EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT OF THE UNICEF SRI LANKA COUNTRY PROGRAMME
DRAFT FINAL REPORT
FOR INTERNAL CONSUMPTION

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Executive Summary (to be inserted to the final version after CO comments)

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I. Introduction

i. Background

The Country Programme Document 2018-2022 (CPD) and the Costed Evaluation Plan for the same period for Sri Lanka was presented to and approved by the UNICEF Executive Board in September 2017. The approved CPD proposed an aggregate indicative budget of $4,735,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and $52,500,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2018 to 2022.

The UNICEF Country Programme 2018-2022 marks an important milestone in supporting Sri Lanka in the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in bridging its internal political and economic aspirations to become an upper-middle-income and even high-income country. Furthermore, the new Country Programme is underpinning the final programmatic touches in the shift from service delivery-focused programming to systems strengthening approach in a development context. In fact, the current Country Programme is the second post-conflict programming cycle and while the conflict ended in 2009\(^1\), reconciliation, social cohesion, human rights and equity continue to feature strongly in the UNICEF programming approach.

ii. Purpose and objectives of the evaluability assessment

The new Evaluation Policy issued by UNICEF in 2018 requires Country Programmes to undergo a Country Programme Evaluation at least once every two programme cycle or once in a programme cycle if monitoring and audit information points to a significant shift in the programming context or a significant increase in the level of risk. The last Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) for Sri Lanka was for the 2002-2006 cycle, and the next CPE would ideally take place at the end of the current cycle to allow the findings and recommendations to feed in the development of the next Country Programme 2023-2027.

In this context, the UNICEF Sri Lanka Country Office has commissioned this evaluability assessment of the Lanka Country Programme (CP) 2018-2022. The main purpose of the assessment is to review whether the programme impact pathways and causal chains have been adequately and logically articulated through the programme Theory of Change and outcome and output statements, while applying the principles of results-based management (RBM). The goal of the assessment is to determine the overall readiness of the Country Programme to be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion.

The specific objectives for the evaluability assessment are:

**Objective 1.** Assess the clarity of objectives, alignment, logic and coherence of each of the five program components, including its Theory of Change.

**Objective 2.** Assess the adequacy and validity of the indicators, tools and systems for monitoring, measuring and verifying results.

**Objective 3.** Assess the adequacy of resources to meet the expected results.

**Objective 4.** Provide guidance on approaches to the evaluation of the country programme with a view to measure results for children.

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\(^1\) A four-phased war between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan state which spanned over 26 years ended with the military defeat of the LTTE and deaths of most of its leaders in May 2009.
Utilization focus. The evaluability assessment took place at the early stage of programme implementation (first trimester of the second implementation year) which enhances the utilization-focused approach of the assessment. The key intended results will include an improved M&E framework and overall evaluability of the Country Programme. The recommendations were developed in collaboration with the key intended users, i.e. the UNICEF Sri Lanka Country Office staff and management.

iii. Approach and methodology
The evaluability assessment was conducted in a participatory manner with an attempt to actively promote evaluation culture. The evaluability assessment sought to (i) promote national ownership of UNICEF results, (ii) instill evaluative thinking in planning and programming as well as (iii) enhance accountability for results in a relevant final product. While the evaluability assessment integrates some consideration to gender issues, it was implemented mindful of the Gender Programmatic Review – planned to be conducted immediately after the evaluability assessment. The Gender Programmatic Review supports the CO in introducing new and/or strengthen existing gender programming elements with a view to align the CO gender programming with the global Gender Action Plan and Strategic Plan, which will also contribute to enhancing the evaluability of the CP.

The analytical focus of the evaluability assessment is on assessing context, relevance, clarity and coherence of the Country Programme and its outcome areas as well the logic, causal chains and the Theory of Change. The assessment will also examine the performance measures, including indicators, monitoring and reporting systems as well as the overall resourcing of the Country Programme and the five outcome areas. The exercise is not intended to assess Country Programme results or progress so far but as an internal exercise to reflect on the original programme design and Theory of Change construct and its validity as the implementation progresses.

The evaluability assessment methods mainly relied on qualitative inquiry tools. The evaluability assessment was carried out in three phases, starting with the inception phase during which the initial document review and inception calls with the key Country Office and Regional Office staff will take place. The data collection phase include an in-depth desk review of the programme documents and context-specific documentation. The primary data (through in-depth, semi-structured and group interviews) was collected during the field mission in Sri Lanka. The third phase which partially overlapped with the in-country data collection phase, included the analysis and final report writing. While Annex 1 to this document provides the evaluability matrix with the detailed inquiry areas and assessment questions, the different methodological approaches and tools can be summarized as follows;

(i) Review of programme and contextual documentation. This included the previous country programme documents, the current Country Programme Document with Costed Evaluation Plan (2018-2022), the Strategy Notes developed for detailing specific Programme components and outcome areas, the Country Programme Action Plan 2018-2022, the Situation Analysis published in 2017, the M&E framework, IMEP/PRIME, UNSDF etc.

(ii) Mapping data points and data sets (for availability/periodicity, quality and consistency) and reviewing the monitoring, evaluation, research and Managing Information System plan for the 2018-2022 Country Programme.

(iii) Stakeholder mapping, field mission and stakeholder interviews. Key stakeholders included CO staff and PME team, senior management i.e. Deputy Representative and Representative,
programme/outcome leads (and section chiefs), government counterparts, Resident Coordinator’s Office and ROSA Regional Advisers. The interviews complement the desk review and more particularly clarify the stakeholders’ views and expectations (over e.g. the logic, coherence, partnership framework, set targets and goals) on the current Country Programme formulation. To enhance the participatory nature and to increase the ownership and thereby utilization of the recommendations of the exercise, a presentation of the preliminary findings was held at the end of the field mission with the Country Office staff.

(iv) Analysis of the Country Programme, its five components and resourcing for the same. The analytical approach to the evaluability of the Theory of Change drew from the ‘Criteria for assessing the evaluability of a Theory of Change’\(^2\). The analysis also focused on the evaluability of the results framework and data and evidence required to verify results. The evaluability parameters are presented below in figure 1.

(v) Stimulating evaluative thinking, learning and accountability in the Country Office and among partners. The evaluability exercise was intended as a light, interactive process and in addition to the key evaluability questions, the approach will employ additional learning questions, which are presented in the evaluability matrix (annex 1).

\(^2\) http://mandenews.blogspot.com/2012/04/criteria-for-assessing-evaluability-of.html
## Limitations of the Evaluability Assessment

There were no major limitations to the EA, though there are few issues which impact the way the assessment can respond to the objectives of the assignment. These include (i) uncertainty of the success of the current resource mobilization strategy and (ii) the absence of a few key post holders such as Chief of Education and WASH Officer. The former relates to the core issue of availability of funds to deliver the intended programme results and the latter to the partial lack of internal inputs to the analytical assessment on implementing the education Theory of Change and WASH approaches within the Child Survival and Development programming. It is also worth mentioning that as the evaluability assessment is conducted during the first quarter of the second programme cycle year -and the CP follows a two-year rolling work plan, it can only provide an indication of how the implementation fits the Theory of Change. Many of the activities and implementation strategies would only take place in the latter part of the CP cycle.

## The 2018-2022 Country Programme

The UNICEF Sri Lanka 2018-2022 Country Programme is guided by a Theory of Change that is based on investing in the critical windows of early childhood and adolescence to contribute to increased cognitive capital which in turn will support Sri Lanka’s sustainable development.
The Country Programme has three converging outcome areas and two supporting and overarching outcome areas. Each of the outcome areas have their own respective Theory of Change narration with a detailed Results and Resources Framework aligning results and resources (both visual and narrated).

The three converging outcome areas are structured to support the internal coordination in a child-centred manner, reflecting the life-cycle approach. These outcome areas are:

**ECD:** new-borns/infants and their mothers, and young children under 5 in targeted areas have improved access to quality care, protection and development opportunities in their home, care and preschool environment. This outcome is led by the Child Survival and Development (CSD) Manager. The ECD outcome is supported by a Health and Nutrition Officer and the WASH Specialist (currently under recruitment) and with additional staff in the Field Offices.

Children in Middle Childhood (6-9 years old) – girls and boys of primary school age realize their rights to good health, and to appropriate cognitive and physical development supported by appropriate care, development and learning services. The Chief of Education (currently under recruitment) would resume the outcome lead role for this area, while in the interim the area is being supported by the Child Protection Manager.

Adolescents (10-19 years old) – adolescent girls and boys receive quality education, have access to adolescent-sensitive and protective services, and reliable information. The outcome lead for Adolescents is the Child Protection Manager.

