

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

1. INTRODUCTION

UNICEF works to promote and protect the rights and wellbeing of children and women in Afghanistan. In September 2014, UNICEF's Executive Board approved the [Afghanistan Country Programme \(ACP\) 2015-2019](#) to support the Government of Afghanistan in realizing the rights of children and women. The five-year programme comprises of six convergent programme areas. A Country Programme Action Plan was subsequently signed in November 2014 with the Government of Afghanistan. In 2017, a mid-term review of the programme was conducted that assessed mid-term progress in collaboration with key stakeholders and formulated strategic recommendations to revise the programme.

The revised UNICEF Evaluation Policy issued in 2018 requires country programmes to undergo a Country Programme Evaluation. Given that a new Afghanistan Country Programme Document (CPD) is planned to be developed during 2020-2021, it is an opportune moment to identify critical lessons from the current programme to inform the design of the next CPD; as well as conduct an independent assessment of progress towards strategic commitments and performance in light of the changing context of Afghanistan. Therefore, an evaluation of the ACP 2015-2019 is commissioned with a focus on the strategic positioning of UNICEF and its Country Programme in specific areas of interest, and subsequently the evaluation is titled the Strategic Positioning Evaluation (SPE). The overall aim of the SPE is to assess how well the ACP—in terms of strategies, approaches and implementation—has contributed to the achievement of UNICEF's strategic goals and mandate as well as strategically positioned UNICEF within the development/humanitarian system and among national partners in Afghanistan. This means looking beyond programmatic outcomes and assessing UNICEF's ability to develop and implement programme strategies that are most appropriate in the country context to advance strategic goals and its mandate.

2. THE AFGHANISTAN COUNTRY PROGRAMME AND PROGRAMMING CONTEXT

2.1. Afghanistan Country Programme

The Afghanistan Country Programme of Cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and UNICEF was approved to run from 2015 until 2019 and further extended to 2021. It contains six planned outcome-level results, which support broader planned outcomes in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Afghanistan 2015-2019. These six outcomes are in the areas of: Child Protection; Basic Education; Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health; Nutrition; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; and Social Inclusion. The [Country Programme Action Plan](#) includes the initial results framework per Outcome. The programme was planned to be implemented mainly through development approaches with concurrent emergency interventions.

The ACP aims to focus on the most-deprived provinces and areas, mostly in South, South East and Western regions in order to accelerate the access of children and women to basic services and bring efforts to scale. At a national level, the country programme leverages the catalytic role of UNICEF to make sustainable changes in systems, policy, and programme implementation, addressing root causes of rights violations. The programme supports nationwide access to high-priority interventions such as routine immunization, polio eradication, provision of teaching-learning materials, and vitamin A supplementation. In the Northern Region the programme aims to reduce vulnerability through a new focus on social protection and increased prioritization of children's issues in local planning. The programme design is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the

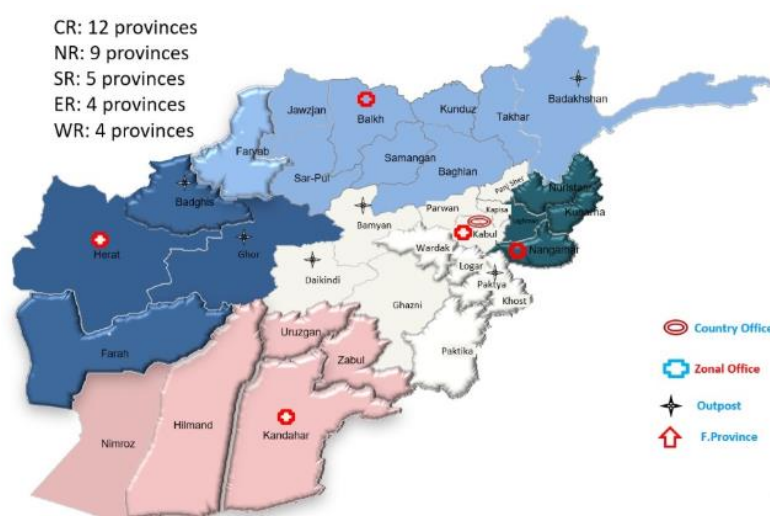
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.

In 2017, a participatory [mid-term review \(MTR\) of the country programme](#) was conducted in view of significant changes to the programming context including changes in the situation of children in Afghanistan, impact of increasing conflict and return of families from other countries among others, as measured by newly available data. The MTR process included a consolidation and simplification of the results structure and an alignment with the Afghanistan national Peace Development Framework, ministry strategies and plans, and the Sustainable Development Goals. While the six programme outcomes were maintained, four headline results were identified—1) Eradicate polio 2) Increase immunization coverage through strengthened routine vaccinations 3) Decrease the number and percentage of girls out of school at every age 4) Prevent all forms of malnutrition—on which the Country Programme would deliver at scale and under all circumstances. This approach, focusing on four headline results, was replaced in 2019 by an integrated programming approach.

UNICEF Afghanistan currently has field presence, and operates via a decentralized structure, through its 5 zonal offices and 6 outposts.¹ Currently, among the 393 staff of UNICEF ACO, 165 work in zonal offices while 288 in ACO's national office in Kabul.



Partners of the country program include government at national and sub-national levels, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and other civil society, bilateral aid missions, other UN agencies, and media partners. Partner ministries include: Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Ministry of Justice, the Central Statistics Organization—now National Statistics and Information Agency (NSIA)—, and the Civil Registration Organization (Ministry of Interior). See annex 1, for a stakeholder map of the country office.

¹ Zonal offices are located in Herat (West Region), Jalalabad (East Region), Mazar (North Region), Kandahar (South Region) and Kabul (Central Region). Outposts are located in Ghor, Badghis, Daykundi, Bamyan, Badakhshan and Paktya. The number of zonal offices was the same at the start of the programme in 2015, while the outposts were 8.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

2.2. Programming context

The ACP was designed to be a development programme in a fragile context. Since then, economic growth has been less robust than hoped and poverty rates remain high. Gender inequality remains a persistent and very serious issue across all sectors, but among children particularly in education and child marriage. Conflict and violence have further exposed women and girls to abuse, including gender-based violence.

A recently conducted risk analysis suggests that the complexity and scope of humanitarian situations affecting children have increased.² This includes emergencies with different direct and underlying causes and both acute and protracted emergency situations. Numerous areas of the country continue to experience natural disasters, and as a whole, Afghanistan is vulnerable to climate and environment-related risks (e.g. extreme weather conditions). In terms of Afghan children on the move, most children move with family members, but there are unaccompanied children traveling to and returning from Pakistan and Iran, and among the internally displaced.

There has been an increase in the number of families who are food insecure, especially in the winter and spring months. According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview and Plan for 2017, as well as assessments and reports by multiple organizations, there has been a deterioration in the security situation and an increase in the number of families and children negatively affected by one or more humanitarian situations. This includes an estimated 5.3 million children.

Afghanistan's communities are acutely vulnerable and highly exposed to a variety of hazards and stresses, with limited mitigation capacity or safety net. The country overall has low adaptive and coping capacity, with a weak institutional and policy environment to reduce and mitigate risk. It is the least peaceful country globally, with the highest level of conflict intensity. The impact on children of conflict caused by anti-government elements and the return of families and children from other countries are among factors that have increased the challenges to achieving substantial gains for children. Attempt to engage in peace talks have resulted in hopeful signs but also regular renewed fighting that has impeded humanitarian access to various provinces.

