, aiming at improving the effectiveness of the systems for children."”

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Methodology and process

Based on the meetings held during the inception mission, it appeared that the weak knowledge and use of the NPA/C has to be imputed to the not-so-well-functioning governance mechanisms of the NPA.

Governance can be defined as "the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). Good governance is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimised, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society."\(^{45}\)

Governance can be understood as the process that regulates the implementation engine, from design, to allocation of resources (human and financial), to implementation and review (see Figure 3 below). In governance, key is the evidence-based decision making, with an M&E mechanism that is not much leaning towards collecting information for reporting purposes, rather towards learning and adaptation. Good governance should be shaped by adopting an approach marked more by “communication and collaboration” rather than “control and command”\(^{46}\).

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\(^{45}\) United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2009

\(^{46}\) See for example Laurie Joshua, Integrated Policy Management Groups Draft Operational Guidelines for the Employment, Skills And Social Policy Sector, Project Preparation Facility, Tirana, December 2014
Figure 3: Governance framework

The first round of consultations held during the inception phase led the evaluation team to identify possible drivers for limited use of the NPA/C. They were:

- weak design, particularly of governance mechanisms of the NPA;
- absence of a theory of change guiding stakeholders towards results for children;
- limited dissemination of the document;
- ineffective coordination among stakeholders;
- weak leadership\textsuperscript{47} on the part of MoWCSW;
- no monitoring and reporting mechanism (institutionalised or informal) on programmes set out in the plan;
- no clear budget allocated to the programmes;
- high staff turnover in the ministries with no of system of handing over to the successors; and
- lack of clear presence of programmes and projects specifically developed under the frame of the NPA.

At the same time, stakeholders consulted expressed a strong opinion on the importance of having a multi-sectoral document bringing together the different actors intervening for children well-being in Nepal. The proposed methodology is tailored to collect data both on the implementation of the NPA/C and for its governance. The following data collection methods were used:

\textsuperscript{47} Leadership is the ability to guide people by showing a vision and giving a sense of direction. A good leader has also to show a good level of emotional intelligence, meaning having self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill (see What Makes a Leader?, Daniel Goleman, \textit{HBR January 2004 ISSUE})
1. Bilateral meetings with the officials and programme officers of institutions that were involved (or were supposed to be involved) in the implementation of the NPA/c since 2012, using a questionnaire. **PURPOSE:** build a history of the design and implementation of the NPA.

2. Desk review of the NPA 2004, MTR 2010, NPA 2012. **PURPOSE:** assess the design of the NPA.

3. Literature review of policies, strategies and plans, as well as the line ministries’ annual development plans and INGOs and DPs’ annual work plans that focus on issues related to children’s health, education, protection, HIV/AIDS and participation. **PURPOSE:** identify areas of overlapping, duplication, direct reference and gaps of the NPA with such plans for children.

All tools that will be used for collecting data are presented in this report as ANNEX 4 - Data collection tools.

**Limitations**

The evaluability of the NPA for Children 2004-2015 is limited due to various factors. First, the NPA document does not have a clear baseline for the initial situation. No evidence was found of a situation analysis prior the design of the first phase of the NPA/C in 2004. Second, the targets for children in 2015 mentioned in Annex 2 of the NPA/C only contains targets for the health and education components, nothing on child protection, child participation and HIV and AIDS. Third, no reporting mechanisms was established under the NPA/C, and consequently, if any activity has been implemented under the NPA/C framework, it was not officially reported to the Steering Committee established under section 6.9 of the plan. Fourth, no monitoring of the NPA/C and of its activities was carried out since its implementation begun.

The evaluation faces also a set of limitations. First, the team was made up of two consultants only, of whom only one collected the information and primary data from the stakeholders; this limited the possibility of a second pair of eyes in reviewing and to have regular debriefings after the meetings held. Second, the regional and district consultations did not happen. Initially, a random selection was identified as a selection method. After inception mission, it appeared that this could not be possible due to a shortage of fuel in the country and of insecurity in certain districts that could not be eligible for the visit. For this purpose, the evaluation team adopted a positive deviance approach, asking national stakeholders to identify the regions and districts to be visited, and to triangulate this with the available literature. None of the stakeholders was able to make any suggestion to the evaluation team. The lack of knowledge and of use of the NPA/C at the national level suggests that the NPA/C is even less known and used at the regional and district levels. Third, the size of the evaluation team and the timeframe are too tight to dedicate sufficient time for good in-depth analysis which is representative of the district level. Fourth, the limited presence and availability of reports, studies, researches related to the NPA, constrained the evaluators in relying in qualitative primary data collection of personal experiences, perceptions and opinions, with limited possibility of triangulating the information, if not just with other informers. For example, unavailability of budget expenditure figures, supposed recognition of NPA in other sectoral plans, availability of records/minutes on committee meetings, absence of official reports on the NPA made it difficult in establishing attribution without any kind of information.

Finally, the evaluation team had to take into consideration the presence of certain risks. The first risk was related to the availability of official documentation on the NPA/C design and implementation. To manage this risk, the national consultant provided extra effort in chasing such documents and in following up with

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48 Given the high turnover of staff in ministries, the fact that there is only one consultant for data collection, and in consideration of the timeframe for data collection, consultants will focus only on the second phase of the NPA. For the previous time, they will rely on the MID term Review of the NPA.
stakeholders who promised to share documents or who appear to have documents available. The second set of risk is related to the situation of insecurity especially in Terai due to political unrest and fuel crisis throughout the evaluation. This risk affected especially the field visit to the district which was expected to happen in mid-December. The risk proved to be too high to be managed, especially the security one. It is also worth to re-state that, when looking for examples of positive deviance, stakeholders were not able to make any suggestions on regions and districts to be visited. This, in consideration to the fact that the NPA/C is not known and used at the national level, led to drop the field consultations. Not surprisingly, the MTR had already identified this gap, when it states that “There is a lack of orientation and induction of NPA among Women Development Officers and Child Rights Officers and their roles for coordination and monitoring are not clarified. Coordination at the district level seems to be limited to observing Child Rights Days and addressing specific cases of child protection” showing thus a weak involvement of the sub-national levels.

Selection of the key informants

An Excel-based pivot table has been developed to identify the number of stakeholders with leading responsibilities (33), and the number of stakeholders with support responsibilities (53) in the NPA. Given the limited time and human resources available, it will not be possible to meet all of them. For this reason, the following criterion has been used: the actors that are mentioned in 10% or more of the major activities either as leading agency or as support partner, have been identified. The following actors are identified:

1. Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and agencies under the ministry
2. Ministry of Home Affairs including Nepal Police
3. Ministry of Education
4. Ministry of Health
5. Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
6. Juvenile Justice Coordination Commission
7. National Human Rights Commission
8. Non-Governmental Organisations

A list of people was prepared for the second round of bilateral interviews. People who worked since 2012 in sectoral agencies were responsible for either programme planning or implementation of the NPA were traced and a questionnaire was administered to them. The list of all stakeholders met during the inception and data collection phase are provided in ANNEX 2 - List of persons interviewed and sites visited.

Consultations process and timeframe

Individual consultations were carried out after the inception phase between early December 2015 and end January 2016. Individuals who were responsible for implementation of the NPA/C after it was revised in September 2012 to its end in July 2015 were contacted and were requested for interview. Staff members working at the planning or other relevant units/sections were considered as key informant. These people were mostly transferred to other ministry/department or even retired from their posts. In total 21 people were interviewed out of which four were from the MoWCSW or agencies under it. More than one person in some ministries were interviewed as they were in the position for a shorter period. Two of the respondents, Section Chief of Child Protection and Development Section of MoWCSW, and Chief of Women and Children

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Directorate of Nepal Police who were in office during the said period had retired. Findings of the KII s will be discussed in the subsequent chapter on findings.

Data collection tools validity

The tools for the data collection were submitted to the evaluation steering committee together with the inception report. Staff members from UNICEF Planning Monitoring and Evaluation and Child Protection sections provided inputs on the inception report and on the tools that were integrated in the final version. The evaluation steering committee met in mid-November 2015 and validated the tools.

The inception report and the tools were also submitted to an external quality assurance check. The evaluation team followed the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards as well as the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.
OBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

The object of the present evaluation is the National Plan of Action for Children 2004-2015. The plan ceased to be implemented at its expiry, in July 2015.

The NPA/C was developed by the Government of Nepal (GoN) as a concrete measure following the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Children in 2002 and was adopted by the Cabinet in 2004. The NPA/C was mainly based on four themes identified in ‘A World Fit for Children\(^\text{50}\), addressing the issues of (i) promoting healthy lives, (ii) providing quality education, (iii) protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence, and (iv) combating HIV and AIDS. The issue of child participation also included in the NPA/C, as a key pillar to sustain the specific goals in each of the previously mentioned issues.

The NPA/C was built around a **vision** according to which “Children enjoy their rights in a society fit for children, and realize their full potential.” The **mission** of the NPA/C was to “Ensure the right of each child to improve the quality of life by promoting child-friendly environments and eliminating all forms of exploitation, abuse and discrimination against children.” To achieve this, the NPA/C identified four **objectives**:

- Promote the rights of every child.
- Eliminate all forms of exploitation, abuse and discrimination against children.
- Promote child-friendly environments, focusing on education, health, nutrition and other sectors.
- Increase the access of children to all basic needs, facilities and services, ensuring quality.

and six **pillars**:

- Promoting healthy lives
- Providing quality education
- Protecting child rights
- Combating HIV/AIDS
- Child Participation
- Coordination, monitoring and evaluation

For the purpose of effectively implementing this NPA/C, a number of bodies were expected to be put in place, namely:

- National Steering Committee
- Joint Coordination Committee
- National Monitoring Committee on child issues
- Inter-ministerial and agency-level facilitation committees
- Child Friendly Local Government (CFLG) committees for implementation of NPA at village, municipality and district levels

The NPA/C does not specify the roles and responsibilities of each of these working bodies, nor their mutual relations. There is no evidence that these committees were ever established and functional. None of them is mentioned in the chart of NPA/C coordination, monitoring and evaluation mechanism in Annex 4.

\(^{50}\) A World Fit for Children was the outcome document of the UNGASS on children, 2002. The document can be found [here](#).
The NPA/C was approved by a decision of the Council of Ministers of the Government of Nepal on 28 November 2004. In 2010, a Mid-Term Review (MTR) was conducted to assess the progress in the implementation of the NPA/C and the possible needs for adjustments. The MTR team assumed the five evaluation criteria from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as centre of the review: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact. The focus of the MTR was to review the progress in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, and the achievement and sustainability of the objectives, rather than reviewing the impact and effect, limited by non-availability of success indicators in a few components and review conducted in a short time frame. For this reason, the evaluation team built on the findings from the MTR and concentrated mostly on the second implementation period, 2012-2015.

The MTR revealed that:

- **On children’s policies**, major gaps and challenges identified were in the areas of implementation of the existing policies mainly due to inadequate awareness among the right holders and duty bearers on the existing laws and policies and the delay in getting a few major amendments, or new Acts and Policies endorsed by the cabinet.

- **On children’s health**, the NPA review team found that in the absence of reliable, updated, nationwide and gender disaggregated data on children, it is difficult to monitor progress and make adjustments to the policies and programmes for children.

- **On children’s education**, achievements were seen in the increased number of Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, increased rate of gross enrolment of children in the centres, and training for facilitators on ECD. Access to education for children has greatly increased with increased enrolment. Major challenges are the low quality of most ECD centres low, inconsistent and the resource availability is also not uniform, lack of primary education fund and program for psychosocial counselling. The rate of retention was still not increasing satisfactorily and huge inequalities and variations in providing educational services to children of the poorest and most marginalised and isolated communities existed. The quality of education and child friendly school environment also seemed to be low. Difficulties with the implementation of Children as Zones of Peace (CZOP) and Schools as Zones of Peace (SZOP) programmes were encountered in all places.

- **On children’s protection**, the major challenges identified included: problems with getting endorsements of many child protection related policies and strategies like child protection policy, child friendly local governance etc. Similarly a few components like adoption were not aligned with the commitment of the CRC. Emerging issues like child pornography and control on children’s access to internet and over the contents on internet were not addressed. The roles of District Child Protection Committees and Village Child Protection Committees (DCPC/VCPC), created to promote the rights of children to protection and on getting their activities coordinated, were not clear. The issues of child labour in informal sector were not addressed by the NPA, and the specific needs of adolescents, particularly girls, to ensure their rights to protection needed to be advocated. Problems with inadequate awareness regarding available social service schemes affected its utilization. Juvenile justice programmes were severely resource and sensitivity constrained.

