

MAINSTREAMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INTO EDUCATION SECTOR PLANNING

COURSE READER FOR **MODULE 5:**
Implementation arrangements,
monitoring and evaluation for pre-primary



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Module 5

Welcome to Module 5.

As discussed throughout the previous modules, the plan preparation follows a sequential yet iterative process. Once the preparation of the priority programs and the cost and financing framework have been drafted and agreed upon, the next step in the preparation of the education sector plan (ESP) consists of three major aspects: drafting the multiyear action plan, defining the implementation arrangements and designing the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework.

For proper and effective plan implementation, one needs to have clear implementation arrangements and clarity on who is responsible for the overall implementation of the plan, who is responsible for specific programs and activities and how to ensure that the necessary capacities are available.

In addition, having the right M&E mechanisms in place is critical to ensure that the plan is on track to achieve its objectives. Specifically for the pre-primary subsector, a well-functioning M&E system is essential for (a) promoting and maintaining early childhood education (ECE) programs and services that are relevant and of high quality and (b) ensuring that the most disadvantaged children are sufficiently targeted.

Module 5 provides guidance on an outline of the implementation arrangements and capacity needed to implement an effective plan and related pre-primary programs. The module also introduces participants to key M&E concepts, processes and tools related to ECE/ESP monitoring and provides guidance on how to construct sound indicators with a focus on ECE indicators. Finally, an overview of the plan finalization steps, if included, conclude this module and the course.

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Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, participants should be able to do the following:

- Explain the concepts and arrangement relating to effective implementation of pre-primary programs.
- Explain the concepts and purpose of M&E for ECE.
- Define the major considerations to be taken into account for the choice of key pre-primary indicators.



Time frame

Module 5 will be held November 25–December 1, 2019.

The study time needed to complete this module is on average two to four hours depending on your learning profile (i.e. reading/watching the materials, and completing the quiz and activities).



Suggested readings

The key references below provide an introduction to key concepts on implementation arrangements and monitoring and evaluation that can be applied to pre-primary education. **They complement this course reader. Please note that the contents of suggested readings will not be assessed during the course.**

GPE (Global Partnership for Education). 2018. *Joint Sector Reviews in the Education Sector: A Practical Guide for Organizing Effective JSRs*. Washington, DC: GPE. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/practical-guide-effective-joint-sector-reviews-education-sector>. See also related tools.

GPE, and IIEP-UNESCO (International Institute for Educational Planning–United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). 2015. *Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal*. Paris: IIEP-UNESCO. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-appraisal>.

IIEP-UNESCO (International Institute for Educational Planning–United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). 2010. “Strategic Planning: Techniques and Methods.” Education Sector Planning Working Paper 3, IIEP-UNESCO, Paris. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000189759>.

Most of these suggested readings can also be found in the bibliography, which lists all the sources cited in this reader. These documents and the further readings listed below are available by clicking on the link.



Further readings

Depending on your interests, you may want to consider these additional readings.

BetterEvaluation website: <https://betterevaluation.org/>

GPE (Global Partnership for Education). 2017. *How GPE Works in Partner Countries*. Washington, DC: GPE. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/how-gpe-works-partner-countries>.

Independent Evaluation Group. 2012. *Designing a Results Framework for Achieving Results: A How-To Guide*. Washington, DC: World Bank. https://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTEVACAPDEV/Resources/designing_results_framework.pdf.

Örtengren, K. 2016. *A Guide to Results-Based Management (RBM): Efficient Project Planning with the Aid of the Logical Framework Approach (LFA)*. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. <https://www.sida.se/English/publications/148157/a-guide-to-results-based-management-rbm-efficient-project-planning-with-the-aid-of-the-logical-framework-approach-lfa/>.

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2009. *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluating Development Results*. New York: UNDP. <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/documents/english/pme-handbook.pdf>.

UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund). Forthcoming. *Pre-primary Subsector Diagnostic and Planning Tool*. New York: UNICEF.



Virtual platform

On the course platform, you will find the following resources to help you through:

- ▶ Introduction video to Module 5
- ▶ Inspirational video
- ▶ Animated presentation
- ▶ Course reader (this document)
- ▶ Assessment tools (quiz + drag and drop exercise)
- ▶ Activities
- ▶ Poll question
- ▶ Connect forum
- ▶ Glossary
- ▶ Wrap-up session



Need help?