The UNICEF country programme contributed to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF³) for Afghanistan. The UNDAF is a collective effort of UN agencies, in areas of comparative advantage, aimed at achieving jointly identified priorities related to human rights and development. The current programme of cooperation between the UN and the government of Afghanistan covers the period 2018-2021 and is aligned with the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF), which is recognized as the single coordinating structure for development assistance in the country. The ANPDF serves to focus all development assistance to Afghanistan around the priorities of the GoIRA, ensuring that Afghanistan's development is Afghan owned and led.

3. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND INTENDED USE OF THE EVALUATION

² DevSmart Group (2020), Child centered, multi-hazard risk analysis.

³ Now referred to as United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

3.1. Evaluation purpose

The purpose of the SPE is threefold:

1. Inform programme design and support managerial decision-taking at country office level in preparation of the next the country programme. Recommendations are to be provided which must be specific enough that necessary actions can be determined in response.
2. Foster organizational learning about what works and does not work, especially in areas where the country programme has taken a leadership position, such as linking development with humanitarian action and gender integration, and within the fragile and conflict-affected setting like Afghanistan.
3. UNICEF has an accountability to design and implement programmes at a standard of excellence. The evaluation will support accountability by providing an independent assessment of how selected strategies and UNICEF's positioning have contributed to supporting the progressive realization of rights for all children, especially the most vulnerable.

3.2. Evaluation objectives

Towards the achievement of above purposes, the SPE is meant to:

1. Provide an independent assessment of the strategies and approaches adopted by the country programme with regards to specific areas of interest, and how well these have contributed to the achievement of UNICEF's strategic goals and mandate.
2. Provide an independent assessment of UNICEF's positioning within the development/humanitarian system and among national partners with regards to specific areas of interest. Strategic positioning refers to UNICEF's ability, through its country programme, to positively influence national agendas, leverage relationships, operate in areas of comparative strengths and take up a leadership role in order to advance its strategic goals and children's rights in the country.
3. Draw key lessons from the innovative and adaptive capacity of the Country Programme design and implementation and provide a set of forward-looking and actionable recommendations for the next programming cycle.

3.3. Scope of the evaluation

Thematic scope: the evaluation needs to take a cross-sectoral perspective with a focus on strategic areas of interest (evaluation issues). During the evaluation scoping the following evaluation issues were identified as being of strategic interest: 1) integration of and positioning for a strengthened humanitarian, development and peace nexus; 2) geographical coverage and access to achieve equitable results for children at scale; 3) optimization of implementation modalities and institutional capacity development; and, 4) gender integration into programming and policy advocacy work. Evidence and recommendations about these issues are of particular relevance for the strategic direction, management and positioning of the new country programme, and can complement the 2017 Midterm review and existing evaluation evidence.

The entirety of the UNICEF country programme within the context and development/humanitarian system of Afghanistan is the unit of analysis to examine the issues, although specific programmes or strategies may receive specific attention because of their value to learning and accounting for results. The focus of the evaluation is on UNICEF work in Afghanistan, not the work of the entire UN or specific agencies or missions.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

The evaluation issues are to be assessed with a focus on effectiveness, coherence, relevance, equity as well efficiency. The latter is primarily understood in terms of dynamic efficiency, i.e. the ability of the ACP to adapt its approaches, implementation and resource base to changing needs and context and learn based on evidence. It is not expected that the evaluation will examine efficiency from an 'economy' perspective nor implementation fidelity perspective. Assessing the impact and the sustainability of the ACP is not a focus of this strategic positioning evaluation.

Sectors: All sectors of the ACP are within the scope of the SPE. Programming sectors are an important but not the main unit of analysis, although specific sectors can be examined to address the evaluation issues and questions. As the evaluation is conceptualized as a SPE, an assessment of result delivery per programme sector/outcome is not envisioned but rather how different programme activities and results contribute to strategic goals and UNICEF's strategic position, in particular in the strategic areas of interest.

Timeframe: the principal focus is on the present country programme from 2015. Information pre-dating this period will be considered insofar as it illuminates issues in the current programme.

Geographic scope: The scope of the evaluation is national.

Participants: Because a critical purpose of the evaluation is to inform UNICEF's next country programme UNICEF stakeholders at country and regional level will be primarily involved in the design and governance of the evaluation. However, given that the evaluation has a focus on the strategic positioning of UNICEF and its Country Programme, the consultation of external stakeholders is critical to addressing the evaluation questions.

3.4. Intended use of the findings

In 2020/21, the ACP is in its last year of the implementation cycle. Parallel to the SPE, the Country Office is preparing for the next CP cycle, with several related on-going and recently completed exercises (such as a perception study, a situation analysis, a conflict analysis and a risk analysis). The evaluation issues have been identified because of their relevance for the design of the next ACP. By approaching the CP evaluation from a strategic positioning angle, the value addition of the UNICEF investment can be assessed through an evaluation of the strategic choices, partnerships and adaptive capacities employed by the Programme. The intended results of the evaluation will be available for the development and fine-tuning of the change strategies for the new CP, which will cover the period of 2022-2026.

4. EVALUATION ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

This section presents the key evaluation questions (KEQ) and indicate sub-questions of interest. The questions are organized by the four identified strategic evaluation issues. Annex 2 presents a brief background of each of the issues. The bidders are invited to refine the evaluation questions in their proposal based on literature review and contextual and sectoral expertise.

1. Integration of and positioning for a strengthened humanitarian, development and peace nexus

KEQ 1. To what extent is UNICEF well positioned to strengthen the coherence and complementarity between humanitarian action, development and peace building within its programming and operations?

- To what extent are UNICEF's development and humanitarian strategies, approaches and actions mutually reinforcing and/or coherent? How can coherence and synergies be improved?

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

- How well has risk-informed programming—including risk analysis, design, response and monitoring—evolved, strengthened and been systematically operationalized across programme sections and field offices? How can it be improved?
- To what extent is UNICEF well positioned through its strategies, operations, partnerships and advocacy to coherently and consistently strengthen the resilience of systems, communities and families to sustain the wellbeing of children? How can it be improved?
- To what extent have UNICEF's programmes and operations adapted to the changing conflict situation and become more conflict-sensitive, based on adequate and useful conflict analysis and informed in general by evidence on contextual risks? How can the programme's adaptive capacity to conflict be improved?

KEQ 2 To what extent is UNICEF strategically well positioned to enhance the humanitarian-development-peace nexus within the national development system to the advancement of children's rights in the country?

- To what extent is UNICEF operating in its areas of comparative strength and advantage to enhance the humanitarian-development-peace nexus considering the array of other actors?
- To what extent and how has UNICEF been able to influence the nexus approach through the coordination structures at national and subnational level, and take leadership in integrating humanitarian and development response to the benefit of vulnerable children and women?

2. Geographical coverage and access to achieve equitable results for children at scale

KEQ 3 To what extent have UNICEF's programme strategy and implementation coherently and consistently fostered multi-sectoral programming to respond holistically to children's needs at scale and protect the rights of children everywhere.

- To what extent has there been consistency between UNICEF ACO's strategic vision on multi-sectoral convergence, geographical coverage and scale, and the actual programming choices made on the ground? What factors explain deviations from the strategic vision in the CPD and actual programming; what were driving factors to adjust any programming approaches?
- To what extent did ACP implementation promote synergies, coherence and better position UNICEF to fulfil its core mandate on children's rights?
- How well has UNICEF been able to balance the dual goals of reducing inequity and increasing programme efficiency and effectiveness? How can UNICEF approach be improved to achieve the dual goals?