- **On HIV/AIDS control**, findings of the MTR of the NPA suggest that lots have been achieved in generating awareness and developing policies and programmes and providing services such as Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART), Voluntary Counselling and Treatment (VCT), and Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT). The major gaps were imputable to emerging issues like, age

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51 Double standard roles (signing on the CoC but not being serious in its implementation) played by the political parties.
appropriate basic minimum package for all children as per the National HIV and AIDS policy. Also identification and maintaining confidentiality of HIV and AIDS infected persons remained a big challenge. Collection of actual data was also a challenge and there were lots of weaknesses in the monitoring process. Access to and adequate availability of existing VCT centres and ART were an issue as well.

- **On child participation**, major successes included (a) increase in the consultation with children during formulation child related plans and policy, (b) increase in the number of child clubs formed, (c) Child Friendly Village Development Committees (CFVDC)/municipality programmes were being implemented, (d) MoFALD directed all VDCs to allocate 15% of their annual budget to fund activities targeted to ensure the rights of children, and (e) participation of children in District Child Welfare Board (DCWB) and DCPC activities and in the meetings/activities at the community level VDC/School Management Committees. At the same time, major gaps include un-systematic and irregular participation of children, especially at homes, schools, VDCs, DDCs, health posts etc. The dependence of child clubs on donor agencies was also cited as one of the issues that directly affects their sustainability. Due to the low level of community awareness on laws and policies to ensure the rights of children, the decisions taken by the MoFALD/MoWCSW, etc are being minimally implemented at the community level. Similarly, the transition of children from child clubs to youth clubs was not planned and they were not prepared for this. Their capabilities were not fully utilized when they transited from child clubs to youth ones.

- **On Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation**, the major successes included the establishment of DCWBs in all the 75 districts and placement of Child Rights Officers in 50 districts. DCPCs have been formed. The Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB) developed a format based on CRC parameters for data collection on child rights issues from the districts. DCWBs provided registration and renewal of child clubs and networks in the districts. Public sensitization on child rights issues was carried out by the CCWB/DCWB, development partners and I/NGOs. Nevertheless, the MTR identified that even though the NPC emphasised the implementation of the NPAC and has given policy guidelines and feedback to the government and to the line ministries, it has not been able to achieve compliance from the ministries to adopt the NPA/C in their Annual and Periodic Plans and take responsibility for its implementation. There has been no mechanism for follow-up and monitoring of child clubs and their networks. Awareness generation activities were not carried out in a coordinated and integrated way. No organization capacity assessment of the CCWB or DCWBs has been done, and no plan for human resource development prepared based on such assessment. The NPA/C also lacks a “fully-phased” communication and information system (CIS) for its implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The MTR methodology does not allow to show a clear attribution of what was achieved to the NPA/C. The tools in Appendix 3 to the MTR do include questions that might refer to attribution, but the analysis does not clearly show such findings. Notwithstanding this, the MTR team concluded that much was achieved since its implementation and many contextual changes have also taken place since its inception. They stressed the importance of updating the document “so that its relevancy and usage is maintained.”

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52 Dr. Dil Prasad Shrestha, Shalini Tripathi, Consultant, and Kedar P Badu, Consultant (MITRA) Mid-Term Review of the National Plan of Action (NPA) for Children (2004/05 – 2014/15), Kathmandu, 2010
After a series of consultation, in 2012 the NPA/C was amended and approved by the Council of Ministers, Government of Nepal, on 3 September 2012. The structure of the plan did not change, neither did the vision, mission, objectives and pillars. Only the activities under each pillar were updated and made more suitable to the changed context.

The NPA/C has six components, five of which refer directly to children’s rights and one is about the Facilitation of implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Each component has a set of “Overall objectives” that are presented in Table 4 here below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT</th>
<th>OVERALL OBJECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RIGHTS OF THE CHILD TO HEALTH</td>
<td>1. Reduce child mortality rates (among four-week-olds, 12-month-olds and under-fives) by improving community and district-level health services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Reduce maternal mortality by improving community and district-level maternal health services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Focus on reduction in the disparities between male and female children, urban and rural areas, and the rich and poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIGHTS OF THE CHILD TO EDUCATION</td>
<td>1. Ensure access of all school-aged children to quality education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Ensure gender equity in school education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIGHTS OF THE CHILD TO PROTECTION</td>
<td>1. Protect children from all forms of discrimination, sexual exploitation, abuse, stigma, traditional harmful practices, neglect, deprivation, negligence, oppression, worst forms of labour, circumstances to become involved in conflict, trafficking, kidnapping and other activities that are against the rights of the child, including separation from their parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Ensure rights of children, focusing on those in especially difficult circumstances such as children with disabilities, children affected by conflict, street children, child labourers, and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV AND AIDS CONTROL</td>
<td>1. Expand the PMTCT programme to the community level for prevention of HIV infection from HIV-infected mothers to newborns, and prevent HIV infection among adolescents at high risk.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Ensure access to and regularity in treatment of children infected with HIV.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RIGHTS OF THE CHILD TO PARTICIPATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ensure and promote meaningful participation of children, on the basis of their maturity and capacity, in the processes of policy-making and decision-making as well as of service delivery at national and local levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Make institutional arrangements for child clubs and child networks, and build their capacities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACILITATION OF IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Develop an effective mechanism for coordination, monitoring and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Overall objectives of the NPA/C components

It has to be noted that the NPA/C presents some confusion between the concepts of protection of child rights and right to child protection. Many strategic objectives in the section on Right of the Child to Protection are in fact formulated around the concept of protection of rights and/or child rights, while the major activities specifically address child protection.

The NPA/C does not present any logic model and/or the expected results chain. There is not a theory of change, nor a description of the change pathway, nor a logical framework that show the relations between inputs, outputs and outcomes of the object. The NPA/C states that “The MoWCSW in coordination with the NPC and CCWB will develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (M&EP) separately and implement it. The M&EP will be an integral part of this NPA\(^{53}\)” but the plan was not developed. Most of the performance indicators are at the output level, and therefore it is difficult to link the baseline and targets with specific activities (or groups of activities) missing the outcome level (see Figure 1 for a reminder). All these factors, together with the absence of any monitoring report and data, make it not possible to determine what was done and achieved in the implementation of the NPA/C.

The intended geographical coverage of the NPA/C is national; there are not any indications of prioritisation of certain regions, districts or other zones. Similarly, being a national plan for children, the target group the plan intended to serve is all children in Nepal. Nonetheless, equity is a concern that is well captured in the plan: most vulnerable children include children who are poor, orphaned, destitute, oppressed, Dalit, unaccompanied, disabled or exploited.

The NPA/C takes into considerations other cross-cutting issues. Gender parity appears mentioned several times in the narrative, but when it comes to the major activities, it appears to be a concern more within the right to education. Specifically, there are six major activities under Right to Education, one under Right to Participation and one under the right to Protection that specifically mention girls or gender. Social inclusion is mentioned as a crosscutting issues at page 14 without any further mention. Early childhood education and development is the object of a specific strategic objective under Right to Education, it is not addressed as a

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\(^{53}\) NPA/C, page 51.
cross-cutting issue. Similarly, Child participation appears to be the object of a specific section of the plan, rather than a crosscutting issue. Children living with disabilities are a central focus throughout all the NPA/C.

The required budget for the implementation of the NPA/C amounts to 125 billion NPR. The interview with the person[^54] who was the consultant in charge of developing the plan in 2004 revealed that no costing methodology was used, but only some estimates to ballpark the expected cost of the NPA/C. This led to two shortcomings in the design of the plan. First, the total cost of the plan appears to be very high, amounting to 4% of the overall GoN expenditure in the timeframe 2004/2005-2014/2015. During the same period, the MoWCSW was given 0.30% of the GoN expenditure; this, in consideration that the MoWCSW is the responsible (very often, co-leading with other agencies) agency for two out of three activities in the NPA/C, constitutes a serious factor of blockage in the implementation of the plan. Second, the budget lines as presented in the Annex 3 do not match with the structure of the plan, making it impossible to determine how much should be allocated and spent for each of the major activities. The budget was not revised after the MTR. No evidence was found of budget allocation and expenditure during the implementation of the NPA/C. Given the absence of an expenditure tracking mechanism, and of any monitoring report, it is not possible for this evaluation team to assess how much was spent to implement the NPA/C and for what. Given the ambitions of the NPA/C, finally, no resource mobilisation strategy was produced, nor were formal commitments made by any of the development partners traditionally involved in child right[^55].

The multi-sectoral nature of child rights, and hence of the NPA/C, calls for a wide representation of different Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in the implementation of the plan. The composition of the National Steering Committee mentions: the National Planning Commission, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Law, Justice, Constituent Assembly and Parliamentary Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Physical Planning, Works and Transportation, the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development Member, and the Ministry of Health. The overall leadership and coordination is placed under the MoWCSW and its CCWB.

Thirty-three different organisations and MDAs are cited in the plan as responsible agencies in implementing its provisions. Of them, those mostly cited are MoWCSW, MoE, MoHA, MoHP and Local bodies; together they sum-up to 82% of all the agencies cited as responsible. Figure 4 presents the distribution of the responsibilities.

[^54]: Meeting held during the inception phase, 30 October 2015.
[^55]: It has to be said that the terms of reference of the evaluation state that “The NPA was prepared through a joint partnership of key stakeholders in Government, Development Partners and I/NGOs. UNICEF, Save the Children Norway, UK and US, Plan Nepal, ILO and GTZ provided financial and technical assistance for the development and implementation of the NPA. Jointly, these partners allocated an estimated amount of 125.820 million Nepalese Rupees for the NPA implementation.” After investigation with UNICEF on the source of this information, it was not possible to ascertain where it came from.
The analysis of the distribution of responsible agencies against the NPA/C’s components and major activities, reveals the high burden for the implementation of the plan given to the MoWCSW. As mentioned earlier, the MoWCSW is mentioned as a leading (or co-leading) responsible agency in two out of three activities in the plan. Disaggregating the number of activities per components, the MoWCSW is by far mentioned as the largest NPA/C implementer, leading on four out of six components (though on health, it is almost at the same level of the major responsible, the Ministry of Health).

Table 5: Distribution of responsible agencies per component and activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT</th>
<th>Act. in NPA/C</th>
<th>Local bodies</th>
<th>MoWCSW</th>
<th>MoE</th>
<th>MoHP</th>
<th>MoHA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FACILITATION OF IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS CONTROL</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIGHTS TO EDUCATION</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIGHTS TO HEALTH</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATION</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIGHTS TO PROTECTION</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a matter of fact, the NPA/C states several times the crucial importance of multi-sectoral and inter-sectoral coordination. It introduces the concept of multi-sectoral adaptation: “The NPA/C will provide the minimum guidance on planning for children in each ministry, and will address provisions made in regional/international

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56 In bold font, the Ministry with the higher number of activities as responsible agency.

57 The total of the five organisations exceeds the 206 activities in the NPA/C since almost all of the activities are co-led by two or more agencies.
conventions. In their planning for children, sectoral ministries should be able to use the objectives specified in the NPA/C to incorporate a child-rights perspective in their plans. In addition, aspects on incorporating the NPA/C’s perspective into sectoral decision-making and planning processes at local and central levels and ensuring coherence on various aspects of the NPA/C have been included. Such adaptations will be done gradually in all concerned sectors.\footnote{NPA/C, page 13} The plan also defines under the implementation modalities: “It is imperative to have a clear and collaborative system for implementation of the NPA/C. All implementing agencies, ministries, departments, district constituent offices, local bodies, user groups and external development partners are responsible for implementing the NPA/C in an integrated and results-oriented manner, since children’s issue are of concern to the national plans of action of all sectors. Programmes related to children will be implemented continuously through relevant sectoral ministries and departments such as the MoWCSW and MoHP. These agencies will be sensitized to pay special attention to children’s issues through a rights-based approach. The same process will be followed for local bodies. Focal persons in concerned sectoral ministries will play an important role in ensuring that attention is paid to child rights throughout sectoral plan and programme periods.”\footnote{NPA/C, page 20}

The analysis of the data sources of the evaluation showed that: i) the multi-sectoral National Steering Committee was never established; ii) focal points in the MDAs were not appointed; and iii) when implementing their programmes, MDAs other than the MoWCSW followed their own plans and strategies, and not the NPA/C. Such plans and strategies constituted a significant overlap and replication in the provisions of the NPA/C. Overall, the evaluation team found that the activities in the NPA/C were replicated in other plans and strategies, such as: health, nutrition and child feeding, iodine deficiency, sanitation and hygiene, breast-feeding, safe motherhood, reproductive health, immunisation, education, school reform, early childhood development (ECD), technical and vocational education and training (TVET), trafficking, child labour, discrimination, violence, social protection, children in armed conflict, HIV/AIDS, disability, adolescents, and internally displaced people (IDPs), gender equality and human rights.