If you have questions or comments on the readings or activities in Module 5, do not hesitate to share them on the discussion forum (on the course platform) for feedback from other participants and the teaching team. We invite participants to help one another on this forum. The course facilitators will follow these exchanges and intervene when necessary.



1.

INTRODUCTION

We are now at the stage where the priority programs and the cost and financing framework have been drafted. In this module, we look at the final three phases in the preparation of the ESP (Figure 1):¹

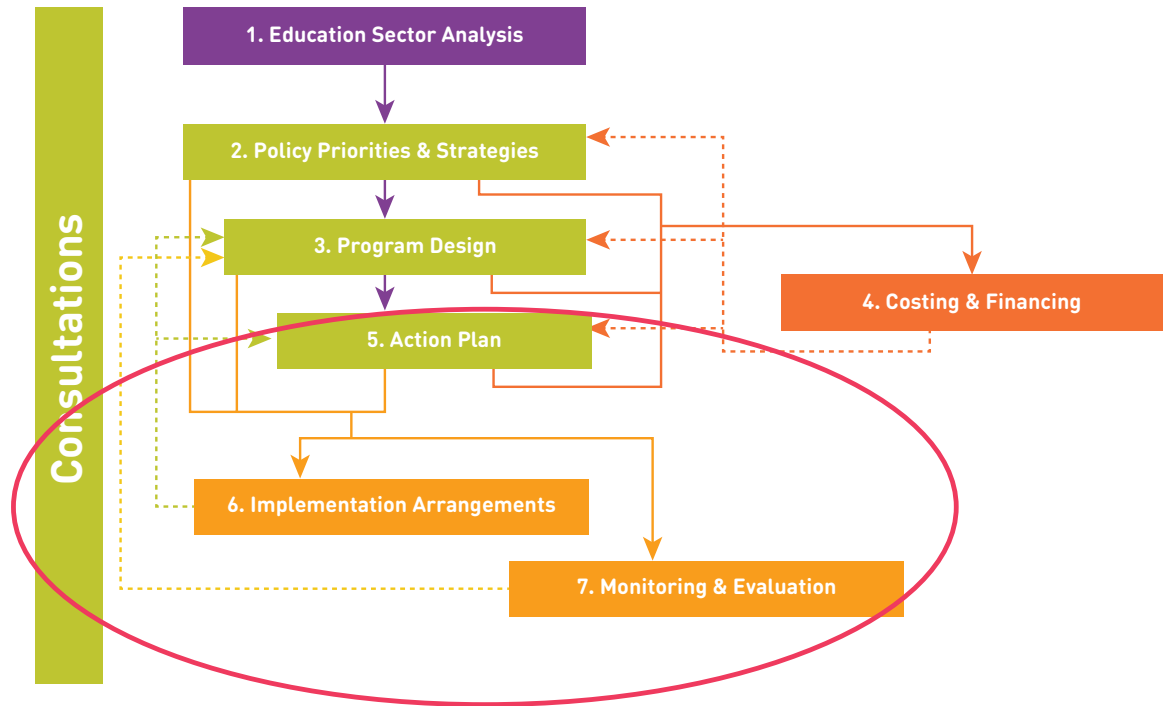
- **Phase 5:** Development of a well-informed action plan
- **Phase 6:** Defining clear governance structures that enable implementation of the plan
- **Phase 7:** Monitoring the progress in achieving key pre-primary plan milestones

We will look at each of these areas from a general education sector planning perspective, including any special pre-primary issues to be considered in each phase. Note that there is no pre-defined order of these particular 3 phases. Each ESP may tackle these in different sequences.

¹ This module has been adapted from GPE and IIEP-UNESCO (2015b), IIEP-UNESCO (2010a), IIEP-UNESCO (2010b), and UNICEF (2019a).

FIGURE 1.

MAIN PHASES OF AN ESP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS,
PHASES 5-7 HIGHLIGHTED



Source: GPE and IIEP-UNESCO 2015b.

2.

ACTION PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRE-PRIMARY

Implementation of pre-primary activities occurs at multiple levels, from the teachers and assistants in ECE learning spaces to their immediate supervisors to curriculum developers, teacher trainers and district-level inspectors. At central, regional or district levels, implementation responsibilities including plan monitoring and oversight, need to be clarified to make sure that lower-level activities are being implemented and to determine whether any corrective actions are needed. The ESP should therefore specify implementation responsibilities at all relevant levels. The action plan (Phase 5 in Figure 1) is one way of doing this. In addition, other structures may need to be set up to assist with the overall oversight of plan implementation, which will be discussed in section 2.2.