KEQ 4 How well have UNICEF's programme strategy and implementation effectively and coherently enhanced access to areas controlled by anti-government elements (AGEs)?

- How effective are current approaches used to accessing and programming in areas controlled by anti-government elements? How well are they institutionalized in ACO's programming and organization? How can they be improved?
- To what extent does UNICEF have the capacity and programmatic agility to respond to needs and risks in AGE controlled areas? How can it be improved?

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

- How well has UNICEF been able to engage, coordinate and partner with other UN and non-UN cooperating actors to enhance access to AGE controlled areas?

3. Optimization of implementation modalities and institutional capacity development

KEQ 5 How well is UNICEF positioned to ensure effective programme delivery through Government and NGOs partnerships?

- How have Government and NGO partnership strategies evolved during the programme period and been well adapted to changing context, needs and priorities set in national policy frameworks? To what extent is there a common partnership approach with clarity of purpose and rationale?
- How effective are UNICEF's partnerships with Government and NGOs for programme delivery? To what extent do they allow UNICEF to influence actual service delivery? How can effectiveness be improved?
- What are UNICEF's strengths and weaknesses as a partner as perceived by Government and NGO partners? What opportunities and threats to the partnerships exist?

KEQ 6 How well has UNICEF utilized extenders⁴ and third-party monitors (TPM) to enhance programme delivery?

- How has the use of extenders and TPM evolved during the programme period and has it become better adapted to changing context and needs? Is there clarity of purpose and rationale of their use?
- How effective are extenders and TPM to respectively contribute to quality programme delivery and quality monitoring? How can their capacity to deliver be further improved?
- How well have extender and TPM delivery processes, oversight and monitoring been designed and implemented to improve their effectiveness and flexible use?

KEQ 7 To what extent has UNICEF contributed to institutional strengthening and government capacity building in accordance to its comparative strengths?

- In which programming areas has UNICEF demonstrated a strong capacity for institutional strengthening and building sustainable government capacities? To what extent is there a clear strategy on institutional strengthening and government capacity building?
- Is UNICEF operating in its areas of comparative strength in terms of institutional strengthening considering the array of other actors? Is ACO an authoritative voice on capacity strengthening in public sector services?
- To what extent has the use of National Technical Assistants contributed to government capacity strengthening?⁵

⁴ A (field based) extender is a person employed by one of ACO's extender contractors (contracted under an approved Long-term Agreement) to undertake a defined set of duties (set in a Terms of Reference). Extenders enable ACO to deliver a programme in conflict areas and where UNICEF staff cannot gain access. They can also be hired for ad hoc projects where specialist skills and local knowledge are required at short notice. Source: UNICEF Afghanistan (2019) Office Instruction on Contracting for Extenders

⁵ ACO implements its programming, among others, through the secondment of National Technical Assistants (NTAs) to government partners.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

4. Gender integration into programming and policy advocacy work

KEQ 8 To what extent is gender increasingly being integrated in programme planning and practice based on evidence generated and lessons learned?

- How systematically is UNICEF investing in and mainstreaming gender-related evidence generation and knowledge management and using the evidence to guide programming? How can it be improved?
- How is the strengthening of gender at organization level been translated into more gender-responsive and transformative programming? What are early lessons learned? How can it be improved?

KEQ 9 How well is UNICEF leveraging its position in strategic partnerships to promote gender in evidence generation, policies and programming?

- To what extent has UNICEF been effective in promoting and building capacity among partners to produce gender data and undertake gender analysis?
- How well has UNICEF been able build and leverage strategic partnerships to increase its visibility as an organization that is committed to gender equality and collaboratively influence policies and programming related to gender inequality in Afghanistan? Is UNICEF operating in its areas of comparative strength and advantages considering the array of other actors?

5. METHODOLOGY

Bidders are required to present their best ideas as part of the technical proposal. The quality of the methodology section will, together with the quality of the proposed team and demonstrated understanding/experience with the Afghanistan context, determine whether a bidder is deemed technically qualified.

The different evaluation issues presented in the previous section cover dimensions that are strategic to the development of the next country programme. The bidders can propose an overarching conceptual framework or specific conceptual models to examine the different issues. Regardless of the conceptual lenses proposed, a clearly outlined evaluation matrix will need to be developed during inception that further refines the evaluation questions, proposes criteria that will be looked at to answer the questions (i.e. what matters to answer the question), and includes the information sources and methods used. The bidders need to include a preliminary evaluation matrix in their proposal.

The evaluation approach needs to take into account the purpose of the evaluation, in particular to inform the design of the next country programme. The way that the identified evaluation issues have been addressed in the country programme has been evolving as well as UNICEF's overall guidance on it. The evaluation needs go beyond describing this evolution. It needs to provide an assessment that can guide strategic choices going forward taking into account the complex context of Afghanistan.

Bidders should display the ability to identify, conceptualize, and manage a range of methods. The following is intended to offer useful information on actual or potential resources and limits:

1. Systematic document review will be a foundational method to apply. The evaluation team will need to review and systematically analyse both UNICEF and non-UNICEF documents that are relevant to the evaluation issues. Document review is not to be considered as a mere informative exercise during the inception phase but as a core method to contribute to answering the evaluation questions. The bidders need to demonstrate their expertise and capacity to efficiently and effectively map out, assess the relevance and systematically analyze a variety and large amount of documents. Use of such existing

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

secondary data is even more important during the current Covid-19 crisis because the potential for primary data collection is constrained. Document identification needs to take place during inception and will continue throughout the evaluation. Annex 3 presents some of the key documents to support the proposal formulation.

2. UNICEF can provide data from its administrative information systems that are used for planning, monitoring, reporting and performance management. These can be used to map and analyse achievement of results, implementation of activities, budget allocation and expenditures, partnerships and gender integration. These data can be particularly valuable to map out and analyse partnerships and use of extenders and TPMs across the programme period and programmes. Gender marking and tagging of outputs, activities and expenditure is also happening, which can help address the gender evaluation questions. The access, usefulness and comparability over time of such data needs to be assessed during the inception phase. Bidders need to foresee capacity to efficiently process and analyse such information. Expertise in geographical representation of results, activities or expenditures through appropriate software can add value. It strengthens the proposal if bidders can demonstrate understanding and previous experience with UNICEF administrative information systems. Annex 3 presents an overview of systems that can be used.
3. Primary data collection among key stakeholders and implementing partners via qualitative data collection methods such as key informant interviews is required. The preliminary stakeholder mapping in Annex 1 provides a first basis to propose such qualitative data collection methods. The mapping needs to be completed during inception. Given the travel constraints during the Covid-19 pandemic, the bidders need to have the capacity to efficiently implement remote qualitative data collection or/and work through national team members/partners. Because the evaluation questions emphasize learning from actual implementation and operational choices on the ground viz-a-viz strategy and vision, sufficient consultation among UNICEF field office staff need to be foreseen. Furthermore, given the focus on UNICEF's strategic positioning within the broader interviews with representatives of government partners and other development/humanitarian partners (UN and non-UN) are to be included.
4. In order to address evaluation questions 5 and 6 data collection with NGO/CSO partners, extenders and third-party monitors needs to be planned. Consultation of these stakeholders can also provide data for other evaluation questions, for example, related to gender integration and positioning (evaluation questions 8/9). The data collection can make use of qualitative techniques, but short remote/online surveys can also be considered. Access to sample frames needs to be assessed during inception.⁶ When surveys are proposed, the bidder needs to explain how it fits the evaluation matrix and what the focus can be. The bidder also needs to demonstrate experience and capacity to efficiently implement and process online/remote surveys and promote adequate response rates.
5. To address some evaluation questions the bidders can propose focusing on specific programmes and/or locations to gain an in-depth understanding of how and why strategies, approaches, actions or delivery modalities were operationalized. This can provide good practice learning that can inform broader strategy formulation for the next country programme.
6. It is not expected that primary data will be collected from end beneficiaries among community members. Any proposal to do this as part of the methodology must carefully justify why this is the case.