The appointment of focal points encountered also a structural challenge, inherent to the functioning of civil service in Nepal. According to Civil Service Act, civil servants are transferred every two years, or even less, from their post by the Ministry of General Administration (MoGA) to another office (ministry or department)\footnote{Civil Service Act}. This has resulted in a high level of turnover in the officials that have been involved in the

\footnote{Government employees in Nepal are governed by the Civil Service Act and its regulation. The first Act was enacted in 1956, however, with this was scrapped after the democracy in the country and a new Civil Service Act along with the rules was promulgated in 1993. The 1993 Act was amended for the fourth time in July 2015 and classified civil servants in 10 categories, i.e. Economic and Statistics, Engineering, Agriculture, Justice, Foreign service, administration, auditing, forest, education, and miscellaneous services. The Preamble of The Civil Service Act states – “it is expedient to make provisions on the constitution, operation and conditions of service of the civil service in order to make the civil service more competent, vigorous, service-oriented and responsible”. Ministry of General Administration (MoGA) is the responsible agency for transfer of the civil servants. The Act on Chapter 4 rule 18 mentions; “The civil employees shall be transferred in order to provide them, inter alia, with experience of different geographical regions of the country. Government employees, in general, can be transferred in every two years but there are some provisions such as those serving in a remotest or mountain area can be transferred between one and 1.5 years. Similarly, senior level employees can be transferred prior to the designated two years whereas junior officers might not be transferred for several years. The Civil Service Act illustrates on transfer of employees considering their educational qualification, training, and experience. Besides, MoGA is required to take into consideration the leadership quality of senior level employees during their transfer.}
design, implementation and monitoring of the NPA/C. The absence of institutional mechanisms for organisational learning and knowledge management, paired with the non-existence of any system for handover, has led to a loss of historical memory, while hampering the smooth implementation of the NPA/C. High staff turnover is reported as a critical issue by almost all the participants to the key informants interviews and by the literature review, also in other fields, despite the lack of specific data.

Institutional memory in government offices is found to be very minimal. There is no practice of preparing handing over notes to successors. Though Rule 41 of the Civil Service Rule, 1993 mentions on preparing and submitting reports to successors, it narrows down to confidential documents, accounts related matters, and work performance forms. See for example, P. Krause, S. Sweet, E. Hedger, and B. Chalise, Operational risk assessment of public financial management reform in Nepal: a review of challenges and opportunities, ODI August 2013, or D. Harris, J. Wales, H. Jones and Dr. T. Rana, with R. Lal Chitrakar Human resources for health in Nepal The politics of access in remote areas, Overseas Development Institute, or the Asian Development Bank, Nepal: Governance Reform Program Validation report, 2010.
FINDINGS

General findings

The analysis of the literature reviewed and the information from the key informants reveal two different ways of understanding the NPA/C. Interviewed staff from MoWSCW understand the NPA/C as a comprehensive plan encompassing all sectors and guiding the programmes and projects of other Ministries. Representatives from other ministries revealed that the NPA/C is not used at all in their MDA of belonging: activities are planned according to sectoral plans and strategies, and the same holds true for budget allocation for children and reporting of any progress and/or challenges. Extracts from the interviews provide clear examples of this situation.

**EVIDENCE FROM INTERVIEWS**

“Child labour activities of Ministry of Labour and Employment are ministry's annual activities and there is no system of referring to any other documents such as NPA/C.” MoLE, 15 December 2015

“No such reporting mechanism to MoWCSW or Social Welfare Council on NPA/C activities in particular but progress reports are shared with SWC and District Development Committee.” CWIN, 10 December 2015

“The Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development focuses on governance part whereas NPA/C deals with protection issues only.” MoFALD, 10 December 2015

“No programmes or projects developed based on NPA/C.” NHRC, 8 December 2015

“Individual budget allocation is not practiced for programmes of NPA/C”. NPC, 13 December 2015

“No projects/programmes are developed referring the NPA/C.” JJCC, 8 December 2015

“Health sector programmes such as school health and nutrition are responsibility of Ministry of Health and Population. NPA/C cannot be given attribution of carrying out health related activities.” MOHP, 4 December 2015

“Programmes/activities that are to be carried out by Ministry of Education are done through own budget, no budget as such is allocated for implementation of activities that are mentioned in the NPA.” MoE, 4 December 2015

The inception mission noted, and the data collection confirmed, that the NPA/C is not widely known and used. Only 2 out of 3 people met ever heard of the NPA/C, and only half of those who heard of it were somehow familiar with the content. The lack of knowledge and use was also identified in the MTR. In fact, one of the findings in 2010 identified the underpinning elements to this situation.

**EVIDENCE FROM DESK REVIEW**

“It was observed that the CCWB and MoWCSW have become unable to disseminate and market the document among government ministries/ departments, DCWBs and other stakeholders. There is a lack of orientation and induction of NPA among WDOs and CROs and their roles for coordination and monitoring are not clarified. Coordination at the district level seems to be limited to observing Child Rights Days and addressing specific cases of child protection, whereas at the national level, the CCWB is more focused on implementing fragmented donor projects, rather than focusing on developing strategies and plans for the dissemination, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the NPA.” MTR, 2010, page 53
This widespread understanding is somehow contradicted by a common intelligence that any achievement for children outside the range of implementation of the NPA/C could be nonetheless attributed the NPA/C itself. This position is clearly exemplified by the representative from MoE, who stated:

**EVIDENCE FROM INTERVIEWS**

“Activities and programmes related to children’s education are primarily responsibility of the Ministry of Education and could be mentioned in other documents such as NPA/C. Targets/achievements of NPA cannot be compartmentalized as they are achieved by cumulative efforts of different agencies working for children including I/NGOs.” MoE, 4 December 2015

This is also confirmed by the MoWCSW, according to which

“NPA/C is well implemented but without referring to it.” MoWCSW, 2 February 2016

This has led to a situation where many activities were carried out for children, but could not be attributable to the implementation of the NPA/C. The lack of any monitoring data on the NPA/C appears to be a sign of this situation. This circumstance is made more complicated by the overlapping of the NPA/C with other plans and strategies for children. The issue of replication of activities in other planning documents, together with the lack of familiarity and direct use of the NPA/C revealed by almost all interviewees, indicates that the NPA/C was not regarded as a plan of action, but as a general framework for activities involving children.

Part of this confusion is due to the design of the NPA/C. The structure and content makes it clearly a plan of action, with activities having leading responsible and supporting agencies. Nevertheless, the NPA/C demands to the different MDAs and partners the duty to run programmes and project to give execution to the plan. This duality has left some room to interpretation in the nature of the document.

**EVIDENCE FROM DESK REVIEW**

“For effective implementation, arrangements have been made to formulate a high-level National Steering Committee headed by a member of the National Planning Commission with the secretaries of various ministries as its members. Therefore, I would like to call on all stakeholders to formulate and implement their own programmes guided by this NPA and to carry them out successfully as a common agenda for all.” NPA/C, foreword

“All implementing agencies, ministries, departments, district constituent offices, local bodies, user groups and external development partners are responsible for implementing the NPA in an integrated and results-oriented manner, since children’s issue are of concern to the national plans of action of all sectors. Programmes related to children will be implemented continuously through relevant sectoral ministries and departments such as the MoWCSW and MoHP. These agencies will be sensitized to pay special attention to children’s issues through a rights-based approach. The same process will be followed for local bodies. Focal persons in concerned sectoral ministries will play an important role in ensuring that attention is paid to child rights throughout sectoral plan and programme periods.” NPA/C, page 20

Shortcomings in the implementation of the NPA/C are also linked to three main design factors:

- **The duration**: the NPA/C was designed to last for ten years; this is quite a long term, especially in consideration that the plans of the Government cover a three-year timespan. The context of a country can change, and in Nepal actually did change, considerable over a ten-year period, in terms
of political situation, needs of children, macro-economic scenarios and development priorities. In conjunction with high turnover, the NPA/C suffered from severe discontinuity in the staff of MDAs.

- **The budget**: activities were not planned according to available budget, or a budget that was likely to be mobilised, but according to all possible needs of children. The absence of any resource mobilisation strategy, as well as the lack of any established funding mechanisms from either the GoN or development partners, led to the non-allocation of funds to the NPA/C. The issue of budget was also captured by the UNCRC Committee in its 2005 final recommendations to the State of Nepal.\(^{62}\)

- **The capacities**: the plan was not developed according to the existing and available capacities. The MoWCSW was given the responsibility (more often, the co-responsibility) of the implementation of two thirds of the NPA/C, with no specific budget allocation for it and benefitting from only 0.3% of the government expenditure. Another proof of this is the high number of activities to develop or strengthen capacities in service providers and/or in leading and supporting agencies. This might have created a situation of capacity gap that led to a type of capability trap\(^{63}\), premature load bearing, in which wishful thinking about the pace of progress and unrealistic expectations about the level and rate of improvement of capability lead to stresses and demands on systems that cause capability to weaken. The issue of capacities especially linked to coordination, was also captured by the UNCRC Committee in its final 2005 recommendations to the State of Nepal\(^{64}\), and also in the MTR.

The main finding of this evaluation is that there is not enough evidence to support the statement that the NPA/C was fully implemented. Lack of any monitoring data, duplication and replication of issues in other plans and limited knowledge and use of the NPA/C makes not only impossible attribution of results, but even attribution of activities.

There were considerable gaps in the governance of the NPA/C. Interviewees lamented the presence of junior professionals, or representatives without real decision making powers in the phase of decision making. Often, several different persons represented the same organisation over time, without proper handing over to substitutes.

**EVIDENCE FROM INTERVIEWS**

“Documents (e.g. action plan) are prepared by the concerned Ministry without prior consultation with the concerned implementing agency. After preparing such documents are sent to the implementing agency for comments only and mostly are not even incorporated in the document (say action plan).” MoE, 4 December 2015

Even after decisions were made, and implementation started, no mechanism to follow-up on the progress and challenges was functional. MDAs did not report to the CCWB as they were asked by the NPA/C. The National Steering Committee, nor any other committee or working body foreseen by the NPA/C, was not put in place and made operational. There is no evidence that the NPC Secretariat played the coordinating role


\(^{63}\) See Lant Pritchett, Michael Woolcock, and Matt Andrews, Capability Traps? The Mechanisms of Persistent Implementation Failure, Center for Global Development, December 2010

among relevant sectoral ministries in the context of annual and periodical planning, allocation of budgets, and determination of programmes, as it is mandated by the NPA/C.

Relevance

Research question (RQ): How relevant is the design of NPA for Children to the Nepal economic, social and political context relating to children?

Based on indirect evidence from the literature review, the NPA/C seems relevant to the economic, social and political context of Nepal relating to children. The NPA/C is well linked to the legal framework existing in Nepal at the time of the design and of the adjustment following the MTR. The NPA/C is linked, and mentioned, in the Three Year Plan adopted by the GoN as its development agenda for the Country. The NPA/C also acknowledges all the other sectoral plans and strategies in place for children, even if the contrary does not hold true. From an economic point of view, the size of the budget required for the implementation of the NPA/C does not take into full consideration the macro-economic landscape of the country, the repartition of the resources across the different MDAs, and the fact that only a figure around 10% of the MDAs budget is usually allocated to implement new programmes\textsuperscript{65}.

RQ: To what extent does it address major challenges that exist in child rights in Nepal?

Despite the absence of an initial analysis to depict the situation of children, the NPA/C addresses the major issues that children were (and are) facing in Nepal. Issues of school enrolment, nutrition and health, protection and safety were clearly identified in the reports and studies available in 2004, when the NPA/C was developed, and in 2012, when it was revised. Information was available mostly in health and education through the National Census, the Nepal Demographic and Health Surveys (NDHS), from the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and from the MDGs progress reports.