2.1 Development of a well-informed action plan

To operationalize the plan over the medium term, the ESP is translated into a *multiyear* action plan (generally of two or three years), sometimes referred to as an *implementation* plan or *operational* plan. Development of a robust multiyear action plan increases the probability of successful implementation because the plan specifies not only the entity responsible for implementation of each activity but also each activity's timing, cost, sources of financing and related outputs (see Annex 1 for a more detailed presentation and a sample template). It is important for action plans to be linked to the national budget processes (Medium Term Expenditure Framework [MTEF] and annual budgeting) to ensure proper financing of activities, yet in some cases the two are disconnected.

The multiyear action plan can be either included in the ESP document or prepared as a separate document. It was quite common for multiyear action plans to be supplemented by annual action plans. However, increasingly, we are seeing that in countries where there are effective annual operational plans, there is a tendency not to develop multiyear action plans to avoid overburdening the overall planning process (see section 3.3.3).

As discussed in Module 4, pre-primary education may either be designed as a stand-alone program within the ESP or the activities may be dispersed across other thematic areas, such as access and quality. In the latter case, it might be helpful to develop a specific pre-primary subsector action plan, either during or following the ESP preparation process. This will make it easier to monitor implementation throughout the subsector. The subsector action plan must, however, be linked to the overall action plan. If the ESP has been designed using thematic areas, it will be helpful to reference each activity in the pre-primary action plan to its corresponding location in the ESP action plan.

As with the ESP, one of the criteria for evaluating the robustness of an action plan is whether it is achievable. The UNICEF *Conceptual Framework for the Pre-primary Sub-sector* (2019a) calls attention to several issues to consider when developing achievable pre-primary subsector plans:

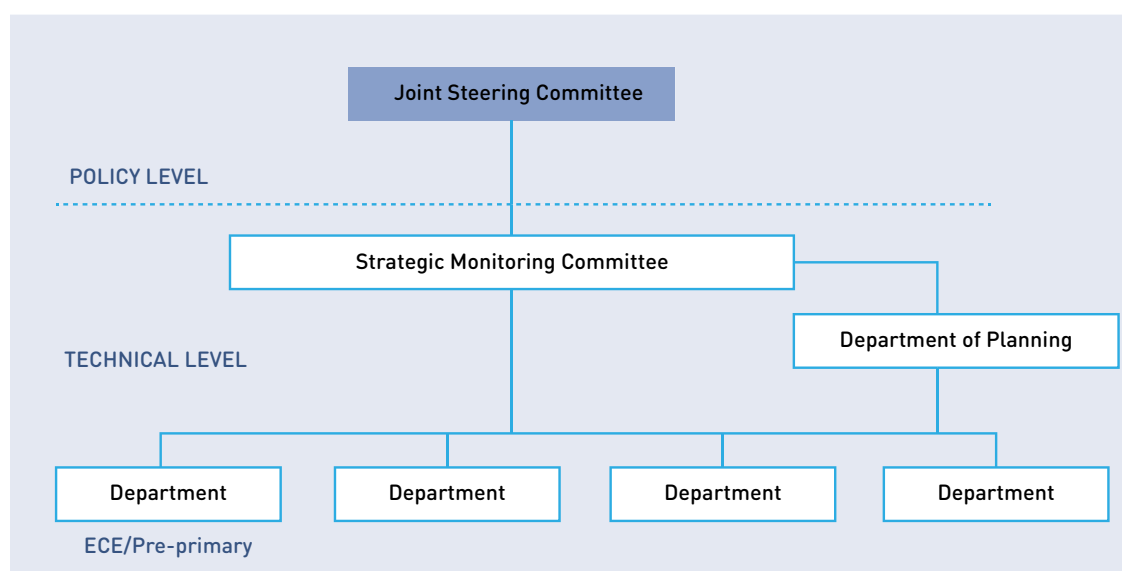
- **Realistic targets and timelines:** The plan should set realistic targets and an implementation timeline/schedule that are realizable given available resources.
- **Coordination between macro (national) planning and implementation and micro (local) planning and implementation well defined:** Because action plans are typically developed at the central level, developing a coherent and consistent plan of action between levels of government requires clear dissemination of the policy priorities and subsector goals and objectives to the subnational and local levels. This is all the more important in a decentralized governance system.
- **Responsibilities among the various stakeholders are clearly set** to prevent key actions falling through the cracks and leading to uneven access to pre-primary services, and uneven availability of personnel and other resources, for existing or new pre-primary programs.
- **Activities are well costed,** so that allocations or reallocations (if necessary) are based on actual needs and costs rather than vague, hypothesized ones. As noted in Module 4, the original costing and financing of the ESP will be based on the information collected during the education sector analysis (ESA) (Module 3). Unit costs are also established during the ESA process and are used in the simulation model (Module 4). During the years of ESP implementation, however, unit costs and levels of funding should be monitored and adjusted as needed. This is easier when countries have a program-based budgeting system.
- **Review and update available and potential financial resources:** Updates of financial resources need to be linked to the government's budget allocation system. Activities in the pre-primary action plan should, to the extent possible, identify funding sources. Beyond government resources for the subsector, existing partners who specifically support pre-primary, including development partners, public-private partnerships, and community or family contributions if appropriate, also should be considered. See also the discussion of costing and financing in Module 3.