⁶ The number of partnerships established during the 2015-2019 programme period is 181. A list of partnership contact details can be provided. Lists of extenders can also be compiled. Third-party monitors are contracted through companies. Details of individual monitors can be obtained if required. Also, lists of National Technical Assistants can be compiled.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

7. Consultation with community influencers/representatives or/and community service providers needs to be foreseen in order to represent a local perspective of the relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency and equity of programme delivery. This perspective can be valuable to better understand, among others, how well the humanitarian, development and peace nexus is operationalized at local level across different programmes and contexts; how convergent programming and equitable access to services are experienced locally; how effective UNICEF's approaches are to reach areas controlled by anti-government elements at local level; how extenders and TPMs are perceived by local stakeholders; and, what can be learned from gender integration at local level. Sampling will be required for data collection at this level, a preliminary approach for which the bidder needs to present in the proposal. UNICEF can facilitate contacts. Bidders need to demonstrate their capacity to implement data collection among community representatives and service providers in an effective and timely manner in the context of Afghanistan. The Covid-19 pandemic creates extra challenges for such data collection. The bidders need to propose creative ways to collect the data under Covid-19 conditions, which constrain face-to-face data collection.
8. The methodology should be aware of and prepared to take advantage of the accumulated and in-process evidence generated through research, studies, and evaluations conducted within the UNICEF-Afghanistan programme of cooperation.⁷

The foregoing comments have mostly focused on data collection. Bidders should not just focus the methodology section of the technical proposal on data gathering. The methodology must also pay attention to evaluation design, tools to be used, and analytic approaches to be employed to make sense of the data. It is important that the evaluators integrate evaluative thinking throughout the evaluation. Mere descriptive analysis of trends and situation is not sufficient. The evaluation design needs to foresee evaluative judgments to be made.

Gender and equity are important dimensions to examine as part of this evaluation. They receive specific attention as part of evaluation issues 2 and 4. However, they should also be considered as cross-cutting across the other evaluation issues. For example, how partnerships are contributing to equity and inclusion; or, how

⁷ Of particular relevance are several ongoing or recently finished evidence-related projects.

- UNICEF ACO has contracted a Perception Study about the levels of awareness, understanding and support for child rights and UNICEF's reputation and mandate among key stakeholders at all levels. The study was in inception phase in August 2020.
- UNICEF ROSA has developed a draft conceptual framework in 2020 to understand the humanitarian-development nexus. A consultant has been contracted to apply the framework on case study countries, for which Afghanistan is considered. Therefore, depending on the timing, the evaluation team may be able to draw on this evidence.
- UNICEF ACO commissioned a conflict analysis to inform its engagement in Afghanistan. The study report was finalised in May 2020. It is an update of a 2017 conflict analysis as part of the Mid-Term Review of the 2015-2019 Country Programme. The conflict analysis addresses topics that are particularly relevant for the evaluation, such as, UNICEF's use of conflict analysis and sensitivity mechanisms, access to conflict affected areas, agility of UNICEF programming to account for different conflict realities and UNICEF's reliance on extenders in conflict affected areas.
- UNICEF ACO commissioned a child-centered, multi-hazard risk analysis. The study report was finalised in May 2020. It examines multiple dimensions of vulnerability; as well as environmental, conflict-related, socio-economic and biological hazards that Afghanistan experiences. In addition, it assesses the institutional capacity present in Afghanistan to manage risks and the implications for UNICEF's child rights programming in different sectors.
- As part of a global evaluation exercise, UNICEF ACO completed an Evaluation of UNICEF's Coverage and Quality in Complex Humanitarian Situations. The evaluation assessed UNICEF performance in achieving coverage and quality in complex humanitarian with the aim of improving UNICEF response to humanitarian crises in Afghanistan.
- UNICEF ACO commissioned an adolescent portfolio evaluation with a gender lens. The study report is expected to be finalised in September 2020. The evaluation is meant to help strengthen the focus on adolescents in Afghanistan in line with UNICEF's current corporate focus on the second decade of life of children, "Generation Unlimited".

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

gender is mainstreamed in the operational use of extenders and TPM to adequately access women and girls. Bidders should propose how gender and equity can be integrated across the evaluation.

Due to the limited time frame and Covid-19-related travel constraints no inception mission by international evaluation team members is foreseen. The bidder needs to propose how to organize the necessary consultations during inception remotely and/or via local partners. During inception at the minimum a kick-off call needs to be planned as well as consultation with key UNICEF stakeholders at national and regional level. Also, a meeting with the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) needs to be scheduled to present the evaluation design and inception report.

During the implementation and validation stages of the evaluation country visit(s) to Afghanistan can be planned by all international team members, but the evolving Covid-19 pandemic may constrain this in practice. The bidders are encouraged to present proposals on how data collection can take place without international travel. The budget for any international travel needs to be identifiable in the overall financial proposal.

Although contract payment will be based on deliverables and not on days of effort expended, it is still important that the anticipated level of effort be presented in the technical bid, either in the methodology section or in the team composition section. All named persons should show the expected level of effort—in person-days—to be invested by evaluation stage. Additional pools of effort by not-named persons [e.g. document analysis; statistical analysis] should also be included. The level of effort presentation in the technical proposal cannot contain any cost information like daily rate.

6. EVALUATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

	Period	Expected focus/Deliverables of the assignment	Other elements in the overall programme to be aware of or link to
1	Inception period: Month 1: 1 November – 30 November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further map out and assemble relevant documents for review and analysis. Start with document review. Review of availability and accessibility of administrative data. Refinement of stakeholder mapping. Refinement of evaluation questions and development of the methodology, including all tools to be used. Deliverable 1 drafted [Inception Report] Presentation to and acceptance of the approach by the supervisor(s) Contact with involved stakeholders; preparation for data gathering and analysis efforts Data collection may begin in conjunction with the inception effort; e.g. interviews with key informants can cover their contribution to the main content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) formed. First ERG meeting at the end of the inception period. UNICEF and other stakeholder are contacted to secure cooperation for the effort. Documentation and data are assembled by UNICEF for use by the evaluation team. Inception report requires external quality assurance
2	Field work, analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing document review and secondary data analysis. Primary data collection and analysis 	

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

	1 December – 30 January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit to Afghanistan by international team members, if possible. Presentation of preliminary findings for discussion and validation. 	
3	Draft final report and validation 1 February 2021 – 28 February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafting of final report. Recommendations fully developed and discussed with ERG Virtual meetings with those who will receive or utilize the deliverables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final report is quality assured by an expert external to the UNICEF evaluation manager Dissemination actions implemented.
4	Final report 31 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All deliverables completed by due date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final evaluation report is subject to GEROS quality rating Management response is prepared by Country office following the submission and approval of the final report

7. WORKING LOCATIONS

The base of work will be the premises of the consultant/agencies utilizing information acquired remotely. An extended mission or several visits by different team members is authorized for the team to work in Afghanistan. However, the feasibility and timing of such mission/visits depends on the ongoing Covid-19 situation. The bidders are encouraged to include local experts that can avoid international travel if needed.