RQ: To what extent was the NPA for Children (i) adapted to the evolving needs of the population, in particular vulnerable groups and the extent to which the NPA has proved flexible in responding to changing needs, particularly considering the evolving political situation; (ii) and in line with the priorities set by the international and national legal / policy frameworks?

The NPA/C did not show much flexibility along time. The only change witnessed was after the MTR was conducted, when the specific objectives and the major activities (called programmes in the first NPA/C) were adapted after consultations with duty bearers and right holders. Several occasions might have provided the opportunity to redefine the NPA/C. For example, in 2010, the GoN adopted the National Plan of Action for the Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Children Affected by Armed Conflict; The NPA/C has several provisions for this target group, but instead of implementing them, with the adjustments that would have been required, a new plan was developed and implemented\textsuperscript{66}.

The NPA/C is clearly aligned with the major international instruments, as well as with the national legislation related to children. The NPA/C not only was developed as a national response to the UNGASS on Children call for the national plans of actions for children, but it is also aligned to the standards set in the UNCRC and its optional protocols, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions on minimum age and on worst forms of child labour, on the Education for All (EFA) framework, and on the standards and guideline on child health from the World Health Organisation (WHO). On the national legislation, it is difficult to state that

\textsuperscript{65} Interview with Ministry of Finance, 3 November 2015
\textsuperscript{66} The final evaluation of the NPA/CAAC was ongoing while this report was being written.
the NPA/C is aligned with the National Child Policy, given that the policy is subsequent to the plan. But for all the laws, policies, plans and strategies that were analysed, no contradictions or discrepancies were encountered by the evaluation team.

Effectiveness

RQ: How effective has the NPA for Children been in strengthening the enabling environment that promote the rights of children, child friendly services and access to basic needs and services including from the perspectives of government at national and sub national levels, civil society, communities and other stakeholders?

No evidence of how the NPA for Children influenced and strengthened the enabling environment that promote the rights of children, child friendly services and access to basic needs and services has been found. Whatever was achieved in these fields is to be attributed to interventions planned other frameworks.

RQ: To what extent were the objectives of the NPA for Children achieved, particularly in relation to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups?

No evidence of activities implemented under the NPA/C has been found. Whatever was achieved in the education, health, protection, HIV/AIDS control and child participation is to be attributed to interventions planned other frameworks. On top of this, the objectives of the NPA/C are not SMART (i.e. Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound), and, as stated above, there is no logical framework in the NPA/C, with targets defined only for child health and education.

RQ: What has been the added value of the NPA for Children to establishing legal/policy frameworks, systems, interventions and agencies and in raising awareness on the rights of children?

The evidence collected through the literature review suggests that the NPA/C was not able to influence the legal and policy framework. Out of 249 documents reviewed, only 21 mentioned the NPA/C in some form (8%). Of these 21, only 3 dated before the MTR (2010): the UNCRC Start report (2003), the UNCRC Committee final recommendations (2005), and the Three Year Interim Plan (2007). The NPA/C is mentioned in the following three year plans from the GoN, and in the National Plan of Action for the Development of Adolescents. Most of the mentions can be called incidentals, meaning that they appear mostly in annexes, bibliography, bullet points.
Where the NPA/C might have played a role is the National Child Policy that was adopted in the 2012. The content of the plan is reflected in the policy, even though the policy fails to call the plan with the right name (it is called 10-year National Action Plan for the Development of Children, a name slightly different from National Plan of Action for Children.) Interviews with key informants revealed that the National Child Policy (2012) has not been implemented since its adoption.

**RQ:** What unintended outcomes, positive as well as negative, have resulted from the NPA for Children in Nepal?

No unintended outcomes have been found.

**Efficiency**

**RQ:** To what extent have appropriate human, financial and technical resources been used to achieve the biggest possible positive change in a timely manner and to pursue the achievement of the objectives of the NPA for Children?

There is no evidence of budget allocation to implement the activities contained in the NPA/C, nor of any civil servant from MDAs other than the MoWCSW being appointed as a focal point for the implementation of the NPA/C. All of the key informant interviews confirmed that budget allocation is usually done for sectoral plans, and not for the NPA/C. Development partners that in other countries have supported the implementation of similar plans of action, such as UNICEF, did not provide technical assistance under the umbrella of the NPA/C.

**RQ:** To what extent meaningful partnerships or coordination mechanisms were established with other key actors not involved in NPA/C, e.g. government at national and local levels, civil society, academia, etc., that avoid duplication of efforts, miscommunication and ensure clearer accountabilities?

Coordination mechanisms that were foreseen by the NPA/C for actors that were supposed to be involved in the plan were not established and made operational. This suggests that meaningful partnerships or coordination mechanisms with other key actors that were not involved in the NPA/C is very unlikely.
Sustainability

RQ: What are the enabling and constraining factors that influence sustainability and success of the NPA/C?

Given the lack of evidence on the implementation of the NPA/C, it is not possible to identify the enabling factors that influenced the sustainability and success of the NPA/C. Amongst the already mentioned constraining factors, the following can be listed:

- The high turnover rate in civil service
- The absence of the governance bodies and committees foreseen by the plan
- The inadequate funding of the activities in the plan
- The high number of capacity strengthening activities in the plan necessary to implement the plan itself

RQ: To what extent have the partnerships and coordination mechanisms established allowed the Government to make use of the comparative strengths of its partners, while, at the same time, safeguarding and promoting its national ownership of supported interventions, programs and policies?

No partnership and coordination mechanisms were encountered and found operational by the evaluation team under the frame of the NPA/C.

Impact

RQ: What has happened as a result of the NPA for Children?

It is not possible to answer this question, since there is no evidence of results for children that are attributable to the implementation of the NPA/C, basically because there is no evidence of the implementation of the NPA/C.

The duplication of activities in other plans, and the information gathered from key informants stating that they followed their own sectoral plans and not the NPA/C, does not make possible to attribute the implementation of the activities to the NPA/C. Also, no funds were allocated to the implementation of the NPA/C, which strengthen the point of non-implementation.

RQ: What real difference has the activities made to the beneficiaries?

It is not possible to answer this question, since there is no evidence of activities for children carried out for the implementation of the NPA/C. As stated above, whatever change produced in the lives of children, their families and communities, it is not attributable to the NPA/C, but to sectoral programmes.

RQ: What changes did the NPA for Children produce on the enabling environment for children in Nepal?

It is not possible to answer this question, since there is no evidence of activities for children carried out for the implementation of the NPA/C. The lack of knowledge and of use of the NPA/C lean to suggest that changes in the enabling environment happened outside the frame of the NPA/C.

Equity

RQ: How equitable has the NPA for Children been in its design and implementation in Nepal to specifically target marginalised and vulnerable groups such as child workers, children living in institutions, children from disadvantaged ethnic groups, among others?
The NPA/C included, in its design, children who are poor, orphaned, destitute, oppressed, Dalit, unaccompanied, disabled or exploited. Equity is a concern that is well captured all through the NPA/C. Nevertheless, there is no clear prioritisation of such groups, especially in consideration of the scarce financial resource. The lack of evidence of its implementation makes impossible to assess if and how much these groups of children benefitted from the NPA/C, especially in comparison with the other children. For example, in 2012, Standards for Operation and Management of Residential Child Care Homes were adopted, and despite the NPA/C provides for children in institutions, such as the major activities under Specific Objective 6 of the Right to Protection: Protect the rights of children who are orphans, destitute, unaccompanied and who are in distress and have no primary caregivers and other such children, a clear link, whether direct or indirect, between the two, cannot be established.

**RQ:** *To what extent has the NPA for Children reached the most vulnerable children (i.e. establish what specific models or approaches were applied to effectively reach these groups?)*

Similarly to above, it is not possible to answer this question, since there is no evidence of activities for children carried out for the implementation of the NPA/C. As stated above, whatever change produced in the lives of children, their families and communities, it is not attributable to the NPA/C, but to sectoral programmes.

**How does the current the NPA for Children address gender inequalities and the empowerment of marginalised girls in the country?**

In its design, the NPA/C put a lot of attention to gender equality and empowerment of girls. The narrative component of the plan clearly stresses out the importance of investing in gender equality. Nevertheless, such attitude is not captured at activity level. In fact, gender equality is the object of 6 major activities under the Right to Education (one third of the activities), one major activity under the Right to Protection (1/88 major activities) and one under the Right to Participation (1/23). This is not enough, when considering that evidence from around the world shows that girls are more likely to be victims of sexual violence, of school drop-out, of child marriage, or domestic labour, and so on. The Approach Paper to the Thirteenth Plan acknowledges that much has yet to be done to achieve full women empowerment and gender equality: “Although the TYP focused on the protection and promotion of the rights of women, persons with disabilities, children, and senior citizens, the expected progress has not been made because policy measures have not been effectively implemented, disaggregated data for use in mainstreaming gender in Nepal’s macro-economic framework is insufficient, and gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation is not conducted. Nor have inequalities among different castes, classes, and ethnic groups of women been scrutinised. State mechanisms have not made the expected progress in ensuring 33 percent women’s representation.”

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CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The evaluation process confirmed what emerged from the inception phase, but also from the mid-term review. The investigation carried out through the analysis of the data gathered from key informants and from the literature reviewed points to the fact that the NPA/C was not implemented, at least not as on action plan. The lack of monitoring data and the subsequent trouble in establishing attribution are just manifestations of such non-implementation, which explains the absence of results for children attributable to the NPA/C, and its minimal effect on other policies, plans and strategies related to children. Figure 7 below systematises the factors that were identified during the inception phase and then examined in depth during the evaluation.

![Diagram](image)

Figure 7: Summary of chain of factors leading to the non-implementation of the NPA/C

The main element that emerged from the evaluation is that each MDA followed their sectors’ plans, rather than developing programmes and projects under the frame of the NPA/C. This is widely supported by both the interviewees stating that they usually do not reference the NPA/C in their planning documents, and by the literature reviewed, which showed that the NPA/C is not mentioned as a trigger for other plans and strategies.

Two set of elements seems to explain the fact that MDAs followed their sector’s plan and did not implement the NPA/C. On one side, the duplication of activities in other plans demonstrates that not enough attention was given to the NPA/C despite is ten-year duration. Duplication of activities that, paired with the absent M&E, makes impossible not only attribution of results, but even of activities themselves. The duplication is strongly influenced by a lack of knowledge of the NPA/C itself and a concurrent difference in the understanding of the nature of the NPA/C. The NPA/C suffered from a limited diffusion, an aspect that emerged already in the MTR, and that was attributed to the limited capacity of the MoWCSW to secure the dissemination and marketing of the document among MDAs, DCWBs and other stakeholders. Even when disseminated, the high turnover present in the civil service and the absence of hand over mechanism
contributed to a loss in terms of institutional memory and to significant gaps in the knowledge of the ongoing programmes and projects amongst the replacing professionals.

At the same time, even where the plan was known, or at least its existence, the data gathered point to a presence of different understandings of the nature of the NPA/C and whether children issues should be considered as a sector. The multi-sectoral nature of the NPA/C is widely acknowledged, but when it comes to specific sectors, each ministry focuses solely on its own territory. While the NPA/C was designed and conceived as multi-sectoral, the fact that the governance bodies, *in primis* the National Steering Committee, were not put in place, did not give a shape to these words. This is also due to the weak leadership role exercised by the MoWCSW, a ministry with little resources and limited capacities that was not either adequately supported in its role of guardianship of the NPA/C by the NPC and by the other MDAs mandated with children issues. Each of the stakeholders mentioned in the NPA/C were accountable for the implementation of the plan. The plan, in fact, was endorsed at the highest level, and placed under the direct oversight of the NPC. Different representatives from MDAs and development partners participated to the development of the NPA/C, assuming responsibilities for the implementation of specifically identified major activities. Almost all interviewees referred to the NPA/C as a national guiding documents, but the evidence from their practice shows that they were not concerned with its implementation, since they were already implementing activities that looked very similar to the provisions of the NPA/C.

