**4.1. Evaluation design and methods**

The evaluation will be guided by the “Norms and Standards for Evaluation” and the “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation” developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and UNICEF’s corporate guidance for equity focused evaluations . It will be planned and implemented with a non-experimental but theory-based design, using mixed-methods and drawing upon secondary data when possible, generating primary data, only, when credible secondary data is not available.

Desk review of existing statistics and programme information, including strategies, policies, concept notes, proposals, narrative and financial reports, monitoring frameworks and databases, work-plans and budget, sector-specific studies and assessments will be undertaken. The main sources of secondary data include the Transmonee databas , sectoral administrative statistics, as well as studies and literature on topics related to the object of the evaluation (see section 4.3). Social media may serve as an alternative source of information.

Due to data gaps and limitations, the evaluation will require primary data collection using both quantitative and qualitative methods to complement the desk research and existing administrative data. The main target groups for data collection will include various bodies dealing with child protection issues including government (e.g. ministries, agencies and local government authorities), CSOs (e.g. associations, NGOS) and vulnerable children (including but not limited to children deprived of parental care, children in residential care institutions, children with disabilities and children at risk of violence, children negatively affected by migration and children affected by emergencies ). While it will be important to collect quantitative data, the emphasis will be made on qualitative data collection in view of the nature of the main evaluation questions.

Considering that the process of carrying out the evaluation, and especially the data collection will be taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic, which poses restrictions for travel and face-to-face interaction appropriate and safe data collection methods will need to be applied to respond to the EQs . UNICEF welcomes the use of alternative and innovative data generating approaches and tools that are adapted to the restrictions of movement and social interaction during the COVID-19 emergency and add further value, e.g. administration of online surveys and digital applications, media monitoring, peer-to-peer data collection. The conditions will be re-assessed at the inception phase and in case of improving the COVID-19 situation the data collection methods and country/field missions will be adjusted accordingly.

If the circumstances and safety considerations allow, primary data generation will involve visits to two regions where interviews will be conducted at both district and regional (oblast) levels. Regions to be visited will be selected during the inception phase among the regions in which UNICEF works. The PE programme’s interventions and their integration with other programme components will be examined more comprehensively at the subnational level in at least two districts using a case study approach. These deeper dive regions/districts will be selected during the inception phase among the regions in which UNICEF works.

The evaluation team is expected to clarify sampling criteria and strategies related to all primary data generation. In selection of regions to visit, sampling criteria will, but may not be limited to, consider the following contextual and operational factors: a) The scale and type of PE activities and applied implementation strategies in each region (districts where there have been majority of UNICEF-supported PE interventions and demonstrated convergence areas); b) the concentration and the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable children and families who will, ultimately, benefit from UNICEF’s support (e.g. at least one urban and one rural district); and c) the extent to which UNICEF has achieved expected results in the area.

The analysis will be built on triangulating information collected from different stakeholders through different methods including secondary data analysis and documentation review. It should critically examine the information gathered from the various sources and synthesize the information in an objective manner. If contradictory information is obtained from different stakeholders, an effort should be made to understand the reasons for such information, including any gender-based differences.

Methodological rigour will be given significant consideration in the assessment of proposals. Bidders are welcome to indicate preferred methodologies (including approaches to data analysis), and succinctly relate these to the objectives of the evaluation and its questions. While the evaluation methodological approach will be finalized at the inception phase, initial advice on the comprehensiveness of the evaluation approach is expected at the proposal stage.

The team will clarify strategies for conducting analyses and disaggregation of data with a view to assess UNICEF’s contribution to diverse beneficiary groups. The team will, furthermore, review the TOC for the PE programme components (see Annex) with a view to verify evaluability, device strategies for how to manage possible data limitations, and as an input to development of evaluation questions. The team will be expected to explain its approach to triangulation and quality assurance of all evaluation deliverables and to clarify, how it plans to engage key evaluation stakeholders to promote participation, ownership and utilization of the evaluation. Finally, the team will draw upon Appreciative Inquiry to generate lessons and recommendations.

**4.2. Ethics, equity and participation**

The proposed evaluation methodology should reflect a human rights-based, participatory and equity-focused approach with data being disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age, disability, etc., and it should pay diligent attention to ethical issues. It is crucial that the evaluation embraces the views of all key stakeholders, including a fair representation of girls and boys, especially the most marginalized and disadvantaged at different stages of the evaluation. At the same time children’s safety and well-being should always be paramount, hence the inclusion of children and adolescents in the evaluation should be in compliance with the ERIC Compendium , and UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis . Ethical requirements are further elaborated within the different evaluation phases.

**4.3. Evaluations and Studies Informing the Evaluation**

Over the period 2016-2020 two evaluations were undertaken.

* The findings and recommendations of the Evaluation of UNICEF Capacity Building Investments in Tajikistan (2016-2018), while broad, provide a useful reference as the country office seeks to improve its capacity building efforts for the remainder of the programme cycle.
* The Country Programme Evaluation (2016-2020), though does not provide a detailed assessment of any one CP component, assesses the totality of the CP portfolio at large including crosscutting issues and inter-sectoral support involving communication for development (C4D), evidence generation and social policy, gender and communication.

A number of relevant studies have been completed that will inform, particularly, the contextual analysis to be undertaken during the Inception Phase but also the ongoing analysis of the evaluation team. These studies that are listed below complement other relevant documentation. A bibliography will be provided for the inception phase.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Year** | **Status** |
| Endline study on children, teachers and parents’ ability to recognize and respond to situations of discrimination or exclusion in five target districts of Sughd Region of Tajikistan | 2019 | In progress |
| Adolescent Baseline Study | 2019 | Completed |
| Situation Analysis of Women and Children in Tajikistan | 2019 | Completed |
| Baseline study to assess protection of children affected by migration | 2018 | Completed |
| Functional Assessment of the Commissions on Child Rights and Child Rights Units at the district and province levels in Tajikistan | 2018 | Completed |
| Baseline study on Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviours, and Practices related to children and women with disabilities in Tajikistan | 2017 | Completed |
| End line study on Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviours, and Practices related to children and women with disabilities in Tajikistan | 2020 | Completed |
| Light gender assessment | 2016 | Completed |
| Evaluation of UNICEF Tajikistan’s work in priority districts during the 2010-2015 Country Programme | 2015 | Completed |

**4.4. Limitations**

* ***Data Availability.*** There are major limitations when it comes to child protection related data in the country. The latest Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey was conducted in 2005, while the Demographics Health Survey 2017 provides very limited data on the child protection issues. The resources for conducting other household surveys that may include child protection related data are limited such as Labour Force Survey are rarely conducted
* ***Data reliability and disaggregation.*** Administrative data in the areas related to PE agenda is not collected in a systematic way. The existing data in the country is often not reliable and may not indicate the real situation, e.g. on children with disabilities and children without family care. Furthermore, the available data is not sufficiently disaggregated even by age or sex. Often data forms are interpreted and reported in different ways (especially at a lower administrative level), which makes data compilation and aggregation more complicated at the national level, and inevitable affects the data quality.
* ***Lack of systematic documentation*** of the design and implementation of some programme interventions may limit the evaluation. In addition, due to ongoing structural reforms in the government, a high staff turn-over has been observed in recent years, which does influence availability of institutional memory. In addition, not all key informants might be available or reachable at the time of evaluation.
* ***Access to decision-makers.*** In recent years, the context of working with the government has become more restrictive. In fact, with greater centralization of power, new bottlenecks have been introduced that have made timely access to decision-makers more difficult with heavy bureaucratic undertones.

During the inception phase, the evaluation team is expected to suggest how it will manage these limitations.