If needed, UNICEF Afghanistan will facilitate accommodation, transport, office space and other logistical support for institutions' international consultants during in-country missions. The contracted institution will be responsible for availing their own computers for the assignment. All travel should be economy class.

8. DELIVERABLES

1. An inception report that presents the complete methodology approach to conducting the work, with all tools fully drafted. The inception report needs to contain a detailed and agreed evaluation matrix. All design issues under discussion to that point are to be answered, any revisions to the issues and questions, and issues of reference group role and supervisory quality assurance.
2. PowerPoint with preliminary findings for discussion and validation. The evaluation team will present the preliminary findings for validation among the ERG and other key stakeholders as required.
3. Draft Final Report with key findings, conclusions, preliminary recommendations and lessons. This report to include chapters based on the evaluation issues presented in the ToR. The report follows the outline provided in Annex 3. Deviations from this outline can be discussed but need to be agreed by UNICEF.
4. Final Report based on draft final report and revisions after feedback and quality assurance by the ERG and other reviewers.
5. PowerPoint: A visually compelling presentation to provide an evaluation brief for the key stakeholders.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

Other notes:

- The final report needs to include actionable recommendations that can be used to formulate concrete management response.⁸ The bidders can propose how actionable recommendations are developed and validated.
- Monitoring deliverables about work progress are not listed but will be periodically required.
- Page limits, if any, to be established during the inception period. In general, there will not be artificial limits, but the report should aim for conciseness, readability, and visual appeal.
- The format of the final deliverables will be decided in the inception period. A high value will be placed on products that communicate well with different audiences. Thus, infographics, PowerPoints, and other products may be fully integrated into the reports or may be proposed as complementary end products.

9. NORMS AND STANDARDS

The evaluation will abide by the following norms and standards:

- [United Nations Evaluation Group \(UNEG\) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System](#), 2016
- [UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis](#), 2015;
- UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, 2008;

These guidance documents will be part of the contract of the evaluator/team. The bidders should include ethical considerations of the evaluation work in their proposal.

The integration of gender equality and human rights in evaluation are an important norm as part of UNICEF evaluation practice. UNICEF evaluation practice follows UNEG guidance on integrating gender equality and human rights.

The final report is expected to meet [UNICEF-adapted UNEG Evaluation Reports Standards](#) as well as benchmarks used in UNICEF's Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS). Annex 3 provides an overview of the final report outline.

10. PROPOSED PAYMENT SCHEDULE

First payment:	20%, upon approval of the inception report
Second payment:	20%, upon acceptance of PowerPoint of preliminary findings for discussion and validation
Third Payment:	30%, upon receipt of draft version of final report
Fourth payment:	30%, upon acceptance of final report and accompanying PowerPoint

⁸ Recommendations need to be timebound and directed to a specific organization.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

11. EVALUATION MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Supervisor/Approving Authority: The ROSA Regional Evaluation Advisor, with support from the Multi-Country Evaluation Specialist, will supervise the assignment and approve the deliverables. In the event that on-site quality assurance is needed when the supervisor cannot be present, the QA role may be delegated to the Chief of Social Policy, Evaluation, Analytics and Research/Research and Evaluation Specialist of the Afghanistan Country Office or one of his immediate colleagues.

Evaluation Reference Group: An ERG will be created to support the consultants and the supervisors. Particular roles of the ERG will be to facilitate access to documentation and persons that must be involved, and to provide feedback on draft deliverables and other issues as required. A full TOR for the ERG members will be drafted.

12. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

This contract will be awarded to a single institution. Consortium arrangement are eligible to bid, but UNICEF will only sign a contract with the lead partner.

The team needs to have experience and be able to operate in the fragile and conflict affected context of Afghanistan. This includes the ability to travel to remote areas of Afghanistan for fieldwork. The inclusion of local experts/partner to facilitate this and add to contextual awareness is highly recommended.

This evaluation is of a strategic nature. The team leader and other senior team members need to have experience with this type of strategic evaluations, which findings are meant to support strategy formulation of the next UNICEF ACO country programme. Familiarity with the UNICEF institutional environment and work within the UN system is highly valuable.

Team Leader

A team leader must be named. She/he will direct all parts of the effort. The leader will be the person accountable in the organization's name to UNICEF. The leader will coordinate and supervise the work all teams or persons of the organization in their contributing roles. She/he will ensure the quality of the process, outputs, methodology and timely delivery of all products. The team leader will take direct responsibility for all deliverables being of satisfactory quality. The leader will ensure that the deliverables emerge in a timely fashion as a result of an in-depth analytic process as well as ongoing consultation with the organizers of the regional consultation and the steering committee.

The key qualifications of the Team Leader include:

- At least ten years of professional experience in evaluations/strategic analytic review exercises, with evidence of understanding global standards, theories, models and methods related to evaluations and research;
- Strong experience in evaluations/reviews of country programmes or corporate strategies/policies, including expertise in institutional change, strategy formulation, results-based management and programme planning cycles; having applied such experience in UNICEF or other UN organisations is desirable.
- Field experience of humanitarian response in complex high threat environments and conflict settings where access and security represent major challenges; recent work experience in Afghanistan is desirable;

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

- Advanced understanding of humanitarian principles, humanitarian space, humanitarian access, international humanitarian law, human rights law, the human rights-based approach to programming;
- Experience in integrating gender into evaluation and good understanding of gender issues;
- Previous work or consultancy experience with UNICEF (and UN systems) and understanding of UNICEF's mandate is desirable;
- Sectoral knowledge of UNICEF programme sectors: Child Protection, WASH, Nutrition, Health, Education (of a majority, if not all, sectors), as well as the Core Commitments to Children;
- Experience with interaction and data collection with different level of government counterparts and development partners
- Diplomatic and social engagement skills necessary for dealing with government and nongovernment representatives in a politically fragile context;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English required;
- Demonstrated team leader experience of complex, multi-programme evaluations, with multiple workstreams.

Other team members

The other named persons in the proposal will have experience and skills that complement the Team Leader. These complementary capacities should include at least one person each with expertise in the following subjects. Note that one team member can cover more than one subject. It is recommended to have at least one national team member based in Afghanistan.

Required

- Expertise in gender analysis/evaluation and gender programming. A gender specialist needs to be part of the team, who can lead on evaluation issue 4.
- Expertise in humanitarian evaluation and humanitarian response, with advanced understanding of accepted principles and standards for humanitarian action, and the international humanitarian system and coordination;
- Advanced understanding about the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCC);
- Expertise in linking humanitarian and development programming in fragile and conflict-affected settings, including risk informed programming in social sectors, risk analysis, emergency preparedness, and resilience building;
- Expertise in programming in conflict-affected areas, conflict analysis, conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding;
- Expertise in the analysis of partnerships and other implementation modalities, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings;
- While expertise in all sectors of UNICEF's country programme (health (incl. polio), nutrition, education, WASH, social protection, communication for development) is not required, it is desirable the at team members can demonstrate experience in as many sectors as possible;

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

- Strong qualitative research skills, including systematic document review; expertise in remote qualitative data collection is a plus;
- A work history in South Asia, with experience in Afghanistan a significant advantage;
- Adequate gender representation;
- At least some team members with fluency in Dari/ Pashto for data collection.