Another factor that contributed to the different understanding of the NPA/C is related to the design of the plan. The design of the plan carries with it a possible ambiguity in the nature of the plan. In fact the document is indeed structured as a plan of action, with objectives, strategies, activities and so on, but at the same time it demands to MDAs to design and implement their programmes and projects to translate the NPA/C into practice, thus suggesting that the NPA/C is a planning framework rather than an NPA/C. The absence of the governance bodies did not allow to solve this uncertainty, which continued throughout the life of the plan, reinforcing the different understandings. There might be also another element related to the process of designing the NPA/C that contributed to the firm adoption of the plan as a multi-sectoral document, and it is related to the level of participation and representation of the different organisations in the development of the plan. Key informants suggested that participation to the development of the plan was limited to the presence of technical people, and not necessarily at the highest recommendable level. This has determined a missed opportunity to bring children’s issues to the decision making level.

On the other side, the other factor that explains the non-implementation of the NPA/C is related to funds. No budget allocation was done specifically for the NPA/C, by both the government and from development partners. The not-so-thorough costing exercise of the NPA/C does not allow to associate activities, budgets and cost centres. Without any commitment in this sense, the overall cost of the NPA/C remained uncovered. His is due to the fact that in Nepal, the MTEF is not yet fully rolled out. MTEF would allow the multi-sectoral programming that the NPA/C would have required, but despite some progresses in the introduction of the MTEF, government budget is still linear. This aspect is also confirmed in the Thirteenth Plan, where children are addressed as a sub category of Social Security and Protection, while Education and Children’s Health are treated separately.

The Secretary of the MoWCSW, at the workshop for the presentation of the findings held on Thursday 11 February 2016 admitted with great realism and self-awareness, that the same results for children would have been achieved in the absence of the NPA/C. While this is an opinion that one can agree with, the chain of factors that emerged during the evaluation shows that the plan was not redundant, but was made so by its non-implementation, poor governance and weak leadership roles. The improved situation of children
that resulted from the implementation of several among plans and strategies would have a much greater impact if the NPA/C would have succeeded in securing the close collaboration across the different MDAs. The non-possibility of attributing activities and results to the NPA/C witnesses the challenge of securing a hierarchy between the NPA/C and the other sectoral plans and strategies.

Lesson learnt

A variety of lessons could be learnt at this point, but the evaluation team would like to focus the attention to the following main one.

While long-term national plans of action for children were justified based on the knowledge and understanding of the time they have been proposed, i.e. in the early 2000, they are probably not the best planning instruments that are currently needed. This, for the following reasons:

1. National plans of action do not make much sense when they target a population, or a population group. They are much more effective when they aim at resolving a specific problem, such as malnutrition, school enrolment, child labour, and so on. Having a common and specific goal increases the chances of cooperation and coordination, and being problem-driven, they are more likely to be addressed in an effective way. Children are not problems.

2. A duration of ten years is nowadays incompatible with the planning processes of governments, usually around three or five years. In ten years, so many things can change, in social environment, in the macro-economic context and in the political horizon. Factors such as the current global economic instability or the exposure of countries like Nepal to environmental risks such as earthquakes, make really difficult to plan and allocate resources over a long-term span.

3. Targeting a whole population, or one of its sub-sets, with all their different needs, usually makes plans of actions very expensive, increasing the likelihood of budget gaps. Governments can hardly afford even a portion of their implementation, making the plans highly dependent on donors’ or development partners’ support, a practice that does not work in the direction of ensuring sustainability of the interventions.

4. National plans of actions are developed according to children’s needs but rarely, if not never, take into account the available capacities to answer to such needs. This has two consequences: on one hand, the plan itself creates a capacity gap that could take the form of capability traps68. On the other hand, such capacity gaps are addressed in the plan but they create a trade-off with the provision of services for children.

Children need and deserve planning documents with legs and space to run: this is probably the biggest lesson learnt.

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68 For a reminder on capability traps, see footnote 63 at page 36.
RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the evaluation findings and conclusion, the evaluation team advances the following recommendations. The first two sets of recommendations are targeting the Government and specifically all the Ministries involved in child rights, the third set is specific to UNICEF.

Recommendations for the next phase NPA for Children

**Content:** the next NPA should be the object of a reflection of what kind of planning document is needed. It appears to be of little value to replicate provisions that, as of today, are already included in other plans and strategies. It is the opinion of the evaluation team that something at a higher level than a NPA is needed, something that can act as national planning framework for children, or a strategy for investing on children. A clear and direct link should be established with: a) the Government’s next three year plan and its goals for children, and b) the National Child Policy, to make sure this will become the overarching document when it comes to the development and protection of children in Nepal. A situation analysis should be carried out, including a mapping and analysis of the running programmes for children. Based on this, the new planning framework should cover only the gaps in children’s needs that are not yet addressed but other plans or strategies, to avoid duplications and/or replications. Also, it should not be a static document, but should be framed as a rolling plan, to get closer to the requirements in terms of implementing a Medium Term Expenditure Framework.

**Governance:** a special attention should be given to the governance of the next NPA. Decision making during design phase is as important as following up on the implementation, or non-implementation, of the planned activities. It is key to put in place the necessary institution, based on the identification and determination of specific functions to be performed. Governance will be the engine that keeps the NPA running ensuring its multi-sectoral nature is guaranteed and enhanced. But governance is not only about establishing a coordinating body. Good governance is about assuming responsibilities to ensure the design and implementation of the plan is transparent and participatory, so that stakeholders can be held accountable and responsive to the right holders. It is about performing oversight to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes, and according to the rule of law. It is about reaching consensus without sacrificing equity and inclusiveness.

**Planning process:** planning should be informed and shaped by the following considerations. First, plans should be developed taking into account available budget, available capacities and reasonably expectable results. This could be done through Performance Based Budgeting (PBB), a planning process that takes into the equation all the variable mentioned above. According to PBB principles, programmes can be developed by embracing the principles of “communication and collaboration” rather than “control and command”. In developing such programmes, the GoN should adopt a Problem Driven Iterative Approach (PDIA). PDIA is based on four core principles, each of which stands in sharp contrast with the standard approaches. First, PDIA focuses on solving locally nominated and defined problems in performance (as opposed to transplanting preconceived and packaged “best practice” solutions). Second, it seeks to create an authorizing environment for decision-making that encourages positive deviance and experimentation (as opposed to designing projects and programs and then requiring agents to implement them exactly as designed). Third, it

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69 A **programme** is a set of outputs that group together a range of different types of services provided to external clients, which have a common intended outcome. Definition from Robinson, Marc. 2013. Program Classification for Performance-Based Budgeting: How to Structure Budgets to Enable the Use of Evidence. IEG Evaluation Capacity Development Series. Washington, DC: World Bank. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0
embeds this experimentation in tight feedback loops that facilitate rapid experiential learning (as opposed to enduring long lag times in learning from ex post “evaluation”). Fourth, it actively engages broad sets of agents to ensure that reforms are viable, legitimate, relevant, and supportable (as opposed to a narrow set of external experts promoting the top-down diffusion of innovation).  

Recommendations for results frameworks, monitoring and evaluation plans and systems

1. The development of an M&E plan should not be postponed after the design of the NPA is completed, but should be integral part of the design process, to make sure indicators at all level can be easily identified, and to act as a checking mechanisms for the logic of the NPA
2. M&E mechanism should not be much leaning towards collecting information for reporting purposes, rather towards learning and adaptation. The rolling nature of the plan, and the governance functioning, require a constant flow of information to review decisions made and to make sure implementation is occurring according to what was planned.
3. The plan should be designed in terms of SMART goals to be achieved for children, not in terms of attainments that are too generic to correspond to measurable performances.

Recommendations for UNICEF Nepal Country Office

1. Besides providing the necessary support to implement the previous recommendations targeting the Government, UNICEF should support the government by providing technical assistance in developing and implementing the next plan for children. Technical assistance should not just be limited to technical aspects (e.g. education quality, child protection, etc.) but should especially aim to strengthen programme cycle management, public finance management, civil service reform and performance base budgeting and management.
2. UNICEF should support the multi-sectoral plans by better coordinating internally its interventions for children. Improved internal communication, and better coordination with other development partners, should aim to reduce the risk of creating capability trap of pre-mature load bearing. At the same time, this support should also aim to bring coherence and avoid duplications or gaps in the plans for children, based on the needs emerged and assessed in the situation analysis.
3. UNICEF should find a way to track directly its contributions to national development plans and priorities, or parts of them, in its internal management system. The country programme document, the country programme action plan, the rolling work plans and the programme budget allotments should clearly reference the plans, strategies, policies that are supported.

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70 See Matt Andrews, Lant Pritchett, and Michael Woolcock, Escaping Capability Traps through Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA), Center for Global Development, June 2012
ANNEX 1 - Terms Of Reference

Terms of Reference – National Plan of Action for Children

EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Individual / Institutional contract details

Duration: 4.5 months

Location: Primarily Kathmandu with field visits to four other development regions

Start Date: 24 August 2015

Contract Management: UNICEF

Title: Independent Evaluation of National Plan of Action (NPA) for Children, 2004/05-2014/15

Background

Based on the commitments made by the Government of Nepal on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) for Children, the ten-year National Plan of Action (NPA) for Children was prepared in 2004/05. The NPA is mainly based on four themes identified in ‘A World Fit for Children’, addressing the issues of (i) promoting healthy lives, (ii) providing quality education, (iii) protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence, and (iv) child participation. The issue of combating HIV and AIDS is also included in the NPA. These priorities are based on the outcome of United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) for children in 2002. The objectives of the NPA are the following:

- Promote the rights of each and every child.
- End all forms of exploitation, abuse and discrimination of children.
- Promote child-friendly environments by focusing on education, child development, health, nutrition and other relevant areas.
- Increase access for children to basic needs, facilities and services with a guarantee of quality.

Although Nepal has made progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals, there are still key inequities that the NPA aimed to address. Stunting rates in the Western Mountains and Far-West Hills are around 20% and 17% respectively higher than the national average, and are 15% higher in rural than in urban settings. Stunting and underweight have been consistently highest (50%) amongst the Dalit, Muslims and other smaller ethnic/caste groups. Almost half of women (49%) were married before the age of 18, 16 percent of them below the age of 15, resulting among others in an early childbearing rate of 16 percent placing them at high risk of complications. Although Nepal significantly decreased their maternal mortality by 76 percent from 1990 to 2013, only 11% of births among the poorest are attended by a skilled birth attendant, compared to 82% among the richest. Neonatal mortality has scarcely reduced in 5 years and key childhood diseases remain a threat to those most disadvantaged populations where careseeking practices

and community and facility-based care and treatment is inadequate. Among all human trafficking cases registered in 2012, 55.1% of victims were children. Similarly, 40.6% of victims of all rape and attempted rape cases are children. Birth registration for children under five remains low at 58 percent. Additionally, 37 percent of children aged 5 to 17 are involved in child labor. Attendance of Early Childhood Education programs is low at 51%, while access to these programs for children from lower quintiles still remains a challenge. Although there are challenges in defining the concept and in collecting data on Out of School Children, NMICS data suggests that 14 percent of primary school age children were out of school, although this is primarily due to a low attendance rate (68 percent) for children aged five years at the beginning of the school year, who appear to be starting school late, as seen by the relatively high percentage attending preschool. The primary school net attendance ratio did not differ by gender.

Regionally, it was highest in the Western Hills (95 percent) and lowest in the Central Terai (75 percent). Children with disabilities consist of 1.3 percent of total enrolment (53,681 children). Disability and poverty are strongly interlinked, with the most disadvantaged regions of Mid and Far Western districts with the highest Human Poverty Index, showing the highest percentages of enrolment of disabled children (3.7%). Disabled children from poor families are more likely to suffer lasting consequences and disability is likely to exacerbate and deepen poverty. Although the NPA aimed to promote the rights of every child, the Plan provided an equity focus in specifically targeting advancement of the rights of children in special circumstances and with special needs, including adolescent girls, disabled, refugee and working children. These NPA aimed to address these inequities through strengthening the legal framework, policies and strategies, raising awareness on child rights and strengthening coordination, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

The NPA was prepared through a joint partnership of key stakeholders in Government, Development Partners and I/NGOs. UNICEF, Save the Children Norway, UK and US, Plan Nepal, ILO and GTZ provided financial and technical assistance for the development and implementation of the NPA. Jointly, these partners allocated an estimated amount of 125.820 million Nepalese Rupees for the NPA implementation.

After the NPA for Children came into implementation in 2004, the Government of Nepal has expressed its commitment to various international/regional conventions by (a) ratifying the Optional Protocol of the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, 2000 in 2006; (b) ratifying the Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2006; (c) ratifying the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, 2002 in 2006; (d) ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities – UNCRPD in 2006; (e) ratifying the SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangement for Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia in 2006; (f) ratifying the Optional Protocol of the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, 2000, in 2007; (g) signing on the International Health Partnership (IHP) Compact in 2007; (h) signing on the SAARC Colombo Statement on Children of South Asia to enhance and make effective child protection efforts - declared on 10th July 2009; and (i) signing on the 1993 Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption in 2009.