The two overarching programme outcome areas are (d) Social Policy and Child Rights Monitoring, led by the Chief of Social Policy, to ensure that children and adolescents in Sri Lanka, including the most deprived, have their human rights protected and benefit from effective child-sensitive social protection system, and (e) Programme Effectiveness to ensure that the country programme is efficiently designed, monitored, managed, evaluated and supported to meet equitable and quality programming standards in achieving results.

**v. Preparation of the Country Programme Documents**

The new 2018-2022 Country Programme preparation started in 2016, with the development of the *Situation Analysis for Women and Children*, SitAn (called Child Rights and Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka – A Situation Assessment and Analysis, December 2017). The SiTan objectives included 1) to function as an advocacy tool for UNICEF, GoSL and development partners for realization of children’s rights and the Agenda for Sustainable Development; 2) to backstop strategic communications on child rights and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda between the GoSL, line ministries, bilateral donors and development partners; 3) to inform sectoral and thematic discussions in preparation for the development of the UNICEF and GoSL Country Programme of Cooperation in 2018-2022; 4) to capture key emerging issues impacting on children’s rights and wellbeing in Sri Lanka; 5) identify themes for further research and collaboration. The SiTan was developed in a highly participatory manner, including consultations with children in four provinces. The SiTan was not developed as a single document, but included other elements as well – such as a video-documentary and qualitative research on the barriers to education facing children with disabilities; natural disaster vulnerability mapping of children and women in the Eastern Province, an equity analysis/profiles in the sectors of health, nutrition, water and sanitation as well as policy briefs on Sri Lanka’s digital landscape and a Child Protection System mapping.
As a design tool for the new Country Programme the SiTan can be considered innovative and inclusive, but the extent to which it (the actual SiTan document) was used as an advocacy tool for child right issues in Sri Lanka is not clear as the document was not published.

*Conceptualisation for the new Country Programme* started in late 2016 with internal sectoral reviews and prioritisation workshops, followed by consultations with the Steering Committee and government and civil society partners. The UNSDF Framework development in mid-2017 coincided with the Country Programme Document (CPD) development and the final CPD and Costed Evaluation Plan was approved by the UNICEF Executive Board in September 2017. The Country Programme Action Plan and the multi-year work plans were agreed with the GoSL in November 2017. Overall, the CPD and the Strategic Programme Notes capitalise well on the lessons from the 2013-2017 CP, the Mid-Term Review of the same as well as the evaluations conducted during the 2013-2017 CP.

The *Costed Evaluation Plan* for the 2018-2022 CP includes four evaluations - two of which are covering education programming (multi-level pedagogy and social cohesion), one on Violence Against Children programming and one on District Nutrition Monitoring and Surveillance System. While the scope of the EA did not cover detailed analysis of the CEP, it is worth noting that those evaluations planned for 2018 are currently not funded and the CO has decided not to go ahead with the nutrition evaluation. Overall, SLCO evaluation history has been very focused on evaluating education programming – since 2010 the CO has conducted five evaluations which have covered a Mine Risk Education, two Child-Friendly School evaluations, an Education Sector evaluation for the Northern Province and one non-education related which was covering the EU-SEM Sustainable Livelihoods Project in North and East Sri Lanka.

Overall, the review of the key documents points out to slight misalignment in the key country programme documents. There are some inconsistencies between the PSNs and CPAP, mainly related to the results framework and between the CPAP to CPMP, mainly related to the staffing issues (structure, internal capacity building plans) and implementation approach. This is normal as the Programme design matures and takes shape and especially the PSNs are considered ‘living documents’ but in view of the forthcoming Programme reviews and evaluations, it would be advisable to update the PSNs to be aligned with the CPAP results framework to provide a coherent and consistent Country Programme lay-out.

**vi. The overarching Theory of Change and Strategic Approaches**

The UNICEF Sri Lanka 2018-2022 Country Programme is guided by a broader Theory of Change according to which UNICEF’s investment in the critical windows of early childhood and adolescence will contribute to increased cognitive capital which in turn will support Sri Lanka’s sustainable development and progress towards upper-middle income country status. There is no Programme-level visual Theory of Change which would support the quick absorption of the causal chains between the overall impact, programme goal, key outcome areas and the cross-cutting supportive programme areas.

According to the Programme Strategy Note(s) the Programme works at three different levels: upstream – referring to the national level; midstream referring to the sub-national (provincial and district) and downstream referring to the community level (parents, caregivers, immediate service providers, children and adolescents themselves etc.). The Programme documents also describe a strategic shift from more emergency, service delivery- focused implementation logic to an upstream policy-influencing and

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3 Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_23269.html

4 Cognitive capital defined as the complete set of intellectual, socioemotional and executive-function skills that enable creativity, flexibility and the ability to work collaboratively (Noble DJ, Blight S, Fajth G, et al.)
advocacy type work aligning broadly with UNICEF’s programming approaches in middle-income countries. Based on the discussions with the Programme staff, the three levels are often understood in the implementation context as policy and advocacy work at the upstream and hardware focus and social and behaviour work at the community level. The CPMP describes the work of the FOs as ‘the two field offices and the outposts in the tea plantations will work on the planning and monitoring of implementation and convergence at the field level and the central office in Colombo will focus on strategic direction, programme design, management and technical oversight, with functional accountabilities for upstream policy work, direct implementation in urban slums and peri-urban activities in the capital.’ In general, the CPD or CPAP does not really provide much ‘rationale’ for having the zonal offices or antenna office in the country programme, beyond the strategic importance in having presence outside Colombo.

While the Programme documents do not have an explicit targeting strategy, the CPD and Programme documents highlight the Programme’s cross-cutting focus on the most disadvantaged children and adolescents. The CPD also mentions the most poverty-affected districts in the Northern Province, Eastern Province and the Uva Province as well as high-prevalence pockets/districts for under-five mortality and malnutrition in the country. Overall, the Programme documents do not describe any urban or peri-urban targeting focus, beyond what seems a slightly disconnected paragraph in the CPMP mentioned above.

The Programme documents note that interventions will be guided by a Theory of Change resting on the generation of evidence from modelling interventions and wider knowledge to advocate for and inform the generation of strengthened policies, standards and guidelines; and support to the implementation of these measures to benefit the most disadvantaged children, parents and their communities. Support to the roll out of national plans, policies and legislation will be instrumental in strengthening child-friendly and quality service delivery at the subnational level. The programme will demonstrate affordable, integrated and innovative solutions to tackle inequalities at the provincial and district level, while national policy and budget advocacy will ensure replication and sustainability. Provision of high-quality technical assistance, generating evidence about the situation and risks for children and adolescents, and strengthening linkages to global knowledge and best practices will be critical to support social and economic policy development and legal reforms.

III. Key findings

The findings presented below are based on a desk review of key Programme and contextual documents and a visit to Sri Lanka to carry interviews with Programme staff and implementing partners through individual, semi-structured interviews, group discussions and a final validation session with staff. The findings and conclusions are structured against the objectives of the evaluability assessment.

O1. Objectives, alignment, logic and coherence of the Programme Components/Outcome areas

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5 CPMP, p.5
6 Ibid.
7 PSN for Middle Childhood, p.2
8 The mission took place between 5th March and 14th March 2019
The overall Theory of Change for the Programme reflects well the shift from service delivery focused programming to systems strengthening, advocacy and evidence-based policy support as intended by design. The ToC is not explicit but rather implicit - i.e. there is no visual presentation of the Programme ToC or a summative narrative of the overall Programme logic and change theory in the Programme documents. There are no objectives, overall goals or impact defined for the Programme or the outcome areas – rather outcome and output statements (as is often the case with UNICEF results frameworks) which describe the achievement at the end of the Programme, as opposed to objectives which would describe the intended results. The overall change theory broadly relies on the three outcome areas with the support of the two other programming pillars and cross-cutting implementation strategies delivering the overall vision. While the overall change logic seems solid and the causal chains from the outcome areas to the overall vision are clear, the ToC both on Programme level and on outcome levels could articulate better the targeting scope of the programme and the strategies on how the Programme will ensure intended results will reach the most disadvantaged segments of the populations. The lack of targeting scope refers to the somewhat inconsistent references to the geographic scope of the programme – in some cases the scope is stated as national, but it also identifies the key areas of interventions and UNICEF support for four the most disadvantaged provinces. Further, there is a limited description of who are the de-facto poor, disadvantaged and underserved women and children in Sri Lanka. The outcome and output articulations in the results framework are presented mostly without specification of the scope – whereas a results framework which would specify the targeted geographic regions or for instance ministries where intended change is expected to happen would be easier to evaluate.