Significant advantages:

- Advanced understanding of UNICEF strategy and planning processes and the functioning of the UN system. Understanding of UNICEF administrative information systems is a plus;
- Development of attractive products to disseminate complex information via Infographics and other means;
- Expertise in the development and implementation of small-scale online surveys;
- Expertise in the geographical representation of results, activities and budgets across the programme period through appropriate GIS software;
- Knowledge of the social, economic, political and conflict context of Afghanistan.

Total team size:

There is no upper or lower limit. However, given the limited timeframe of the evaluation a relatively large team is desirable, depending on the expertise that can be covered by different team members. While the different evaluation issues are interlinked, they allow for some of the issues to be the focus of specific team members.

Coordination across team members will be important to ensure that data collection among key informants is integrated across evaluation issues.

Any changes to the team composition presented in the proposal and included in a potential contract would need to be discussed with and agreed by UNICEF.

Declaring prior work with UNICEF or with the UNICEF Afghanistan country programme. Institutions and individuals may have worked for UNICEF ACO in the past or with an implementing partner. All such affiliations must be declared within the proposal. UNICEF will review these declarations and judge the potential for conflict of interest. If a COI is presumed, the bidding institution will have a limited time to propose a substitute.

13. APPLICATION AND EVALUATION PROCESS

Each proposal will be assessed first on its technical merits and subsequently on its price. In making the final decision, UNICEF considers both technical and financial aspects. The bid review team first reviews the technical aspects of the offer, followed by review of the financial offers of the technically compliant vendors. The proposal obtaining the highest overall score after adding the scores for the technical and financial proposals together, that offers the best value for money will be recommended for award of the contract.

The Technical Proposal should include but not be limited to the following:

General Issues

The technical proposal should minimize repeating what is stated in the TOR and should emphasize the conceptual thinking and methods the bidder expects to utilise.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

There is no minimum or maximum length. If in doubt, ensure sufficient detail.

Bidders are requested to attach previous work samples along with the proposal.

Bidders may be asked to provide additional information.

Ensure that the level of effort [LOE] to be committed by the named team members in each phase is visible within the technical proposal. Cost data cannot be included within this technical proposal LOE discussion. That same LOE information with additional cost data should feature in the financial proposal.

Specific Reminders

Keep in mind that the following specific items are to be included, in addition to whatever other approaches and methods proposed:

1. A preliminary evaluation matrix (see section 5).
2. Presentation of a work plan in three phases: 1) Inception; 2) Implementation, including field data collection; and 3) Analysis and report preparation. The plan should be as realistic as possible.
3. Views on whether it is feasible/desirable to sample and analyze a portion of the country programme activities rather than the whole, if such an approach can reach valid conclusions of the evaluation issues.
4. An identification of the risks that may be actually or potentially present for the successful execution of this assignment, and the mitigation measures that are recommended for limiting their effect.

RATING CRITERIA for the TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

Technical criteria	Points to consider	Score
Company/Team profile & Experience	Demonstrated proof of producing high quality evaluations. **To be demonstrated by submitting 1-3 samples Experience with country programme or strategic evaluations.	10
	Ability and experience doing research and data collection in Afghanistan, including in remote areas.	5
Team composition and qualifications	Team Leader meets the qualifications and experience leading teams conducting country programme or strategic evaluations	10
	Other team members, per qualifications sought	5
	Team members experience (including research and data collection) in Afghanistan	5
Proposed methodology and approach	The overall approach is technically adequate for the assignment. The elements listed in section 5 have been properly considered in the design of the approach. The methodology advances beyond data gathering and discusses the analytic approach to arriving at findings. The evaluation approach facilitates strategic decision making about the next country programme.	15

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

	Risk identification and mitigation measures are suitable for the assignment.	
	The evaluation matrix reflects a good understanding of the evaluation issues (i.e questions and criteria are relevant and appropriate) and proposes relevant methods/data sources	5
	The proposed data collection strategy and workplan is appropriate for the context of Afghanistan and considers innovation/flexibility for conducting evaluation during Covid-19.	10
	The Level of Effort for the named persons and for the effort as whole is sufficient to deliver at quality and takes into account the proposed timeframe.	5
TOTAL SCORE	Maximum possible score	70
Assessment	Passing grade: >48 [i.e. 70% of the maximum possible score] Failing grade: <49	Pass Fail

The Financial Proposal should include but not be limited to the following:

Bidders are expected to submit a lump sum financial proposal to complete the entire assignment based on the terms of reference. The lump sum should be broken down to show the detail for the following:

- **Resource costs**
Daily rate multiplied by number of days
- **Any other costs (if any)**
Indicate nature and breakdown
- **Copy of the company registration (if relevant)**

Bidders are required to estimate travel costs in the Financial Proposal. The budget for any international travel needs to be identifiable in the overall financial proposal. Please note that i) travel costs shall be calculated based on economy class fare regardless of the length of travel and ii) costs for accommodation, meals and incidentals shall not exceed the applicable daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, as propagated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). Details can be found at <http://icsc.un.org>.

Cumulative Analysis will be used to evaluate and award proposals. The evaluation criteria associated with this TOR is split between technical and financial as follows:

70 % Technical
30 % Financial
<hr/> 100 % Total

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

Annex 1. Preliminary stakeholder map of the Afghanistan Country Programme (ACP)

Stakeholder	Role in ACP	Sector(s)	Responsibilities in the ACP
National level			
ACO Representative	Strategic leadership UNICEF representation Operational manager	All CP sectors/programmes, cross cutting and operational sections and units	The main governance body to oversee ACO programmes and operations
ACO Deputy Representative Chiefs of programmes Chiefs of cross cutting sections and units	Programme Management Pillar	Health Nutrition Polio Education Child protection WASH Communication advocacy and civic engagement Resource mobilization Planning and monitoring Communication for Development (C4D) Emergency Social Policy, Evaluation and Research Gender Adolescents Field operations Field offices Cluster coordinators	Overall technical guidance and oversight to development and emergency programmes and the consistency of technical standards, approaches, plans, results, monitoring and reporting; Promoting partnerships at the national level, encouraging donor relations at the sector level, Maintaining situational awareness of national and regional economic, social and political dynamics and trends affecting UNICEF programme implementation. Ensuring capacity building and learning of UNICEF programme staff and partners in programme policy and innovations for the successful implementation of UNICEF's core commitment to children
ACO Deputy Representative-Operations	Operation Pillar Note: security is led by security advisor who directly reports to Representative	Functional areas of supplies and logistics, administration, finance, human resources, ICT, construction oversight, and the Business Support Centre (BSC). Administrative and budgetary oversight is also provided to the security function.	The operations pillar acts in partnership with the Programme and Field Pillars. Contributing to and advising on programme planning, management and implementation where required. Providing financial and budgetary information, advice and assistance to all functions as required. Providing oversight and support to ensure compliance with policies and procedures.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