Awareness regarding the rights of children has been increasingly gaining momentum and has been addressed in the 10th Plan and the subsequent Three Year Plans of the Government of Nepal. The Interim

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Constitution and the recommendations for the upcoming Constitution have also incorporated issues of children’s rights, after holding consultations with children and their networks from all over the country.

In addition, many new policies and strategies with focus on child rights have been formulated over the past ten years. In addition to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and Three-Year Interim Plan giving priority to ensure the rights of the child, the government has adopted sector-wide approach to facilitate development work within a coherent strategic framework to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Notably, to protect the right to health the National Health Sector Reform Strategy and Implementation Plan I (NHSRS IP) has been implemented and National Health Sector Plan (NHSP) II has been implemented from July 2011. To protect the right to education: the School Sector Reform Plan and School Health Nutrition programmes have been launched. To ensure the right to protection of National Plan of Action for Reintegration of Children Affected by Conflict was endorsed in December 2010. Additionally, minimum standards and rules for running Child Welfare Homes (residential care homes), the Juvenile Justice (Procedures) Rules, Human Trafficking (Control Act), National Strategy, Guidelines and basic minimum package for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS (CABA) was adopted in 2009. Finally, adolescent reproductive health program and adolescent girls’ empowerment program have been promulgated and National HIV and AIDS Strategy 2006-2011 has been launched since 2007.

Implementers of the NPA are line ministries, local bodies (District Development Committees (DDCs), Village Development Committees (VDCs) and municipalities), development partners (UN agencies, international agencies, INGOs), NGOs, civil society, etc. For effective implementation of the NPA for Children, a National Steering Committee was formed to coordinate and monitor activities related to NPA implementation (see Annex I for composition of Steering Committee). NPC secretariat were responsible for central level coordination of the NPA among all line ministries, especially in annual and periodic planning and programming. The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW) and Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB) would jointly coordinate the planning and implementation process with all line ministries, agencies and development partners at the central level. The role of CCWB was to be more in coordination, facilitation, monitoring and evaluation than in the implementation of NPA. Similarly, at the district level, the District Child Welfare Boards (DCWB) were expected to coordinate, monitor and evaluate district level plans and programs. Child rights NGOs and child networks were expected to play the role of watch groups at the local level.

It was also planned that a group of professionals be formed at CCWB as ‘NPA implementation watch group’ as well as a ‘pressure group’ at national level. This pressure group was expected to prepare annual progress reports on child rights to draw public attention to actual implementation of the NPA.78

In order to review the effectiveness of implementation of key policies outlined in NPA the Mid-Term Review was done in 2009/2010 and its findings and recommendations were approved by the Council of Ministries, Government of Nepal on 3 September 2012. The review helped examine effect of historic changes in Nepal including on-going political transformation process, rapid globalization and technical advancement in IT sector that pose both opportunities and threats to children.

The Mid Term Review (MTR) of the NPA concluded that the programs envisaged were largely relevant. Effectiveness and efficiency of the NPA implementation strategy has been constrained mainly due to (a) lack of strong ownership and role clarity in the implementation, (b) poor donor coordination for resource mobilization, (c) lack of strong and multisectoral coordination, and (d) inadequate enabling policies/directives. Additionally, implementation of existing policies was obstructed due to inadequate awareness among the rights holders and duty bearers on the existing laws and policies and delays in the endorsement of major amendments, Acts and Policies by the cabinet. The absence of reliable, updated,  

78 Annex 4 of the NPA for Children outlines the coordination, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
nation-wide and gender disaggregated data on children provided a further limitation to adequately monitor progress and make meaningful adjustments to child-centered policies and programs. A Management Information System is yet to be developed. MoWCSW in coordination with NPC and CCWB pledged to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan for assessing progress towards NPA indicators and to enhance capacity of CCWB and DCWB on M&E.

The NPA that was revised in 2012 provides for an external evaluation on the NPA implementation. As the timeframe for the revised NPA for Children 2004/05 – 2014/15 is nearly completed, an evaluation will be carried out to assess progress towards its objectives. The evaluation will inform the development of the next NPA for Children.

Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to support policy makers and government and non-government sector representatives responsible for children’s rights to analyse the barriers that obstructed progress in implementation of the NPA as the Plan has come to an end in 2014/15. The evaluation aims to provide practical recommendations for enhancing the enabling environment, coordination, monitoring mechanisms and partnerships to ensure rights of children related to survival, development, protection and participation that will inform development and support improved implementation of the next National Plan of Action for Children. The target audience for the evaluation are policy makers and government stakeholders at the central level, including NPC, MoWCSW, CCWB and relevant Line Ministries, district level agencies including DCWB and line agencies and village level bodies, such as child clubs. Stakeholders further include development partners, NGOs and civil society at various levels.

Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation are the following:

- The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and equity of the 2004/05 – 2014/15 NPA for children. Impact will be assessed to the extent possible considering the data available at this result level.
- Assess progress towards objectives, strategies, policies, programmes, results and indicators of NPA based on four areas of basic rights of children as outlined in the CRC, namely survival, development, protection and participation of children, and to assess the roles of government, private sector, I/NGOs and civil society in the funding, coordination and implementation of the NPA.
- In collaboration with stakeholders, development of practical recommendations based on identification of best practices and lessons learnt to facilitate development and implementation of the next NPA for Children.
- Enhance evaluability of subsequent NPA for Children by assessing the results framework, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and systems and recommend measures for improvement.
- To inform the formulation of the next NPA for Children to be implemented from the end of 2015 onwards.

Scope and Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will assess progress towards objectives, strategies, policies, programmes, results and indicators of all areas of implementation of the NPA for Children, including survival, development, protection and participation of children. Due to the programme focus on areas of policy making, systems building and advocacy, the evaluation will primarily focus on national level of implementation, while also involving district and village level stakeholders in order to assess knowledge and coordination processes supporting local level implementation of the NPA for Children. The evaluation should therefore include consultations with stakeholders from all development regions in Nepal as well as district and village stakeholders. The
evaluation should cover areas such as systems strengthening, coordination mechanisms, alignment of sectoral policies and guidelines, alignment and coordination of regional and district level structures, advocacy strategies and awareness on NPA at all levels and sectors and commitment through allocating funds to NPA priority areas.

This independent evaluation will primarily include a process analysis to provide guidance on measures for improving programme effectiveness in future. The evaluation will focus on evaluation questions of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and equity to address how the NPA sought to strengthen the application of an equity approach and mainstream gender. Impact will not be included in this evaluation due to limited availability of impact indicators and lack of available information to determine attribution.

The evaluation will cover the entire implementation phase of the NPA from government endorsement on 18 November 2004 until the end of June 2015.

The target group of the evaluation will include stakeholders at all levels, government, line ministries, regional and district level governmental stakeholders, development partners (UN agencies, I/NGOs), private sector, I/NGOs, including policy makers, child rights professionals and civil society. Children, including vulnerable groups, should also play a central role as stakeholders in the evaluation, including child clubs, children’s networks, disabled children, working children, etc., providing them with an opportunity to highlight children’s priority issues in relation to NPA, identify measures for increased involvement of children, and suggest recommendations for improved implementation of the next NPA.

The evaluation should address the following five criteria and questions:

Relevance

- How relevant is the NPA for Children to the Nepal economic, social and political context relating to children? To what extent does it address major challenges that exist in child rights in Nepal?
- To what extent was the NPA for Children (i) adapted to the evolving needs of the population, in particular vulnerable groups and the extent to which the NPA has proved flexible in responding to changing needs, particularly considering the evolving political situation; (ii) and in line with the priorities set by the international and national legal / policy frameworks?
- How equitable has the NPA for Children been in its design and implementation in Nepal to specifically target marginalised and vulnerable groups such as child workers, children living in institutions, children from disadvantaged ethnic groups, among others?

Effectiveness

- How effective has the Government of Nepal been in strengthening the enabling environment that promote the rights of children, child friendly services and access to basic needs and services including from the perspectives of government at national and sub national levels, civil society, communities and other stakeholders?
- To what extent were the objectives of the NPA for Children achieved, particularly in relation to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups?
- What has been the added value of the NPA for Children to establishing legal/policy frameworks, systems, interventions and agencies and in raising awareness on the rights of children?
- What unintended outcomes, positive as well as negative, have resulted from the NPA for Children in Nepal?

Efficiency

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79 http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm
To what extent have appropriate human, financial and technical resources been used to achieve the biggest possible positive change in a timely manner and to pursue the achievement of the objectives of the NPA for Children?

To what extent meaningful partnerships or coordination mechanisms were established with other key actors not involved in NPA, e.g. government at national and local levels, civil society, academia, etc., that avoid duplication of efforts, miscommunication and ensure clearer accountabilities?

**Sustainability**

- What are the enabling and constraining factors that influence sustainability and success of the NPA?
- To what extent have the partnerships and coordination mechanisms established allowed the Government to make use of the comparative strengths of its partners, while, at the same time, safeguarding and promoting its national ownership of supported interventions, programs and policies?

**Equity**

- How equitable and effective is the NPA for Children in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, excluded and marginalised children such as child migrants, children from ethnic minority groups, children living in institutions, among others? How do we know?
- To what extent has the NPA for Children reached the most vulnerable children (i.e. establish what specific models or approaches were applied to effectively reach these groups?)
- How does the current the NPA for Children address gender inequalities and the empowerment of marginalised girls in the country?

**Evaluable**

The NPA for Children contains a results framework with set targets in the areas of child health and education. In the realm of child protection, participation and HIV/AIDS no clear targets were formulated that would facilitate assessing progress. This limits the evaluability of the NPA in these areas. Additionally, a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan for assessing progress towards NPA indicators and for enhancing capacity of CCWB and DCWB on M&E is yet to be developed, further limiting an assessment of progress towards indicators. Particularly in the areas of child protection and HIV/AIDS there is a lack of (reliable) data that will impede assessing any changes at the outcome level in these areas. Impact will be challenging in this evaluation due to limited availability of impact indicators and lack of information to determine attribution. However, the evaluators should consider possibilities to assess the extent to which the NPA has met its objectives in selected areas, e.g. child rights, child health.

Although the evaluability of the NPA for Children is compromised by a lack of SMART formulated results statements and targets, particularly in child protection, participation and HIV/AIDS, the level of progress towards objectives and the process of implementation will be evaluated to the extent possible, for example through process analysis. Qualitative data collection methods will be used as the primary method of data collection to facilitate an assessment of the perceived contribution and implementation process of the NPA for Children. Secondary data sources such as CBS Surveys, EMIS and HMIS can be used as data sources to assess progress in some of the areas of focus in the NPA and include disaggregated data, such as on gender, ethnicity and disability. As there are challenges in accuracy of these data sources, these can triangulated using (disaggregated) information from DHS, MICS and the 2011 Census. Additionally, specific research and studies should be identified and used to provide data on specific areas covered by the NPA (see Annex II).

Disaggregated data would be available from most of these data sources.

Evaluability is a concern that should also be addressed in the course of this evaluation to be improved upon in the formulation of the subsequent NPA for Children. The evaluation aims to assess the weaknesses in the
results framework, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and systems and recommend measures for improving evaluability with the potential expansion of the programme.

Approach and methods

The evaluation will go through the following interrelated processes: inception phase, consultative phase, and final report writing phase.

Inception phase

The detailed evaluation methodology including a detailed evaluation framework scoping the work and exploration of possible approaches that will yield credible and timely evidence. The report should be in conformity with UNEG standards for inception reports\(^{80}\) and should follow the table of contents as provided in Annex III.

The inception phase will include identification of data sources and desk review of key NPA related documents, including NPA Mid Term Review, etc. (see Annex II for overview of relevant documents). Discussion with the Steering Committee and key stakeholders will further facilitate preparation of the inception report. To support assessment of the results, the evaluation team will need to develop an understanding of the NPA logic framework and indicators as the basis for the evaluation.

The inception phase should further result in identification of key stakeholders, including but not limited to NPC and relevant Line Ministries, MoWCSW, CCWB, development partners, DCWB, District Development Committees (DDCs), line agencies, civil society, Village Development Committees (VDCs) and child clubs.