Flexibility of the overall ToC. The overall change theory as well the outcome-specific Theories of Change can be considered adaptive and flexible, which is required in the SLCO implementation context with a high level of uncertainly regarding the Programme funding as well the unpredictable political stability on the government side. The flexibility – which stems from a broad approach to strategies and intervention logic in the Programme design and a results framework that relies strongly on qualitative progress indicators, could translate into low evaluability of the Programme. However, the SLCO could easily increase the evaluability by improving and updating the current results framework.

Relevance and alignment of the Country Programme. The Programme is well aligned with the UNSDF Framework – as it largely benefitted from the same design period allowing integration of the UNSDF programming elements to the UNICEF Programme. The Programme is also well aligned with UNICEF Global Strategic Plan and GAP 2.0 which were also developed at the same time. However, the life-cycle approach to the SLCO programming with multi-sectoral outcome areas requires a more thorough understanding of the implementation and results logic, as the outcome areas are not directly aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan results areas. It also places additional challenges to the SLCO corporate reporting requirements (e.g. the case of the COAR and for instance Vision). Nevertheless, based on the discussions with the SLCO staff, there seems to be no insurmountable challenges to this regard. What emerged in several discussions was the mis-match between UNICEF corporate reporting requirements (often geared towards humanitarian and least developed country context) and results framework in a

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9 The same issue was raised in two other evaluability assessments (Malaysia and Mongolia) and it seems to be related to UNICEF-specific guidance, including the use of if-then format for ToC which is also challenging from an evaluability perspective
middle-income - aspiring upper-middle income - context such as Sri Lanka. In addition, the programming priorities in Sri Lanka with significantly higher HDI\(^{10}\) compared to the rest of South Asia, are not fully aligned with the ROSA regional headline results, beyond ‘save newborns’ and ‘stop stunting’. The issues of out-of-school children, polio, child marriage and open defecation are not priority issues in the national development context and therefore not a priority in UNICEF programming.

The Programme is well aligned with the national development plans, such as Vision 2025 and the PIP. The area where further alignment could take place is related to the education and nutrition programming (discussed later in the document) where slight programmatic shifts should be discussed.

*Risks, assumptions and mitigation strategies in Programme design.* The CPD states that ‘the main threats to country programme implementation include the pace of reform; uncertainties relating to social coherence and reconciliation; inequities that make children particularly vulnerable and leaves them behind; persistent institutional bottlenecks in the implementation of policies; and an increase in the intensity and frequency of natural disasters which exceed existing response and resilience capacities.’ These external risks are certainly valid, though its is not fully clear why existing inequities would jeopardize programme implementation. The risks related to social coherence and reconciliation could be more explicitly described as political and governmental instability and the complexity of the ministerial responsibilities– with an adverse impact on economic growth. This coupled with an elevated risk to public debt sustainability will indeed have an impact on the efforts to advocate for increased fiscal space for the social sectors as envisaged under the SP outcome area. Lastly, the substantial internal risk related to unpredictability of funding has not been factored in the programme design.

The assumptions about the role of partners, government and UNICEF are clearly depicted and based on the discussions with the key line-ministries, appear solid and draw well from the well-established longstanding partnerships with the GoSL.

*ToC for Early Childhood Development.* The change theory for ECD stands out as the strongest of the three life-cycle outcome areas, mainly due to the more mature conceptual framework and the cross-sectoral ECD programming that took place in the preceding Country Programme. The ToC for ECD – or ECCD as in the PSN, has a logical vertical flow where the outputs (health, nutrition, child protection and ECE) translate to ‘children under 5 in targeted areas benefiting from improved access to quality healthcare and nutrition, protection and development opportunities in their home, care and preschool environments’. It is also the only outcome which is narrowing the scope to the targeted areas. However, there is a slight incoherence with regards to WASH - the outcome statement does not encompass WASH directly even though there are two performance indicators relevant to WASH. The ToC assumptions also note that there is no clear domain for WASH within this age group. Partly owing to the absence of the WASH Specialist the conceptualizing of WASH activities and respective implementation seems delayed, while the activities are also largely unfunded in the current work plan. Based on the discussion with the CO staff, the CO should engage in a dialogue regarding where to ‘house’ the WASH in the CO implementation architecture and results framework and to what extent WASH hardware delivery is aligned with the CP implementation logic.

ToC for Middle Childhood. The change theory for this outcome area is less explicit to that of the ECD. The outcome statement as well as the output statements are broad and would benefit from a narrower scope so as to define the ‘environments’ as schools in the targeted areas. The output areas are currently not attributable to UNICEF interventions. The change theory could include ‘improved equitable learning outcomes’ as most of the outputs and interventions are essentially contributing to this area. Having the equitable learning outcomes as part of the change theory would strengthen the causal linkages to increased cognitive capital, yet now this important focus for the age group is largely missing. The results framework requires updating with as number of baseline indicators are yet to be established and some MoVs require attention.

ToC for Adolescents. The ToC for this outcome area has some of the same issues as the Middle Childhood outcome area with respect to the horizontal logic. The outcome statement is broad and not targeted, and the outputs are not targeted nor do the indicators particularly reflect adolescent-specific measurement. An example of this slightly incoherent causal logic would be for instance within output 3.2:

Similarly, the output 3.1 ‘By 2022, the health and nutrition service delivery systems provide quality healthcare, nutrition and WASH interventions for adolescent girls and boys, especially the most deprived’ has no indicators on nutrition service delivery systems and it is not entirely clear which interventions
would lead to the provision of quality nutrition intervention for this age group. Overall, the strategies – the ‘how’ part on reducing stunting is not very comprehensively captured in the CP documents.

The adolescence outcome area focuses strongly on increasing adolescents’ resilience and participation and contribution to a more cohesive and peaceful society. The CO has a solid track record of implementing education initiatives for social cohesion and UNICEF’s role seems to be much appreciated by the MoE. However, based on the discussions with the MoE constituency and the CO staff, the CO should engage in a dialogue regarding the extent to which UNICEF should incorporate elements of skills for employability as well as STEM education, especially for girls. These two areas are increasingly important in Sri Lanka, considering the current growth diagnostics which point out to economic growth stagnation due to lack of innovation, economic diversification, knowledge and know how.11 Nevertheless, the MoE does have strong partnerships for these areas with other agencies, and the SLCO approach to skills development in the previous Programme was to disengage due to UNICEF’s limited value-add and expertise in this thematic area. With respect to the education related indicators in the results framework, the CO should review whether these could be more closely aligned with the Education Sector Development Plan: General Education in Sri Lanka 2018-2025.

ToC for Social Policy and Child Rights Monitoring. The change theory for SP and Child Rights focuses on interventions that would lead to ensuring that all children and adolescents, including the most deprived, would have their human rights protected and would benefit from effective child-sensitive social protection systems. The causal pathways from outputs to outcomes in the current results framework are not entirely linear and the outcome area has evolved from the design stage towards a more coherent and logical package, which should lead to changes in the output articulation. The current implementation focus articulates the four output areas as (i) improved child poverty measurement; (ii) improved capacity to deliver social protection systems; (iii) capacity for managing fiscal space enhanced for increased investment on children and adolescents including the most disadvantaged (PF4C), and (iv) systems strengthening and advocacy for child-rights monitoring. These could be directly used as the revised output statements. While the SP programming has taken some impressive steps forward it would be good to also focus on clarifying the cross-sectoral support that the outcome area is providing internally. The PSN describes evidence and data generation as one of the key strategies to drive the Programme vision – however, it is not fully clear what evidence will be generated, beyond the important work on child poverty measurement and budget briefs. Further, the linkages to other outcome areas could be further clarified in the PSN and especially support strategies to programme-wide evidence generation.

Data, evidence and innovations. The CP lists nine key strategies12 to achieve intended results. Based on the review of the planning documents and reporting, the CP implementation so far does not seem to include or employ innovative elements to engage adolescents or in monitoring and evaluation approaches as described in the CPD. As mentioned above, work on strengthening national data systems has started strong vis-à-vis National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) training and calculation and child-poverty measurement.
measurement, even these areas were not included in the CPAP and MYWP. The HIES 2019 will include a child module with sex-disaggregated data that will also capture any discriminatory household practices. Based on the discussion with the staff (SP and CP in particular), there is a need to enhance advocacy for government making data and data sets public, open-standard format and at no cost.