			<p>Managing operations relationships with other agencies and UNAMA.</p> <p>Managing the office's Business Operations Strategy (BOS) as per Headquarters guidance.</p> <p>Managing the office's internal and external audit processes and advising the office on control and oversight issues.</p> <p>Managing the office's Annual Risk Assessment (ARA) system and processes, such that all offices and categories of staff fully understand and have an input in the exercise, including the Staff Association</p> <p>Overseeing the office's ethics and financial disclosure processes, including ensuring that coverage includes categories of non-staff personnel such as extenders.</p> <p>Overseeing the fulfilment of UNICEF's duty of care obligations to staff and visitors concerning well-being, living standards and the provision of health care.</p> <p>Supporting the processing of operations transactions to facilitate the efficient implementation of programme activities.</p> <p>Transaction processing efficiency and effectiveness</p> <p>Ensuring that all section relevant Operations staff are fully aware of current Programme Criticality levels and the consequences of this for operations activity and programme delivery.</p>
Government Major line ministries, including Public Health, Education, Foreign Affairs, Economy, Women Affairs and Social Affairs	Strategic and implementing partner	Health, nutrition, education, WASH, social/child protection	Among the ministries and other government entities, some of the them play implementing partner role e.g. ministry of public health; some play strategic partner role e.g. ministry of education that carry the national education plan, GPE.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

UN Agencies (including UNAMA, WHO, UNFPA, UNHCR, WFP, UNDP) and UNCT	Implementing and strategic partners	Health, education, nutrition, social/child protection Cluster coordinators	Other UN agencies work with ACO as strategic partners and/or implementing partners. Also, they play advisory role in the form of clusters or working groups
International and national NGOs	Implementing partners Advisory role	Nutrition, education, WASH, social/child protection, emergency	NGOs mostly implement ACO programs in the field under direct partnership. Also, NGOs play an advisory role in the form of working groups, advisory groups and clusters
Donors	Funder	All programmatic sections and units	Funding programmes/ providing financial resources
Supra national level			
UNICEF Regional Office of South Asia	Technical assistance Oversight Quality assurance	All programmatic and operational sectors, including cross cutting sectors such as gender	Regional Office provides technical and programmatic advice, support and guidance. Regional Office facilitates knowledge sharing and learning across country offices. Regional Office conduct quality assurances, monitors and provides oversight over country office plans, operations, programmes and management.
UNICEF HQ	Guidance Oversight Policy setting & strategic leadership	All programmatic and operational sectors, including cross cutting sectors such as gender	HQ provides strategic and technical guidance to regional and country offices HQ develops policies, guidance, tools and systems to enable programme delivery HQ provides strategic leadership and overall direction to the regional and country office HQ ensures oversight of UNICEF's overall performance
Provincial/regional			
ACO Chief of Field Operations Chief of Field Offices	Management of field operations	All Field Office's level programmes and operations	Provide an effective interface with the programme, operations, and supplies sections to ensure effective programme delivery. Guide process of planning, organizing, controlling and monitoring financial resources with a view to

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

			<p>achieve organizational goals and objectives.</p> <p>The Chief of Field Operations further supports UNICEF-led Clusters to ensure that UNICEF delivers effectively on its cluster obligations.</p> <p>Chiefs of the zonal offices are accountable for:</p> <p>Represent UNICEF in area of jurisdiction and manage partnerships with local authorities and local civil society organizations;</p> <p>Oversee the context analysis, programme planning, implementation, monitoring and review in the field offices under his/her responsibility and make course corrections in conjunction with section chiefs; manage all funds and supplies allocated to the zone;</p> <p>Develop Field Office work plans aligned to national programme sector work plans and their implementation;</p> <p>Draft field focused PCAs and ensuring PCAs are implemented and monitored and reported regularly and accurately; performance and ensure adequate performance, capacity building</p>
Government Provincial directorates of key line ministries	Implementing partners/ collaborators	Health, nutrition, education, WASH	UNICEF Field Offices coordinate with government to facilitate implementation
NGOs	Implementing partners	Nutrition, education, WASH, child Protection, emergency	NGOs mostly implement ACO programmes in the field under direct partnership.
Local			
Community level influencers (religious leaders and elders)	Implementation facilitators/ promoters	Education, health, polio, wash, nutrition, child protection, C4D, advocacy	Local influencers support UNICEF in promoting their programme for smooth implementation and contribute in sustainability plans.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

Local service providers/frontline workers (teachers, health workers)	Implementation support/beneficiaries	Education, health, nutrition, polio	Local service providers, such as teachers and health workers, have been supported to strengthen local service delivery.
Local media (radio)	Implementing partner	Polio, nutrition, child protection, C4D, advocacy	UNICEF partners with local radio stations mainly for implementations of advocacy and awareness raising on polio campaign and child rights
Communities members Women and men, girls and boys	Right holders/beneficiaries	Health, nutrition, polio, education, wash	Recipients of programmes

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

Annex 2. Background to the evaluation issues

Integration of and positioning for a strengthened humanitarian, development and peace nexus

The ACP was designed with an emphasis on development approaches with concurrent emergency interventions. At a later stage the ACO shifted emphasis to a more integrated approach in light of the increasing complexity and scope of humanitarian situations, a changing conflict situation, and a policy and programming environment that promoted a stronger triple nexus. The government development agenda for Afghanistan calls for an increased focus of linking humanitarian, development and peace-building policies and programmes. UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 also highlights the humanitarian-development nexus as a cross-cutting priority; and together with other guidance documents propose to strengthen resilience elements in UNICEF's work, integrate preparedness and risk-informed approach into programming, focus more systematically on community engagement and accountability to affected populations (AAP), and work in partnership to mobilize additional capabilities and resources.⁹ Understanding the conflict context is considered a first step to more conflict-sensitive programming and supporting peace building.¹⁰

The 2017 MTR of the ACP recommended a strategic shift to a development-resilience humanitarian continuum approach and a need to bring conceptual clarity how to translate it into programming. The MTR also recommended integrating peacebuilding and social cohesion into UNICEF's work. A recent evaluation of UNICEF Afghanistan's Coverage and Quality in Complex Humanitarian Situations finds that UNICEF is well placed, given its dual mandate and expertise, to deliver results in the nexus and much of what UNICEF is already doing can be considered as contributing to the nexus.¹¹ However, it also indicates that opportunities were missed on convergence between humanitarian and development work within its programmes; further conceptual clarity is still needed; and the incorporation of resilience building through its partnerships has had mixed results. Siloed sector-oriented approaches, siloed funding streams and the existing humanitarian and development institutional architecture are not conducive to strengthened humanitarian-development linkages. Furthermore, the evaluation finds that ACO has focused greater attention on identification of risks and preparedness and has taken up conflict-analysis, but the extent to which each programme had risk mitigation strategies and use conflict-analysis to ensure programme conflict-sensitivity was not clear.

Geographical coverage and access to achieve equitable results for children at scale

Geographic prioritization of the CP resulted in the selection of ten focus provinces in order to reach the most deprived areas, promote multi-sectoral convergence and achieve scale. In addition, the programme aimed to support nation-wide access to high-priority interventions. The adherence to the focus province strategy that underpinned the ACP was mixed.¹² To further encourage programme convergence four flagship results were introduced after the MTR, which in 2019 were replaced by an Integrated Programming approach. According to the evaluation of UNICEF's Coverage and Quality in Complex Humanitarian Situations, despite positive examples, convergence across programmes remained limited.