Data collection phase

Following the endorsement of the inception report by the Steering Committee, the evaluation team will undertake the necessary data collection activities as per agreed schedule. At the conclusion of the data collection phase, the evaluation team presents preliminary findings of the evaluation to the Steering Committee.

Final report writing phase

The evaluation team will submit the draft final report in conformity with UNEG evaluation standards.\(^{81}\) The report should follow the outline as provided in Annex IV.

The report, the conclusions and preliminary recommendations of the evaluation will subsequently be presented to the Steering Committee counterparts and stakeholders as part of the validation process. This presentation should also serve as a basis for consensus building while formulating recommendations that will inform the next NPA. The evaluation team will collect and incorporate feedback from the Steering Committee and other relevant stakeholders. The final report will be submitted to the Steering Committee for endorsement.

Data on the relevant indicators will be collected from various sources through a non-experimental design using a mixed methods approach, including primary data collection primarily through application of qualitative techniques and analysis of secondary data sources. Methods will include the following:


• Desk review: Identification, collation and analysis of existing key programme documents, logic and results frameworks, literature and secondary data sources. Desk review should result in the development of an inception report, evaluation instruments and detailed work plan;
• Primary data collection through qualitative methods of key informant interviews, multi-stakeholder consultations, focus group discussions and case studies with relevant stakeholders (including children) could be used to respond to evaluation questions;
• Quantitative analysis of secondary data (e.g. EMIS, HMIS, MICS-5, etc.) to complement primary data collection as well as to ensure the validity of the primary data.

Sampling
The evaluation should include consultations with stakeholders primarily at the central level, including NPC and relevant Line Ministries, MoWCSW, CCWB and development partners. Assessment of knowledge and coordination mechanisms at a disaggregated level will also be included in the evaluation. The five development regions should be included in a sample to represent various geographic regions and diversity in Nepal. The sample will further include stakeholders at least from five VDCs (one per region) to assess knowledge and coordination processes supporting local level implementation of the NPA for Children. The purposive sampling of the VDCs will include the most disadvantaged based on the Child Deprivation Index, based on the assumption that these are areas where greatest barriers exist in NPA implementation and lessons learnt collection may be most informative. The sample at the regional/VDC level is not intended to be nationally representative, but rather provide insight into the NPA implementation processes at the local level.

The evaluators will propose the specific methodology, sample framework, target groups, interview and field work techniques in the inception report.

Deliverables
The total contract duration is 4.5 months. The consultancy is expected to start from the beginning of August until half December 2015. An international and national consultant will be recruited for the evaluation. A national consultant will be primarily responsible for implementing the evaluation, stakeholder consultations, etc. An international Technical Adviser is expected to draw upon expertise in evaluating and/or implementing similar policies or plans in other countries and provide recommendations that should inform the development of the new NPA. S/he will support in developing of key evaluation products, e.g. inception report, evaluation instruments and final report. A final task division will be determined based on the background of the specific consultants.
Management and Coordination

Oversight

The evaluation will be commissioned by the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW) with technical support of UNICEF Nepal in collaboration with other partners. The Steering Committee will review all evaluation products and ensure independence of the evaluation. MoWCSW will maintain close coordination with National Planning Commission (NPC), CCWB, Council of Ministers and Office of the Prime Minister, and communicate with line ministries, departments and concerned development partners.

A Steering Committee will be set up to lead the evaluation. Proposed members of the Steering Committee are described in Annex I. Tasks of the Steering Committee will include the following:

- Endorsement of Terms of Reference Consultant Evaluator and work plan;
• Approval of evaluation methodology and instruments;
• Consensus reached on best practices, lessons learnt and recommendations based on the findings of the evaluation
• Provide recommendations on all evaluation products, including inception and final evaluation reports.
• Steering Committee should be capacitated to develop an effective NPA drawing on lessons from this evaluation.

A small Technical Committee will be established to provide support to technical issues and quality assurance in the evaluation on a regular basis. Logistical and administrative assistance may be provided by CCWB. The evaluators will be recruited by UNICEF to conduct the evaluation. A list of proposed members of the Technical Committee is provided in Annex I.

The evaluators will report the Steering Committee, with technical assistance from Technical Committee. The consultancy contract will be commissioned and managed by UNICEF.

Management

The Evaluation Manager under the guidance of Steering Committee led by MOWCSW will provide overall guidance, coordinate and contribute directly to quality assurance activities. The UNICEF Child Protection team and the Technical Committee will support the evaluation team by providing assistance in providing inputs to the evaluation design and tools, providing relevant documentation, arranging for meetings, writing letters of introduction and/or accompanying the team to meetings where necessary and arrange other logistical arrangements.

Quality Assurance

The Steering Committee, the Evaluation Team and Evaluation Manager have major roles in ensuring that all the deliverables meet the quality assurance criteria. Quality assurance will take place at different stages of the evaluation process. The Steering Committee will assess quality of key evaluation products, including methodology and evaluation instruments, inception and final reports. The Evaluation Team will ensure quality by selection of skilled interviewers, providing adequate training, providing clear interviewer protocols and supervising data collection. The evaluation should adhere to National Monitoring & Evaluation Guidelines.  

As the evaluation is commissioned by jointly by the MoWCSW and UNICEF, the Evaluation Manager will also ensure it will meet UNICEF quality standards and follow UNICEF quality assurance processes. Key evaluation products will be assessed against UNEG evaluation report standards through UNICEF internal and external review processes.

Ethical considerations

Ethical concerns will be of utmost importance in determining the evaluation methods and their implementation. The evaluation process will ensure an equitable approach (all stakeholders and genders are consulted). The evaluation team is expected to adhere to the UNICEF procedure for ethical standards in

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research, evaluation, data collection and analysis, the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN system and address any ethical issues in proposals and reports.

Profile of Evaluators

The Consultant(s) should have the following qualifications:

National Consultant:

- Postgraduate degree in relevant area (child protection, social work, etc.) and at least 10 years’ experience in evaluation, including on child rights / child protection;
- Demonstrated experience in conducting evaluations;
- Strong quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis skills;
- Strong experience and skills in facilitating group work processes and communication of evaluation findings;
- Experience in supporting data collection processes;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in Nepali and English, ideally also in translation.

International Technical Adviser:

- Postgraduate university degree (doctoral degree preferred) and at least 15 years of relevant work experience in evaluation, including on child rights;
- Documented experience in management of policy related evaluations, particularly in the realm of children and women’s rights;
- Strong quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis skills;
- Strong management, interpersonal, teamwork and organizational skills;
- Experience with using a gender and equity approach in evaluations;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English;
- Demonstrated commitment to delivering timely and high-quality results.

Resource requirements

Proposed Fee schedule for payment

- First installment: 30% upon submission of inception report, incl. methodology, scope of evaluation, evaluation instruments and field work schedule;
- Second Installment: 20% upon submission of draft final report;
- Final installment – 50% upon submission of final technically edited report and satisfactory completion of all deliverables;
- Schedule of Output Submissions and Payment Scheme (see Deliverables table).

Working Conditions

The consultancy work will be based in Kathmandu with travel to four geographic regions. DSA will be provided to both consultants during travel to districts and in Kathmandu for the international consultant.

ANNEX I – STEERING & TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Proposed members of the Steering Committee include the following:

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84 UNICEF procedure for ethical standards in research, evaluation, data collection and analysis, 1 April 2015, CF/PD/DRP/2015-001, available from UNICEF
85 http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/102
The Technical Committee members could be drawn from the following agencies:

- Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation sections in ministries
- Relevant human / child rights / child protection sections in ministries
- CCWB
- UNICEF
- Representative of national and international NGOs
- Academia

ANNEX II – DOCUMENTS & DATA SOURCES


30. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Regional Strategic Framework for the Protection, Care and Support of Children affected by HIV/AIDS


38. UN General Assembly (Special Session on Children), (2002). UNGASS Declaration and Plan of Action – A World Fit for Children.


ANNEX III – OUTLINE INCEPTION REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION
1.1 Purpose and objectives of the evaluation
1.2 Background and context
1.3 Scope of the evaluation
1.4 Gender & human rights perspective

1.4 Purpose of the Inception Report

2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH
2.1 Evaluation Criteria and Evaluation Questions
2.2 Conceptual framework
2.3 Evaluability assessment, limitations and risks
2.4 Methods for data collection and analysis
2.5 Selection of the sample of stakeholders
2.6 Analytical approaches

3. EVALUATION PROCESS
3.1 Phases of work
3.2 Team composition and distribution of tasks
3.3 Management and logistic support
3.4 Work plan
3.5 Draft outline of evaluation report

ANNEXES

1. Terms of reference of the evaluation
2. Evaluation matrix (including evaluation questions, data sources, data collection, data analysis tools or methods
appropriate for each data source)

3. Stakeholder map
4. Tentative outline of the main report
5. Interview checklists/protocols
6. Theory of change
7. Detailed responsibilities of evaluation team members
8. Reference documents
9. Detailed work plan

Terms of Reference – National Plan of Action for Children

ANNEX IV – OUTLINE FINAL REPORT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
1.1. Overview of the evaluation object
1.2. Evaluation objectives and intended audience
1.3. Evaluation methodology
1.4. Most important findings and conclusions
1.5. Main recommendations

2. INTRODUCTION
2.1. NPA description
2.2. Purpose and objectives of the evaluation
2.3. Scope of the Evaluation
2.5. Gender & human rights perspective
2.4. Methodology and process

3. FINDINGS
3.1. Relevance
3.2. Effectiveness
3.3. Efficiency
3.4. Sustainability
3.5. Equity

4. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

5. RECOMMENDATIONS
5.1. Next phase NPA for Children
5.2. Recommendations for results frameworks, monitoring & evaluation plans and systems
ANNEXES

1. TOR
2. List of persons interviewed and sites visited
3. Reference documents
4. More details on the methodology, such as data collection instruments, including details of their reliability and validity
5. Evaluators biodata and/or justification of team composition
6. Evaluation matrix
7. Theory of Change
# ANNEX 2 - List of persons interviewed and sites visited.

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<tr>
<th>S No</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ms Radhika Aryal Lamichhanne</td>
<td>Joint Secretary, Chief, Women Empowerment and Child Development Division</td>
<td>Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Dr Kiran Rupakhetee</td>
<td>Under Secretary, Chief, Child Protection and Development Section</td>
<td>Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Mr Tarak Dhital</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Central Child Development Board</td>
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<td>Mr Gyanendra Shrestha</td>
<td>National Programme Advisor</td>
<td>Central Child Development Board</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Ms Namuna Bhusal</td>
<td>Programme Manager</td>
<td>Central Child Development Board</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Ms Arpanah Rongong</td>
<td>Child Protection Specialist</td>
<td>World Vision International</td>
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<td>Mr C B Pun</td>
<td>Operation Manager</td>
<td>World Vision International</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mr Mahendra Shrestha</td>
<td>Chief, Policy, Planning and International Cooperation Division</td>
<td>Ministry of Health and Population</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mr Dhan Raj Gnyavali</td>
<td>Joint Secretary, Human Rights and Law Division</td>
<td>Ministry of Home Affairs</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Ms Ava Shrestha Karna</td>
<td>Joint Secretary, Chief, Employment Coordination and Labour Relations Division</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour and Employment</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Mr Ambika Prasad Adhikary</td>
<td>Under Secretary, Chief, Policy, Planning and Monitoring Section</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour and Employment</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Mr Uday Kumar Gupta</td>
<td>Senior Factory Inspector, Labour Relation, Child Labour and Information Section</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour and Employment</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Mr Jiyam Shrestha</td>
<td>Senior Child Protection Specialist</td>
<td>Terre des Hommes</td>
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<td>Dr Lava Deo Awasthi</td>
<td>Joint Secretary, Chief, Planning Division</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Mr Janak Raj Sharma</td>
<td>Under Secretary, Budget Division</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Mr Krishna Gautam</td>
<td>Senior Superintendent of Police, Women and Children Services Directorate</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Dr Rownak Khan</td>
<td>Deputy Representative</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
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<td>Mr Munir Mammadzade</td>
<td>Child Protection Specialist, Child Protection Section</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Mr Hyung Joon Kim</td>
<td>Communication for Development Officer, Health Section</td>
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<td>Ms Suman Tuladhar</td>
<td>Specialist, Child Protection Section Child Education Unit</td>
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<td>Mr Ashok Vaidya</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Mr Rajan Burlakoti</td>
<td>Child Protection Officer, Child Protection Section</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Mr Thakur Dhakal</td>
<td>Social Policy Specialist, Social Policy and Economic Analysis Section</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Ms Bina Kunwar Thapa</td>
<td>Programme Officer</td>
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<td>Ms Bipina Sharma</td>
<td>National Project Coordinator - ACHIEVE</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Mr Arvind Lekhak</td>
<td>Project Officer, ACHIEVE</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Dr Padam Bahadur Chand</td>
<td>Senior Officer</td>
<td>Ministry of Health and Population</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Mr Keshab Prasad Regmi</td>
<td>Director General</td>
<td>Department of Women and Children</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Ms Shanta Bhattarai</td>
<td>Chief, GBV, AT and CP Section</td>
<td>Department of Women and Children</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Mr Dilli Guragain</td>
<td>Sr Advocacy, CRG and Child Protection Specialist</td>
<td>Save the Children</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Mr Shubhakar Baidya</td>
<td>Programme Support Manager</td>
<td>Plan International</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Ms Laxmi Pathak</td>
<td>Project Manager, Child Labour Project</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Ms Indira Thapa</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>Ms Chanda Pradhan</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Dr Teertha Raj Dhakal</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Mr Deepak Sharma</td>
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<td>Mr Dhurba Raj Ghimire</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>Mr Hari Krishna Phuyal</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Mr Prakash Raut</td>
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<td>Mr Kamal Thapa Chettry</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Mr Chabi Rijal</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Mr Bijay Raj Subedi</td>
<td>Under Secretary/National Project Coordinator of Golden 1000 days Programme</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Mr Madhav Pradhan</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Center (CWIN)</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>Ms Pradarsani Kumari Sha</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>Mr Navin Pokhrel</td>
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<td>Mr Laxmi Prasad Tripathi</td>
<td>Retired. Previous Position: Under Secretary/Chief of Child Protection Section</td>
<td>Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Virginia Perez</td>
<td>Chief of Child protection Section</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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ANNEX 4 - Data collection tools