**Cross-cutting programming lenses.** Gender, conflict-sensitivity, disability and DDR and climate change adaptation are incorporated in the Programme design as cross-cutting elements. While conflict-sensitivity is explicitly present in the education and adolescent programming and results framework (peace education, conflict resolution focused skills training, and VAC programming) the planning documents and results framework do not explicitly address gender, disability and DRR and especially the how-part, i.e., how these elements will be integrated in programming to deliver results for the most disadvantaged — those often most affected by gender discrimination, disability and exposure to adverse climate effects.13 While the context analysis for gender, disability and DRR are included in the Theories of change, there are no outputs or indicators specifically targeting these important programming elements, which makes it difficult to measure or evaluate results in these areas in the future. There are no targeted gender priorities and gender mainstreaming results formulated to address the GAP 2.1 results. DRR programming is increasingly important, considering that Sri Lanka was the second most affected country by climate related risks in 2017 by Global Climate Risk Index 201914. Disaster Risk Reduction appears in the CPAP mainly under Programme effectiveness and Middle Childhood and the focus more on response than prevention and risk reduction.

**O2. Indicators, tools and systems for monitoring, measuring and verifying results**

*Horizontal and vertical logic in the results framework.* As mentioned above in the section regarding the overall Theory of Change, the upward vertical causal chains from outcomes to the ‘overall vision’ seem strong and coherent but there are some issues with the change theory from the activities to the outputs and outputs to outcomes. Further, there are weaknesses that currently reduce the evaluability of the Programme related to the horizontal linkages in the results framework, such as hard to measure outcome and output statements and indicators, lack of baselines and targets and relevant or aligned MoVs. The full set of comments regarding the results framework is provided in the annex II. At the time of the evaluability assessment, the CO was initiating a process on operationalization of the results framework which would possibly results in a monitoring framework for the CP – the issues discussed in detail in the annex and below should be taken into consideration in the operationalization process. The key issues regarding the improving RRB principles in the results structure are summarized here:

- Both the outcome and output statements across the results structure could be improved by increased scope and specificity. Nevertheless, the focus from an evaluability point of view should be on improving the scope and specificity of the output articulation, considering this is the UNICEF attributable results’ level. Many of the improvement suggestions are rather fine-tuning; for instance, articulation improved to as ‘enhanced or improved’ capacity and targeting specificity improved to ‘in the targeted districts or provinces’ rather than a generic

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13 There is a plethora of evidence on how climate change affects the poor and the marginalized segments of the population the most

14 https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/germanwatch.org/files/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202019_2.pdf
statement of desired situation status at the end of the Programme. With regards to the latter – the RWP has the geo-location for most activities, which can be used to improve the output level articulation.

- Most of the indicators are self-explanatory and reflect industry standards. A few are suggested to be standardized if possible, mainly owing to an excessively complex scoring system
- Several baseline and target levels still need to be established and some require updating to better reflect 2017/2018 baseline. This requires urgent attention to ensure any future evaluation has a baseline benchmark to measure progress
- There is potentially a level of overcommitment in the MoVs related to the indicators. The Programme should ensure that the planned surveys, KAPs, evaluations and monitoring exercises will take place and if not (due to lack funding or other reasons), then find an alternative MoV
- The results structure would benefit from adding time-indication for baselines, targets and MoVs
- Overall, a background note should be developed for all the indicators, baselines, targets and MoVs to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the results framework

**Costed Evaluation Plan and IMEP (Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan).** The CO implements a two-year IMEP which includes the planned evaluations, studies and research. The current IMEP 2018-2019 encompasses two EB approved evaluations; namely the Multi-Level Pedagogy evaluation and the District Nutrition Monitoring and Surveillance System Pilot evaluation. The former was planned in the CEP for 2018 and in the IMEP it is planned for 2019 (all four quarters). While the IMEP tracking sheet notes that the ToR is finalized, the discussions with the education section point out to further scoping will be required vis-à-vis the methodology and therein the question of whether the evaluation will be conducted as qualitatively or quantitively, with budget implications. The latter one of the evaluations is currently on-hold and most likely cancelled, due to several reasons including the line ministry’s low interest in an evaluation looking at paper-based monitoring system as they are moving on towards a digital monitoring system and lack of budget.

Based on the review of the IMEP, CEP and the M&E staff, there is room for improvement (vis-à-vis overall accountability, institutional record of decisions and any forthcoming audit) in the off-line IMEP tracking sheet. The improvements include adding intended timing (missing in some cases), planned budget vs. materialized budgets and reasons for delays or cancellations. Further, it would be good to note in the IMEP tracking sheet those evaluations that are in the CEP, given the additional accountability framework around the EB approved CEPs.\(^\text{15}\)

**Evidence Generation and Knowledge Management.** The SLCO aims to ‘be a knowledge leader / broker for children, promoting shared learning, good practices and innovations across countries in the South Asia region and beyond through South-South Cooperation.’ The CO’s growing engagement in evidence

\(^{15}\) The new database system Evidence Information Systems Integration (EISI) features a dedicated field for CEP and the CEP implementation progress will be increasingly monitored by the RO, Evaluation Office at the HQ as well as the EB – see more on Updated Guidance Note on Costed Evaluation Plans, 2019.
generation on children is also noted across the key Programme documents but in particular through the SP outcome area. While upping evidence generation and knowledge brokering is core to the change theory of the current CP, there is no explicit evidence agenda or evidence/data gap analysis for the CP, and the KM Strategy has not been developed to date. The IMEP format, as standard corporate planning tool for M&E, does not capture the evidence and data gaps, strategic linkages and synergies with research, evaluation, studies and longer-term research or evidence requirements to reach the CP and UNSDF results. The CEP format does provide some strategic linkages (to UNSDF and UNICEF SP) but it only covers four evaluations, of which one would be most likely cancelled. The SiTan includes a formative research agenda, which partially response to the need to explicitly identify evidence gaps. The formative (rolling) research agenda could be used as a basis for developing an explicit evidence agenda covering all outcome areas and the five-year programme cycle.

O3. Adequacy of resources to meet expected results

Financial resources. The question whether the CP has adequate funding to deliver the intended results is difficult to estimate due to the funding structure of the CP. The Other Regular Resources (OR) funds comprise of around 92% of the total planned Programme budget, which in the CPD was approved at 57.2 million USD. The OR funds are to be mobilized through resources mobilization from traditional donors, UNICEF NatComs as well as private sector engagement. In addition, the CO is actively tapping on UNICEF thematic funds from global and regional resources. The CP is on full RM mode, with a RM Strategy well under implementation and all programme sections, RM section and management engaged in mobilizing funds for Programme implementation. The review of the proposal tracking sheet (which tracks all OR funding proposal from UNICEF thematic funds, traditional donors and Natcoms) lists approx. 27.2 million USD in proposals since Programme start. By first quarter of 2019 around 7.8 million USD has been received, including a 6.1 million USD KOICA financing for improving the quality of education in Kilinochchi district in the Northern Province.¹⁶ The remaining funds are mostly from UNICEF’s global and regional thematic funding. Funding from the private sector and individual giving is expected to grow gradually, but as these are new areas to SLCO, the actual amounts to be received through these channels are still modest.

The Programme design is based on the programme being fully funded and lack of funding is not included in the risk assessments as a potential threat for achieving intended results. The only Programme document - while being optimistic regarding the Programme being fully funded – noting the funding gaps as risks to achieving intended results is the AMP 2019. The work plan review for 2018-2019 point out to that while the education activities are fairly well funded (80% of planned activities funded), the other programming areas have significant funding gaps with Child Protection 20% of planned activities funded, CDS 50% of planned activities funded and SP and Child Rights monitoring only 8% of planned activities funded. While the two-year rolling work plan only provides indicative projection of Programme implementation in the five-year programme cycle context, it underpins severe delays and possible cancellations of certain programme activities. Especially many of the evidence generating activities are

¹⁶ The Proposal Tracking sheet received during the country visit was not fully up-to-date and missed e.g. the KOICA funding
currently un-funded and/or delayed which in turn can have an adverse impact on the evidence-based programming for the remainder of the CP and on strengthening the UNICEF Sri Lanka’s position as knowledge broker.