⁹ UNICEF (2018), UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021, Executive Summary. UNICEF (2019) UNICEF Procedure on Linking Humanitarian and Development Programming. UNICEF (2019) Executive Board Update on UNICEF Humanitarian Action with a focus on linking humanitarian and development programming.

¹⁰ UNICEF (2016) Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding, Programming Guide.

¹¹ Itad (2020) Evaluation of UNICEF's Coverage and Quality in Complex Humanitarian Situations: Afghanistan, draft evaluation report.

¹² Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and UNICEF (2017) Mid-Term Review of the Country Programme 2015-2017. Summary Report.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

At the same time, UNICEF has expanded the reach of its humanitarian assistance through growing field presence balancing between achieving scale and reaching places with the greatest needs in hard-to-reach areas.¹³ The evaluation also noted that UNICEF has become increasingly vocal with both state and non-state interlocutors on issues of humanitarian access and response; and the establishment of outposts in areas controlled by anti-government elements is seen as a proactive approach to extend services to people in need beyond government-controlled areas. However, as the ACP is designed exclusively as a programme of cooperation with the recognized government, there's no definitive strategy in place to guide access to areas controlled by anti-government elements. An approach based on community acceptance and the provision of assistance based on humanitarian principles has guided expanded access, although, according to the aforementioned evaluation, the evidence suggested that there was a mixed picture when it came to applying principles in practice.

Optimization of implementation modalities and institutional capacity development

ACO implements its programming through mixed partnership modalities, including using government systems [including secondment of National Technical Assistants (NTAs) to government partners], implementing partnerships with NGOs, institutional contracts with private sector extenders (see Box 1) and third-party monitors (TPM). Due to security risks limiting access across the country, the country programme has utilized extenders and TPM extensively.

The MTR reported that in the programme period 2015-2017 ACO provided support to more than 200 government partners, which represented on average 89% of the financial transfer allocation; the remainder going to various NGO partners. The MTR recommended to assess the rationale, advantages and disadvantages, benefits and costs of different implementation modalities. The evaluation of UNICEF's Coverage and Quality in Complex Humanitarian Situations highlighted that the mix of implementation modalities has enabled to expand coverage at scale, particularly in hard-to-reach areas. However, it also pointed to concerns about capacity, oversight and UNICEF's visibility and proximity to communities. The evaluation recommends engaging more strategically in partner capacity development.

Box 1: Use of extenders

A (field based) extender is a person employed by one of ACO's extender contractors (contracted under an approved Long-term Agreement) to undertake a defined set of duties (set in a Terms of Reference). Extenders enable ACO to deliver a programme in conflict areas and where UNICEF staff cannot gain access. They can also be hired for ad hoc projects where specialist skills and local knowledge are required at short notice.

Source: UNICEF Afghanistan (2019) Office Instruction on Contracting for Extenders

Gender integration into programming and policy advocacy work

Following the recommendation of the MTR, a gender programmatic review was undertaken in 2018. ACO developed a comprehensive gender strategy to guide gender integration in programming and strengthened its organizational gender capacity and office-wide accountability for gender. The evaluation of UNICEF's Coverage and Quality in Complex Humanitarian Situations presented some elements of the gender strategy already implemented, such as staff training on gender mainstreaming, the establishment of a network of gender focal

¹³ Itad (2020) Ibid

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

points across offices and sections, and the introduction of new sex-disaggregated data collection tools. Following the recent increased strategic and organizational attention given to gender, it is worth examining and identifying early lessons learned about how gender integration efforts have been translated into practice in UNICEF's programming and policy advocacy work.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

Annex 3. Preliminarily overview of secondary data

3.1. Documents

- UNICEF strategic documents
 - UNICEF (2013), [UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017](#)
 - UNICEF (2017), [UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021](#)
 - UNICEF (2014), [UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2014-2017](#)
 - UNICEF, [UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2018-2021, Brochure](#)
 - UNICEF (2014), [Afghanistan Country Programme Document 2015-2019](#)
 - UNICEF and Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2014), [Country Programme Action Plan 2015-2019](#)
 - UNICEF (2019), [Update on UNICEF humanitarian action with a focus on linking humanitarian and development programming](#), Executive Board Paper
 - UNICEF (2009), [UNICEF Strategic Framework for Partnerships and Collaborative Relationships](#)
 - UNICEF ACO Programme Strategy Notes (PSN)
 - WASH: PSN 2017-2021
 - Health/Polio: PSN 2020-2021
 - Education: PSN 2019-2021
 - Child protection: PSN 2015-2021
 - Nutrition: PSN 2017-2019
- UNICEF operational documents
 - UNICEF (2016), [Conflict sensitivity and Peacebuilding, Programming Guide](#)
 - UNICEF (2018), [Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming](#)
 - UNICEF (2018), UNICEF Guidance on Field Monitoring
 - UNICEF (2019), UNICEF Procedure on Linking Humanitarian and Development
 - UNICEF (2015), UNICEF Procedure for Country and Regional Office Transfer of Resources to Civil Society Organizations
 - UNICEF (2019), UNICEF Procedure for Country and Regional Office CSO Implementing Partnerships
- Evidence documents
 - UNICEF and Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2017), [Mid-Term Review of the Country Programme 2015-2019](#)
 - UNICEF (2016), [2015 Afghanistan Annual Report](#)
 - UNICEF (2017), [2016 Afghanistan Annual Report](#)
 - UNICEF (2018), [2017 Afghanistan Annual Report](#)
 - UNICEF (2019), [2018 Afghanistan Annual Report](#)
 - UNICEF ROSA (2018), Gender Programmatic Review of the Afghanistan Country Office
 - Itad (2020), Evaluation of UNICEF's Coverage and Quality in Complex Humanitarian Situations, Afghanistan
- Afghanistan relevant documents

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

- UN Country Team, [United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Afghanistan 2015-2019](#)
- OCHA (2018), [2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview](#)

3.2. UNICEF information system

- **Vision** (Virtual Integrated System of Information) is UNICEF's integrated enterprise resource planning (ERP) system that captures all business transactions, covering areas such as finance, HR and logistics. It also facilitates programme management, including fund commitments and registration of partnerships and contractual arrangements.
- **InSights** is UNICEF's performance management system. It provides financial and programme management data, including key performance indicator scorecards/dashboards, a results assessment and reporting, and information about risk management, partnerships, finances and human resources.
- **eTools** is a partnership management system that enables UNICEF to strengthen the effectiveness of partnerships with both Government counterparts and CSOs and provides linkage between outputs and partnerships. It captures and consolidates data on UNICEF's partnership life cycles with its implementing partners, both government and civil society organization. It includes a module on third party monitoring that enables to manage programmatic visits by third party monitors and their progress. eTools was introduced in Afghanistan in 2018.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2019

Annex 3. Outline of final evaluation report

Executive summary

Acknowledgements

Table of content

Abbreviations and acronyms

Map

1. Introduction
2. UNICEF's Country Programme and context
 - a. Summary of the object of the evaluation (evaluand)
 - b. Description of relevant country context
3. Purpose, scope and methodology
 - a. Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation, including evaluation questions
 - b. Evaluation design and methodology
 - c. Discussion of crosscutting issues (ethics, gender,)
 - d. Limitations
4. Findings
5. Conclusions and lessons learned
6. Recommendations

Annexes, at the minimum

- Terms of reference
- Evaluation matrix
- Bibliography
- Stakeholders consulted