National level semi-structured interview

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Department</th>
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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>MTR</th>
<th>NPA design</th>
<th>NPA implementation</th>
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</table>

### SECTION 1 - If involved in NPA design

1. What measures were taken to ensure that the NPA was aligned with the Government’s priorities for children in 2012?

2. How the priorities of the different sectors (health, education, child protection, justice for children) were incorporated and reflected in the NPA document? How target results were set?

3. How were the recommendations from the MTR taken into consideration, analysed and integrated into the NPA document?

4. How the different needs of children were assessed and considered in the process of designing the second phase of the NPA document? What was done to make sure that the NPA addressed the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised children?

5. What actions were undertaken to ensure that the NPA document was widely circulated and known?

### SECTION 2 - If involved in NPA implementation

1. How the NPA has been translated into programmes and projects in your Ministry? And in your department? (Ask to have access to documents)

2. How many people in your department were in charge of implementing the projects and programmes that you developed based on the NPA? How would you assess their performances?

3. What results for children have been achieved thanks to the implementation of the projects and programmes that you developed based on the NPA? Do you think that the results achieved for children will last much longer the end of the NPA? Why do you think so? (Ask to have access to documents)

4. In your department, did you have a specific budget allocated and spent for the implementation of the programmes and projects under the NPA? How much was it? Was it adequate for the achievement of the objectives set in your programmes and projects developed to implement the NPA? (Ask to have access to documents)
5. How reporting on progresses in the implementation of your department’s programmes and projects developed to implement the NPA was done? How frequently? To whom did you report? Did you receive any feedback on your reports? Did you receive any report on progresses in the implementation of the NPA? How the reports were used?

6. How did you coordinate with partners in your sector? And what about partners in other sectors? How often coordination meetings took place? What was discussed? Were minutes prepared and shared after each meeting? (Ask to have access to documents)

7. In the inception phase, it emerged that the NPA was not widely known and implemented. Do you agree with this statement? Can you please justify why? What evidence can be brought to show attribution of results for children directly to the NPA and not to any other sectoral planning document? (Ask to have access to documents)
## District level semi-structured interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Post held since</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involved in</th>
<th>MTR</th>
<th>NPA design</th>
<th>NPA implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### SECTION 2 - If involved in NPA implementation

1. How the NPA has been translated into programmes and projects in your district? (Ask to have access to documents)

2. How many people in your office were in charge of implementing the projects and programmes that your office developed based on the NPA? How would you assess their performances?

3. What results for children have been achieved thanks to the implementation of the projects and programmes that you developed based on the NPA? What was done to make sure that the NPA addressed the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised children? Do you think that the results achieved for children will last much longer the end of the NPA? Why do you think so? (Ask to have access to documents)

4. In your office, did you have a specific budget allocated and spent for the implementation of the programmes and projects under the NPA? How much was it? Was it adequate for the achievement of the objectives set in your programmes and projects developed to implement the NPA? (Ask to have access to documents)

5. How reporting on progresses in the implementation of your office’s programmes and projects developed to implement the NPA was done? How frequently? To whom did you report? Did you receive any feedback on your reports?

6. How did you coordinate with partners in your sector? And what about partners in other sectors? How often coordination meetings took place? What was discussed? Were minutes prepared and shared after each meeting? (Ask to have access to documents)

7. In the inception phase, it emerged that the NPA was not widely known and implemented. Do you agree with this statement? Can you please justify why? What evidence can be brought to show attribution of results for children directly to the NPA and not to any other sectoral planning document? (Ask to have access to documents)
ANNEX 5 - Evaluators biodata

Manolo Cabran

Manolo has more than 20 years of experience in child rights. His main field of work is on child protection systems strengthening. He has conducted mapping and assessment of child protection systems in Malawi, in The Gambia and in Albania, and provided technical assistance for similar exercises in Bhutan, Maldives and Uganda. He was part of the team that evaluated the National Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Malawi in 2012, and was the leading person in the development of the new National Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Zimbabwe in 2015.

Manolo was involved in different capacities in the development of national strategies and plans of actions, as well as in capacity assessment and development of capacity strengthening plans. His competencies encompass child participation, team working, problem solving, drive for results, and monitoring and evaluation. Manolo has completed a master in Cooperation and Development, with major in development economics and econometrics from the University of Pavia, in Italy, and is currently in the process of obtaining a master degree in Data Analysis in Social Science, at the University of Essex.

Dilli Joshi

Dilli Joshi has over 25 years of experience working in South Asia and West Africa on monitoring, evaluation, climate change, livelihoods, institutional and policy analysis. Between 1900 and 2010, he worked for the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, Nepal’s apex body in science, contributing to planning and monitoring of the academy’s programmes and projects. After leaving the public sector he has conducted several evaluation of projects and programmes.

Dilli has conducted and/or contributed in over 50 national and international assignments on various areas including evaluation, monitoring, assessments, perception surveys, livelihoods, climate change, environmental management, institutional and policy analysis. He is conversant in designing planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME) systems and uses participatory need assessment, participatory sectoral analysis and strategic planning, livelihoods assessment, baseline, institutional/context/result monitoring, mid-term evaluation, outcome mapping, output to purpose review, and impact evaluation tools. Dilli has completed Masters in Development Economics from University of Strathclyde, UK and Statistics from Garhwal University, India.
### ANNEX 6 - Evaluation matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>EVALUATION QUESTIONS</th>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>DATA COLLECTION METHODS</th>
<th>MEANS OF VERIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELEVANCE</strong></td>
<td>How relevant is the design of NPA for Children to the Nepal economic, social and political context relating to children?</td>
<td>1. Activities matching the MDGs 2. Activities matching the priorities identified in the situation analysis of children</td>
<td>Desk review</td>
<td>NPA, situation analyses, MICS, DHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent does it address major challenges that exist in child rights in Nepal?</td>
<td>1. Activities matching the priorities identified in the situation analysis of children</td>
<td>Desk review</td>
<td>NPA, situation analyses, MICS, DHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent was the NPA for Children (i) adapted to the evolving needs of the population, in particular vulnerable groups and the extent to which the NPA has proved flexible in responding to changing needs, particularly considering the evolving political situation; (ii) and in line with the priorities set by the international and national legal / policy frameworks?</td>
<td>1. Activities matching the priorities identified in the Mid Term Review 2. Activities matching the priorities identified in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
<td>Desk review</td>
<td>Mid-Term Review, NPA, international standards, national legal / policy frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EFFECTIVENESS</strong></td>
<td>How effective has the Government of Nepal been in strengthening the enabling environment that promote the</td>
<td>1. Local government implementing the NPA 2. Budget allocation to NPA to show governmental</td>
<td>Desk review</td>
<td>NPA, progress reports, activity reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
rights of children, child friendly services and access to basic needs and services including from the perspectives of government at national and subnational levels, civil society, communities and other stakeholders?

3. Other NPAs influences by the NPA-C
4. Activities to address attitudes, traditions, customs, behaviour and practices
5. Articles about the NPA
6. Activities for children’s life skills, knowledge and participation
7. Capacity strengthening activities
8. Basic and Targeted Services
9. Monitoring and oversight reports on the progress of NPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent were the objectives of the NPA for Children achieved, particularly in relation to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Improvement in selected child statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desk review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPA, progress reports, activity reports, MTR</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>What has been the added value of the NPA for Children to establishing legal/policy frameworks, systems interventions and agencies and in raising awareness on the rights of children? What unintended outcomes, positive as well as</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Law amendments, new laws, new plans of action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desk review</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPA, progress reports, activity reports, MTR</td>
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</table>
negative, have resulted from the NPA for Children in Nepal?

### EFFICIENCY

To what extent have appropriate human, financial and technical resources been used to achieve the biggest possible positive change in a timely manner and to pursue the achievement of the objectives of the NPA for Children?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>1. Investments in capacity building</th>
<th>2. Staff deployed specifically to implement the NPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desk review</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NPA, progress reports, activity reports, MTR</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reports from meetings</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. **Investments in capacity building**

To what extent meaningful partnerships or coordination mechanisms were established with other key actors not involved in NPA, e.g. government at national and local levels, civil society, academia, etc., that avoid duplication of efforts, miscommunication and ensure clearer accountabilities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>1. Meetings of the Steering and Technical Committees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desk review</td>
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<td>NPA, progress reports, activity reports, MTR</td>
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<td>Reports from meetings</td>
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<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
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1. **Meetings of the Steering and Technical Committees**

### SUSTAINABILITY

What are the enabling and constraining factors that influence sustainability and success of the NPA?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>1. Budget allocation in the MTEF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desk review</td>
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<td>NPA, progress reports, activity reports, MTR</td>
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<td>Reports from meetings</td>
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<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
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1. **Budget allocation in the MTEF**

To what extent have the partnerships and coordination?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>1. Dependence on NOGs for implementations of the NPA</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reports from meetings</td>
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</table>

1. **Dependence on NOGs for implementations of the NPA**
mechanisms established allowed the Government to make use of the comparative strengths of its partners, while, at the same time, safeguarding and promoting its national ownership of supported interventions, programs and policies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>What has happened as a result of the NPA for Children?</th>
<th>1. Improvement in selected child statistics</th>
<th>Desk review</th>
<th>NPA, progress reports, activity reports, MTR</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What real difference has the activities made to the beneficiaries? What changes did the NPA for Children produce on the enabling environment for children in Nepal?</td>
<td>1. Improvement in selected child statistics</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Reports from meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQUITY</td>
<td>How equitable has the NPA for Children been in its design and implementation in Nepal to specifically target marginalised and vulnerable groups such as child workers, children living in institutions, children from disadvantaged ethnic groups, among others?</td>
<td>1. Activities specific to those target groups</td>
<td>Desk review</td>
<td>NPA, progress reports, activity reports, MTR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent has the NPA for Children reached the most vulnerable children (i.e. establish</td>
<td>1. Examples of positive deviance</td>
<td>Desk review</td>
<td>NPA, progress reports, activity reports, MTR</td>
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<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Reports from meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Reports from meetings</td>
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<td>What specific models or approaches were applied to effectively reach these groups?</td>
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<td>How does the current the NPA for Children address gender inequalities and the empowerment of marginalised girls in the country?</td>
<td>1. Activities specific to gender inequality and girl empowerment</td>
<td>Desk review</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NPA, progress reports, activity reports, MTR</td>
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Semi-structured interviews
Reports from meetings