**Human resources.** The staffing of the CP is only moderately affected by the funding shortage as most staff positions are covered by the RR, institutional budget or available OR funding (staffing number is more or less similar to the previous CP) – and in fact according to the CPMP, staff costs constitute 86% of IB/RR funds, which adds significant pressure to ‘align people with results’. The CP documents refer to a Learning and Development Plan for 2018-2019, which would address the capacity gaps in the CO, but at the time of the EA, this plan was not available. Currently there is only one NO2 C4D position frozen due to the funding shortage but in addition, the abolishment of the PME Specialist position in 2018 was done on the back of funding shortage. Based on the discussions with the programme staff, the absence of the C4D officer is seen as a serious capacity gap vis-à-vis delivering the SBCC strategy and policy support envisaged by the CP. With respect to the outcome areas, the following observations were made:

- CSD programming and ECD outcome area has a very ambitious scope and the staffing seems sub-optimal to deliver the ECD results, especially the health results. The WASH position is under recruitment and ECD outcome area relies heavily on the frozen C4D position’s support, which further compounds the current delivery capacity
- The Middle Childhood outcome lead i.e. Chief of Education is currently under recruitment and she/he will bring new skill set to support the delivery. However, based on the programming and current staff profiles, there are some gaps in capacity to deliver the Middle Childhood and Adolescent outcome area for skills development (e.g. skills for employability), learning assessments and therein methodological skills for quantitative research
- The SP & Child Rights Monitoring outcome is the least funded programming area, but it has managed to deliver results with very limited staffing and resources. As the programming area is still in its formative stages there seems to be no imminent HR related capacity gap, but the issue is rather on access to operational funds to push the outcome area to the next level and ensuring there are funds to increase the overall staff capacity (as well as key government partners) on social policy-related issues
- For delivering the Programme Effectiveness results, there were no emerging issues regarding the capacity within the RM, advocacy and communications staff to deliver the intended results. However, there is a potential gap in the CP’s capacity to deliver the M&E architecture with the current staffing. M&E is supported by three staff members but only the Programme Officer for PME is fully dedicated to M&E and even this position is additionally tasked with the role of coordinating EU-funded projects. The workload of the PME officer seems excessive. The other roles supporting PME are shared functions. The dispersed M&E unit could potentially affect evaluability of the Programme via reduced capacity to ensure adequate accountability, learning and knowledge sharing around monitoring the progress against the results frameworks as well as the IMEP. The M&E architecture could be strengthened by updating the Programme Effectiveness PSN with a clarification of the new set up (new roles and responsibilities) as well as developing an RWP for

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17 The EA did not conduct a systematic review of staff capacities (qualification and practical experience) vis-à-vis required skills and expertise, but proposes that such an assessment should take place based on the EA findings
18 The Programme design included an actual M&E Unit but the PME Specialist position at P3 level was abolished in 2018
Programme Effectiveness, which is currently missing. It is not currently clear who or which function has the capacity and resources for designing and managing evidence generation (research, monitoring exercises and studies), dissemination and uptake of evidence as well as overall office-wide knowledge management. While these might fall under the Deputy Representative’s responsibility area it seems unrealistic to expect that the Deputy Representative, who already has a heavy managerial burden, would be able to develop strategies and action plans for all these areas. Overall, the M&E function is core to effective programme delivery, and the CO should ensure that this function is well resourced.

O4. Approach to the Country Programme Evaluation

The fourth objective for the evaluability assessment was to provide guidance on the *approaches to the forthcoming Country Programme Evaluation (CPE)*. While some potentially suitable methodologies and approaches are described in annex IV: Note on the Country Programme Evaluation Approaches, it is worth noting that the UNICEF HQ is currently working on a Guidance Document for UNICEF Country Programme Evaluations and this document would be the main reference document in designing the CPE for Sri Lanka. In addition, the design of the CPE would draw heavily from the Mid-Term Review, which should normally take place in the first half of 2020. The Mid-Term Review would also include recommendations on what the CPE should be potentially evaluating.

With respect to the *Mid-Term Review*, there are both internal and external reasons why the programming context necessitates an external Mid-Term Review. The funding gap is the most pressing issue with a potential adverse impact on achieving overall programme results, but the funding situation also affects the zonal offices and their operational capacity and strategic importance. Several interactions with staff pointed out to the fact that the zonal offices have little if any operational budgets available. Further, the political situation and forthcoming elections also might have an impact on the conduciveness of the implementation context. Based on the discussions with the Programme staff and review of the relevant documents, the forthcoming MTR should focus on at least the following – if not systematically reviewed earlier:

- Assessing the programme funding situation to determine whether any reprogramming, re-staffing, down-scaling or up-scaling needs to take place for the remainder of the programme cycle in the overall context of ensuring cost-effectiveness in Programme delivery
- Conducting an assessment of the zonal offices to determine whether they are cost-effective and good value for money for all outcome areas; whether their strategic importance has changed vis-à-vis funding or programming priorities; whether the zonal office roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear vis-à-vis convergent programming and outcome areas and whether the human resources (qualifications, skills and experience) available in the zonal offices are optimal for implementing the remainder of the CP.

With respect to the timing of the CPE and MTR, there needs to be an early dialogue between the Regional Office and Country Office regarding the timing of the MTR and CPE. In UNICEF, the MTR findings often feed into the development of the new CPD – as has been in the case for Sri Lanka – but with the planned CPE, the timing of these two exercises is crucial. The CPE should provide an overview of the achievements against the intended results, but the findings should also be available in time for the new CPD development which starts normally in the first quarter of the last cycle year. The right sequencing of these
two evaluative exercises is important for increasing the utility focus and learning for both. The CO should also consider improving the document/knowledge management practices to ensure that key programme planning and reporting documents are easily available for the evaluation focal point. A good practice would also be to establish Evaluation Document repositories on e.g. SharePoint or shared drives for facilitating forthcoming evaluative exercises.

IV. Conclusions

While the above findings underpin several areas where the evaluability of the CP could be improved, there is no fundamental reason why the CP would not be evaluable. The number of issues in the ToC articulation, weaknesses in the results framework and funding situation do indicate that the CP is not ready to be evaluated in its current state but at the same time, the CO can easily improve the evaluability by addressing the identified weaknesses. Overall, the change theory and strategic intent of the Country Programme is clear, with a set of broad outcome areas logically supporting the overall vision of increasing the cognitive capital for sustainable development in Sri Lanka. The desired results are not set at an unachievable or unrealistic level but are rather cautious and considerate of the on-going trend and underlying assumptions. Further, many of the progress indicators are quantitative and related to policy wins, which are less dependent on funding and more subject to evidence-based advocacy, political will and momentum.

However, with respect to the desired results, funding is the key issue. While the ToC and Programme itself is evaluable, the availability of operational funds is of course key to having results and progress to measure. There is currently no contingency planning or simulations of alternative, low-cost high-impact strategies to deliver the same results with a reduced budget. A key strategy to this end would be to invest in the capacity of the staff itself, to strengthen the role of UNICEF as a technical partner rather than financing and service delivery partner as the CP strategic shift to more upstream work entails. Another key strategy would be to ensure that the CP delivery is based on the most cost-effective implementation structure (staffing, logistics, zonal offices etc.) and that there is a cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analysis conducted for interventions requiring larger budgets, with hardware components.

V. Recommendations

To strengthen the evaluability of the Country Programme components and outcome areas and employed strategies, the following improvements are recommended.

O1. Finetuning and improving the ToC of the CP components/outcome areas (during 2019)

- Develop a Programme-wide visual TOC which facilitates a quick absorption of the Programme goals, intervention logic and context.
- Adopt more results-based and specific output statements for outcome areas 1 to 4. As part of the annual review exercise, revisit the outcome ToCs and update the scope, risks, assumptions and how-strategies and improve the causal pathways (horizontal and vertical logic) to better depict the current implementation approach and context in the PSNs.
Consider initiating discussion regarding the WASH programming vis-à-vis what is the most strategic implementation logic for WASH, could it serve better as DDR mainstreaming vehicle in the context of ‘Climate Smart WASH’?

Clarify the Social Policy and Child Rights Monitoring outcome areas’ role in providing cross-cutting support to other outcomes internally (vis-à-vis evidence, SDG monitoring & evaluation, data support, equity profiles, SiTaN)

02. Improve the M&E architecture, indicators and means of verification (during 2019 and 2020)

- Revise and update the indicators, baselines, targets and MoVs across the results framework to ensure clarity of indicators, feasibility and appropriateness of suggested MoVs and that baseline benchmarks exist for measuring programme results at the end of the cycle.
- Improve the IMEP tracking sheet by adding planned timing (missing in some cases) vs. actual start, planned budget vs. materialized budgets and reasons for delays or cancellations. In addition, note in the IMEP format those evaluations which are part of the CEP.
- Develop RWP or equivalent for Programme Effectiveness to increase accountabilities around outcome specific progress and delivery.
- Consider developing an explicit 5-year evidence agenda which reflects the shift to upstream delivery model and prioritizes strategically aligned, policy-relevant & government demand-driven rather than programme informing evidence and data. Enhance the focus on strategic use of learning and evidence from pilot and modelling interventions at national level.

03. Improved staffing structure and resources for optimal CP implementation and results

- Aligning people with results – conduct a comprehensive staff capacity review as a baseline for developing the annual Learning and Development Plans and ensure funding is available for required trainings. The CO should map comprehensively the skills required to deliver the ‘upstream’ model and identify gaps for further internal capacity building or for outsourcing to external partners those capacity areas which are not feasible to enhance or address internally.
- Review the current roles and responsibilities among the PME function and ECD outcome area vis-à-vis alignment with Programme planning documents and delivery capacity for the intended results. Consider adding resources and capacity through use of interns, UNVs, TA and by using existing Long-Term Agreements available at UNICEF for methodological support and quality assuring support for research, surveys and studies.
- Ensure that cost-effectiveness is a key consideration in all implementation, procurement of services and goods and that the CO has capacity (either internally or via external services) to conduct basic cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis.

04. Improved approaches to the Country Programme Evaluation with a view to measure results for children

- Institute a synchronized planning process for the forthcoming MTR and CPE to maximize learning, utility, complementarity and cost-efficiency. Establish a document repository for key planning and programme documents and other supporting material which will be required by the forthcoming exercises.
• Explore possible synergies with the UNICEF CPE and the UNSDF evaluation which should co-inside timing wise
• Enhance the synergies among evaluations, research and studies vis-à-vis the CPE by aligning TORs with the CP results to extent possible and increasing the scope

The forthcoming MTR focus should include, but not be limited to, the following:

• Review of the programme funding situation to determine whether re-programming, re-staffing, down-scaling or up-scaling needs to take place for the remainder of the Programme cycle in the overall context of ensuring cost-effectiveness in Programme delivery
• Comprehensive, external assessment (or validation of the internal assessment if such an assessment is available) of the zonal offices to determine the cost-effectiveness and value for money for all outcome areas; whether their strategic importance has changed vis-à-vis funding or programming priorities; whether the zonal office roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear vis-à-vis convergent programming and outcome areas and whether the human resources (qualifications, skills and experience) available in the zonal offices are optimal for implementing the remainder of the CP

VI. Lessons

➢ An adaptive and flexible Theory of Change is essential in an implementation context where funding is not secured and external factors, such a political instability, has a direct impact on programming. However, looseness in causal pathways and indicators reduce the overall evaluability of the Programme and makes it difficult to measure UNICEF’s contribution to achieving outcomes.
➢ The timing of the evaluability assessment for Sri Lanka was optimal. After the first full year of implementation (which happened to include political turmoil with implications to UNICEF programming) there are initial wins and set-backs with respect to policy level work thus setting the pace and direction for the forthcoming years. The first year also ‘tests’ the robustness of the results framework and the revision of the same is easier based on the occurred changes. However, the review of the results framework could have taken place earlier, to highlight the need of establishing baselines for those which were left to ‘TBD’ state during design.
➢ The SLCO and RO supported the development of the ‘Review of National Evaluation Systems and Capacities for Evaluating Progress towards the SDGs’ as well spearheaded the National Evaluation Policy development and approval. However, the current CP lacks resources to capitalize on these achievements and move forward in the operationalization of the National Evaluation Policy and creating linkages to SDG monitoring and evaluation, which can be considered a missed opportunity.
➢ The SLCO has a very strong presence in the UNSDF Driver Groups and it has been actively engaged even with limited staff capacity, contributing to the improved UN coordination and coherence. Engagement has also positively fueled advances in the areas of nutrition and social policy. Close
engagement has included joint resource mobilization initiatives which is increasingly important in the current donor scene for Sri Lanka.
### Annex I. Evaluability matrix

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Evaluability assessment objectives</th>
<th>Specific inquiry areas/key questions</th>
<th>Data collection method/approach</th>
<th>Verification/data sources</th>
<th>Additional learning questions&lt;sup&gt;19&lt;/sup&gt;:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. To assess the clarity of objectives, alignment, logic and coherence of each of the five program components of the country programme including its Theory of Change</td>
<td>1a. How relevant is the CP in relation to national development plans of the country and UNDSF and how well is it aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan goals? 1b. Are the components of the CP clearly relevant to the needs of the target group, as identified by any form of situation analysis, baseline study, or other evidence and argument? 1c. Are the intended beneficiary groups with an equity focus clearly and correctly identified (vis-à-vis available poverty profiling and evidence)? 1d. Is the Theory of Change for the programme components adequately described, logically connected to the overall goal of the programme (to increase cognitive capital) and is there clarity of logic across the results levels?</td>
<td>1a-1f. Document review and in-depth interviews with CP staff (programme leads, PME, senior management), UNCT representative(s) and line ministry representatives 1b. Document review and corroborating evidence 1c &amp; 1d &amp;1e Review of CPAP and CPD results framework and Theory of Change workshop with CO staff</td>
<td>1a-1g. CPD 2018-2022, CPAP, Strategy notes, UNDSF 2018-2022, Vision 2025, Peace Building Priority Plan 2016), Public Investment Programme 2017-2020 1b. SiTAN 2017 (Child Rights and Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka) and most recent poverty estimates</td>
<td>Does the CP Theory of Change adequately reflect the shift to systems strengthening and technical assistance? Is the ‘business model’ viable and innovative? Is the Theory of Change innovative, flexible and responsive to external factors, (such as political instability)? Are the programme components designed in a convergent manner at outcome and output level?</td>
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<sup>19</sup> The additional learning questions are formulated as secondary inquiry areas to stimulate evaluative thinking within the Country Office and to contextualize the analysis around the key inquiry areas.
1e. To what extent has RBM principles applied to the CP development – e.g. are results, indicators and activities measurable? (to go in the results framework part)
1f. To what extend are cross-cutting priorities (i.e. Gender, Disability and DRR) and equity integrated and measurable against clear targets?
1g. How well have key assumptions, risks and mitigation strategies been specified? Have assumptions about the role of partners, government and UNICEF been made explicit and are they realistic?

2. To assess the adequacy and validity of the indicators, tools and systems for monitoring, measuring and verifying results

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<th>2a. Are indicators in place? Have the indicators been defined (e.g. numerators and denominators) with clearly understood standards?</th>
<th>2b. Have the baselines been established and target values</th>
<th>2a-2d. Document and data(^{20}) review and in-depth individual and group interviews with CP staff (PME, outcome leads, senior management), ROSA advisers,</th>
<th>2a-2d. CPD 2018-2022 with CEP, CPAP, Strategy notes, UNSDF M&amp;E framework, Rolling Research Agenda</th>
<th>What are the key challenges for data quality and consistency (internal, GoSL and collaborative data efforts?)</th>
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\(^{20}\) Key data sources for monitoring, measuring and verifying CP results include, but are not limited to; Department of Census and Statistics 2012/13 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES); the 2012 Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medicine (MoHIM) Annual Bulletin; the 2013 MoHIM Family Health Bureau (FHB) Report; the 2013 UNFPA/UNICEF National Youth Survey (NYS); the 2014 MDG report; the 2014 National Human Development Report (NHDR), 2015 World Bank Country Diagnostic (SCD), National Census of Early Childhood Development Centers in Sri Lanka (2016), Demographic and Health Survey 2016 (Published in 2017)
<p>| 3. To assess the adequacy of resources to meet the expected results | 3a. Are resources aligned with the results? 3b. Are the resources (human and financial) adequate and well sequenced/structured to fund the outcome areas? Are data and systems in place (such as unit costs or costing models) to allow UNICEF to assess the 3b-3c. Review of COAR 2018, RWPB, budget allocations | 3a. Review of the staffing, planned and materialized budgets (RR/OR) as well as expenditure thus far 3b-3c. Review of COAR 2018, RWPB, budget allocations | 3a-3c. CPD 2018-2022 with CEP, CPAP, COAR 2018, Strategy notes, Resource Mobilization Strategy | Does the GoSL have the required resources (financial and human) to meet the UNICEF expectations for counterpart resourcing? Does UNICEF have the capacity to support the |</p>
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<th>4. To provide guidance on approaches to the Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) with a view to measure results for children</th>
<th>adequacy of resources to achieve intended results? 3c. Are the budgets made available for the items in the Costed Evaluation Plan?</th>
<th>4a-4g. In-depth interviews with the CO Outcome leads and teams, PME staff, ROSA Programme &amp; Planning and Evaluation Advisors, GoSL representatives</th>
<th>4a-4g. CPD 2018-2022 with CEP, CPAP, COAR 2018, Strategy notes,</th>
<th>UNSDF M&amp;E efforts?</th>
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<td>4a. What should be the purpose, objectives &amp; scope of the CPE? 4b. How should the CPE be designed and what methodologies should be adopted? 4c. How might the utility of CPE be enhanced? How can the learning from the CPEs maximized and incorporated in the country learning and knowledge management strategy? 4d. What evidence work should the programme consider undertaking to complement/feed into the country programme evaluation? 4f. With the MTR planned for 2020 what should the CO emphasize in this exercise? 4g. How does the CPE link to the various research initiatives and the Costed Evaluation Plan items? Are all planned evaluations still</td>
<td>4a-4g. CPD 2018-2022 with CEP, CPAP, COAR 2018, Strategy notes,</td>
<td>What is the plan for absent baselines - Can some of the Rolling Research Agenda items be formulated specifically to provide baseline and end-line data for measuring CP results? What are the GOSL data gaps and data priorities vis-à-vis monitoring the progress against the SDGs? How is the UNCT (and therein SLCO) responding to these gaps?</td>
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Annex II. Comments regarding the Results Structure

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Outcome and output area</th>
<th>Comments regarding statement articulation, baseline, target, MoVs 21</th>
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| **Outcome 1 Early childhood**  
By 2022, children under 5 in targeted areas benefit from improved access to quality healthcare and nutrition, protection and development opportunities in their home, care and preschool environments. | Stunting - Revise/update stunting baseline and target (moderate and severe) as per DHS 2016, consider the long-term stagnant rate as well as aligning with the GoSL Vision 2025 target. Also align indicator in CPAP and PSN (currently different wording). Residential care – CPAP has 20% reduction, PSN 15% reduction? Participation rate in organized learning – clarify % or per centage point increase |
| **Output 1**  
By 2022, the Health and Nutrition service delivery systems provide quality healthcare, WASH and nutrition interventions for pregnant women and children under 5 from the most vulnerable families | Consider revising Output statement to be more specific, measurable and attributable to UNICEF interventions – currently this has a broad focus with no limits to scope. Also the focus of the output is on service delivery whereas the implementation focus is on improving HIMS and nutrition behaviours and drivers. Consider revising the MoV for quality healthcare through POQC1 – currently the MoV not measuring quality at all. Finally – (i) the GoSL is moving towards digitalised monitoring systems and hence the 25 districts is not a realistic target; (ii) the PI on capacitating frontline health workers to ‘deliver safe water’ is not clear - nor is the MoV for the same. The PSN and CPAP have very different PIs and wording? |
| **Output 2**  
By 2022, a coordinated child protection system, including alternative care system, prevents and responds to violence, abuse and neglect of children in home, care and preschool environments. | As above - Consider revising Output statement to be more specific , measurable and attributable to UNICEF interventions, current articulation is not fully aligned with outcome and partially exceeds it. Scoring for most form of violence data lacks clarity - Score 3 (target) describes standards whilst score 4 is on data being collected. In all cases the VAC data should be available and public for the system to be able to prevent and respond. The # districts that implement local protocol seems disconnected from work planning and is also un-funded - consider if this is a priority to keep? |
| **Output 3**  
By 2022, national and sub-national government authorities enable comprehensive and developmentally appropriate early learning and school readiness | The complex scoring system for ‘Quality of teaching and learning environment for early learning ’would require a comprehensive progress review as a MoV – or specify who will conduct the current MoV as it stands very vague currently |

21 These comments reflect the staff members’ comments as well as the comments raised by the consultant.
### Outcome 2 Middle childhood

**By 2022, girls and boys aged 5-9, especially the most deprived, benefit from healthy, nurturing, protective environments and live free from violence.**

Consider consolidating the outcome 1 and 2 stunting indicator – now looking at proportion of under five stunting, and at 5 years and 9 years.

The ‘children 5-14 years who have experienced violent disciplinary practices’ indicator BL is currently TBD – rework the indicator or carry out the BL survey asap.

### Output 1

**By 2022, the Health and Nutrition service delivery systems provide quality healthcare, WASH and nutrition interventions for girls and boys aged 5-9, especially the most deprived.**

Consider aligning the ‘Proportion of schools implementing health, nutrition and WASH promotion school programmes’ indicator with the Education Sector Development Plan 2018-2025 indicator on the same and clarify ow is the BL established?

Consider the indicator on training frontline health workers and primary schools – is this what the CP will deliver? With national focus, that is a huge number of trainings. It is also an unfunded activity currently. Since the training would be supported by UNICEF the MoV should also have an internal element.

### Output 2

**By 2022, children and families have capacity to prevent violence and abuse in home and school settings.**

Revise ‘children and families have increased capacity to prevent...’

Clarify the MoV for the ‘functioning national, multi-sectoral multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism’

% of adults knowing and supporting laws on corporal punishment and child marriage – rework the indicators or carry out the BL survey asap.

Clarify the indicators and its scope for ‘parenting programmes implemented’ and life skills programmes – currently not measurable, attributable or clear. Also consider clarifying the MoVs.

### Output 3

**By 2022, the education system provides holistic and child-centred learning and development in primary schools.**

Consider revising – holistic and child-centred is difficult to measure – not standardized. Reduce the scope in the output statement and if possible, include improved learning outcomes as the foreseen activities’ main impact lies on improved learning.

What is the planned school survey as an MoV? What about the planned multi-level pedagogy evaluation as an MoV?

‘National classroom assessment system in primary schools’ and ‘Quality of national systems for school leadership’ indicators – is there room to aligned with the Education Sector Development Plan indicator on the same?

### Outcome 3 Adolescence

**By 2022, adolescent boys and girls, especially the most deprived, live free from violence, have capability to reach their full potential and contribute to a cohesive and resilient society.**

Reconsider the teenage pregnancy indicator as it is not currently owned by any outcome or programmatic approach and not supported by any direct intervention or strategy.

The length of legal trail in child related cases indicator does not have an UNICEF equivalent/standard – is the target achievable with the current planned (and funded) interventions and GoSL CP systems strengthening effectiveness?

Check the MoV for the indicator ‘Net enrolment rates in secondary education for children’ and whether the target can be aligned with the MoE target for 2023 (see Education Sector Development Plan).
<p>| Output 1 | By 2022, the health and nutrition service delivery systems provide quality healthcare, nutrition and WASH interventions for adolescent girls and boys, especially the most deprived | Consider revising: ...provide improved or adolescent sensitive healthcare, nutrition and WASH interventions ... The indicator ‘Number of tertiary care health facilities that provide adolescent sensitive services’ requires clarification for relevance and content – it is currently not aligned with the strategies or interventions described in the PSN or RWP. There is also no PI for nutrition and there is no specific focus on nutrition for adolescents in the PSN or RWP. For the MHM in secondary schools - indicator revise the MoV – according to the IMEP there will be a baseline study for 5 provinces and the CEP does not list the Evaluation on School Health Programme as a planned evaluation |
| Output 2 | By 2022, the justice for children mechanisms offer timely, quality and comprehensive justice services for all adolescent girls and boys, including the most deprived | The two PIs are not particularly targeted to adolescents Which ‘survey’ is planned as MoV? |
| Output 3 | The education system is strengthened to promote peace, reconciliation and resilience among adolescent girls and boys | Consider aligning the PIs with the Education Sector Development Plan indicators on the topic Consider if the PI ‘Extent to which community engagement supports the mainstreaming of skills development within the national system’ could be further standardized/clarified, as the indicator and scoring is very complex Clarify the MoVs – e.g. ‘document’, ‘survey’ and their relevance to the indicator |
| <strong>Outcome 4 Social Policy and Child Rights Monitoring</strong> | <strong>By 2022, children and adolescents in Sri Lanka, including the most deprived, have their human rights protected and benefit from effective child-sensitive social protection system</strong> | The two outcome indicators are increase in the number of children covered by social protection programmes and increased per capita spending on education and health – related to the former, the bottlenecks in targeting, access and quality of social protection schemes are not adequately identified in the PSN to assume that the coverage is the main issue i.e. number increase might not be the best way to measure progress. Further under output 4 there is a similar indicator on the number of children covered by cash transfer programmes. |
| Output 2 | Government M&amp;E and information management system progressively generate and use evidence to address the situation of children in Sri Lanka | The output statement is essentially too broad to be measurable and diverts the causal pathway from effective child-sensitive social protection systems. Consider reducing the scope to cover either improved SDG monitoring and evaluation capacity or limiting the scope to ‘increased evaluation capacity for more effective social protection service delivery’ or similar. If kept, increase the ambition from the target of ‘National Evaluation Policy available’ to the next level |
| Output 3 | Social sector ministries and sub-national governments have the capacity to develop and implement child-responsive budgets | Revise ...improved capacity... Consider updating the baseline and target for the government spending on health &amp; education (currently 2015 BL) further – not aligned with the outcome indicator on increased per capita spending on health and education |
| Output 4 | The Government has the capacity to provide efficient and effective social protection services to most deprived girls and boys | Revise ...improved capacity... Establish BL and target for # of children covered by cash transfer programmes asap Consider whether the scope is achievable for all social protection programmes to include emergency prevention, preparedness, and response |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Outcome 5 (outputs 1-4)</strong></th>
<th>Sri Lanka Country Programme is effectively and efficiently designed, coordinated, managed and supported to meet quality programming standards in achieving results for children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yearly perception and awareness surveys are not conducted – revise the indicator to monitor the performance accurately &amp; effectively (e.g. using KPIs) Confirmed that (EWEA) status report indicator and target is valid Revise the KM Strategy indicator to reflect the current situation (KM Strategy not developed as of end-March 2019). Revise the current PI ‘Number of businesses contributing core assets’ reformulate to ‘supporters engaged in digital platforms – currently PI, BL, target and MoV are not corresponding’</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Annex III. Protocols for the semi-structured interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives/Questions</th>
<th>Interviewee category</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CO Management</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Clarity of objectives, alignment, logic and coherence of each of the five program components of the Country Programme including its Theory of Change</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How relevant is the CP in relation to development plans of the country? Are there programming elements that are more relevant/aligned than others?</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the Country Programme aligned with UNICEF Global Strategic Plan?</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is UNICEF contributing to the UNSDF M&amp;E Framework?</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is UNICEF generating data and evidence to fill data gaps vis-à-vis SDG monitoring? On what indicators UNICEF is leading?</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there demand from the GoSL for the UNICEF supported evaluations, research and evidence? Are they policy relevant in a national context or are they mainly informing UNICEF’s own programming?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the assumptions regarding collaboration with Government and partners realistic?</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the Theory of Change flexible and responsive to external factors, (such as political instability)?*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome specific Questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is the outcome area and planned activities clearly relevant to the needs of the target group? Have the target groups been identified?</td>
<td>x</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What are the main issues emerging in the interpretation of the outcome ToC in terms of its clarity and translation into implementation?
- Are the key assumptions, risks and mitigation strategies noted accurately in the strategy notes and are there additional risks or challenges?
- What are the main challenges relating to convergent, multi-sectoral programming?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators, tools and systems for monitoring, measuring and verifying results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the main challenges relating to the current results structure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there data gaps and is there a plan to fill them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the M&amp;E system apt to capture the systems strengthening and multi-sectoral results measurement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the CO have adequate capacity to deliver the M&amp;E architecture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there alternative and innovative measuring and verifications means (e.g. qualitative) for the CO results?*</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the key challenges for data (monitoring, survey data, administrative data) quality, periodicity and consistency in Sri Lanka?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome specific Questions</th>
<th>CO Management</th>
<th>CO Sections/Outcome leads/</th>
<th>PME Section</th>
<th>RO</th>
<th>Government Counterparts</th>
<th>Other Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the main challenges relating to the outcome-specific results structure? (logic, indicators, targets, baselines, data quality, periodicity, monitoring &amp; reporting capacity of Co section and partners?)</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are the outcome-specific result structures reflective of the cross-cutting themes (Gender, DRR, Disability)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there any monitoring mechanisms or indicators that are producing data or</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adequacy of resources to meet the expected results</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are the human resources adequate for achieving the intended results? Are there any staffing challenges with respect to having the right capacity to deliver results?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are the financial resources (planned – materialized) adequate to achieve the intended results?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>If the planned funding scenario (OR) does not materialize does the management have an operational contingency plan?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does UNICEF have adequate capacity to support the UNSDF M&amp;E efforts?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the Government have adequate resources (human and financial) to fulfill its ‘counterpart resourcing role’?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<th>Outcome specific Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the financial resources (planned – materialized) adequate to achieve the intended results? What is the current status of the funding gap? What is the funding scenario vis-à-vis disbursed, committed and in-proposals funds?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the human resources adequate for achieving the intended results? Are there any staffing challenges with respect to having the right capacity to deliver results?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the budgets for the Costed Evaluation Plan items committed/available?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Guidance on approaches to the Country Programme Evaluation (CPE)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What should be the purpose, objectives &amp; scope of the CPE?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How can the utilization focus of the CPE be increased?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>With the MTR planned for 2020 what should the CO emphasize in this exercise?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What evidence work should the CO consider undertaking to complement/feed into the CPE? Is the CO linking various research initiatives and the Costed Evaluation Plan items to the planned CPE?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there any evaluations or research planned by the GoSL or partners which would be complimentary to the Country Programme Evaluation or other evaluative efforts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome specific Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all planned evaluations (CEP) – still - relevant and can their scope be improved for enhanced synergy and complementarity with the CPE?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex IV. Note on the Country Programme Evaluation approaches
Annex V. List of people interviewed

SLCO:
Representative; Tim Sutton
Deputy Representative; Paula Bulancea also skype call 5.2.2019

Outcome leads and respective teams during SL field mission
Social Policy; Louise Daniels & Sajith De Mel
Education; Rasika Somaweera (ECD) & Yashinka Jayasinghe (Multi-level pedagogy), Luxmy Sureshkumar
Child Protection and Youth Empowerment; Ramiz Behbudov & Hemamal Jayawardena, Inoka Bandaragamame
Child Survival and Development; Safina Abdulloeva & Dhammica Rowel
PME team
Shanek Fernando (skype call 5.2.2019 and 21.2.2019)
Lara Perera (skype 21.2.2019)
Scalina Rattwatte
Communications; Jeremy Sprigge
Operations; Agharazi Dadashev & Ruthie Pelpola
Provincial/zonal offices – Refinceyaa Patterson Batticaloa ZO
DRR; Watsala Jayamama

ROSA (to be updated):
Regional Evaluation Adviser; Samuel Bickel (skype call 18.2.2019)
Regional Programme and Planning Adviser; Inoussa Kabore (skype if required)
Regional Data Specialist; Daniel Reijer (during SL field mission)
Regional Education Adviser; Urmila Sarkar (skype if required)
Regional Social Policy Adviser; Abdul Alim (skype if required)
Regional Nutrition Adviser; Harriet Torlesse (skype if required)
Regional Gender Adviser; Sheeba Harma (skype if required)

National and sub-national GoSL:
Ministry of Health; Dr Lilani Rajapaksa, Director National STD/AIDS Control Program Sri Lanka
Ministry of Education; Dr. Madura Wehella, Additional Secretary Planning and Policy with K.S.A.D.H. Wickramasingha, ADE, Guidance and Counselling)
S. Muralilharan
R.M.K. De Silva, Director CC
Y.M Gunasinghe, DDE, Primary
G.S.G.W. Kumana, Assistant Lecturer
K.C. Gunasekara, Assistant Lecturer

Ministry of Women and Child Affairs – Department of Probation and Child Care Services; Mrs. P. Chandima Sigera, Probation Commissioner

**National Nutrition Secretariat**

**Other:**

Resident Coordinator’s Office; Gulana Huseynova
Annex VI. Key references and documents

**Country Programme Documentation:**


Programme Strategy Notes (Early Childhood, Middle Childhood, Adolescence, Social Policy and Child Right Monitoring and Programme Effectiveness) and Programme Strategy Note Overview CPMP, AMP 2019


COAR 2016, 2017 & COAR 2018

IMEP 2018-2019, MYWP


SiTAN 2016 (finalized in 2017)

**UNICEF Global documentation**

UNICEF Evaluation Policy 2018


**Other documentation:**


## Annex VII. Work Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evalability Phase</th>
<th>Activity completed by</th>
<th>Week 6 8th Feb</th>
<th>Week 7 15th Feb</th>
<th>Week 8 22nd Feb</th>
<th>Week 9 1st Mar</th>
<th>Week 10 8th Mar</th>
<th>Week 11 15th Mar</th>
<th>Week 12 22nd Mar</th>
<th>Week 13 29th Mar</th>
<th>Week 14 5th April</th>
<th>Week 15 12th April</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inception Phase</strong></td>
<td>Initial Document review</td>
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<td>Inception calls with CO and ROSA</td>
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<td>First draft of the EA report shared with the CO and PPT on preliminary findings</td>
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<td>Second draft of the EA report shared with CO and ROSA</td>
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Annex VIII. Terms of Reference for the Evaluability Assessment