2.2 Structures for oversight of plan implementation

The ESP generally needs and describes structures to oversee and advise on implementation. Similar to the participatory approach followed for the ESP preparation, it is advisable to design an equally participatory structure to oversee plan implementation. In most cases, a three-layer structure is adopted that is quite similar to the one created for plan preparation (see Module 2).² Figure 2 illustrates this typical three-level structure. The actual structure will vary by country depending on needs and existing structures that may already be in place. These implementation structures should be based on existing structures to the extent possible.

FIGURE 2.

GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR OVERSIGHT OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



Source: IIEP-UNESCO 2010b, 32.

- At the first level, each **department** in charge of a specific program prepares annual operational plans derived from the multiyear action plan (see section 3.3.3 and Annex 2) and is responsible for ensuring day-to-day, routine monitoring of the program implementation. In the case of complex programs, in which different departments intervene, the department with the main responsibility should take the lead in organizing regular interdepartmental meetings to assess progress made, take corrective action, and ensure coherent program implementation.
- The technical level requires a **strategic monitoring (or implementation) committee** to oversee plan implementation in a comprehensive way—that is, to ensure information exchange and coordination between the different departments implementing programs, and to deliberate collectively about necessary higher-level decisions for keeping the plan

2 Section 2.2 has been adapted from IIEP-UNESCO (2010b). Note that this three-layer structure very much integrates M&E functions, as monitoring activities are an integral component of plan management and implementation.

implementation process on track. The committee should be composed of the department directors and be chaired by a high-ranking officer. Consideration should also be given to adding members from other ministries that play a role in pre-primary education. At a minimum, they should be invited for discussions specifically relating to pre-primary.

- At the policy level, the **joint steering committee**, created during the plan preparation period (see Module 2³), can generally be maintained as such. This committee, chaired by the education minister (or his/her representative), continues to serve as a linking mechanism between the ministry and the major education development partners, and advises the minister on major policy decisions required at critical moments of the plan's implementation (especially on the occasion of the annual, midterm and final reviews).
- Depending on the context, it may be useful to include a specific pre-primary education subsector working group in the structure for implementation arrangements.

2.3 Pre-primary implementation capacity

Proper and effective plan implementation requires sufficient implementation capacity, including within the pre-primary subsector.⁴ The ability of the education ministry (and other associated ministries) to implement the plan and related programs depends on a number of factors, not all of which are under its control; some are the result of overall government policies. An overall analysis of the capacity for plan implementation needs to examine the following:

- **Public sector management and institutions:** The management capacity within the public sector, the delivery capacity of the implementing actors, the quality of public administration and civil service management, transparency, and accountability in the public sector.⁵

For pre-primary education, this also means considering the capacity of other state and non-state providers of pre-primary education. How will their capacity affect implementation of the ECE priorities that are included within the ESP? What is the role of the ministry of education in overseeing or supporting nonpublic ECE services, and what is the capacity of the ministry to implement this role?

- **The effectiveness of educational administration:** Clarity of roles and responsibilities, link between roles and structures, communication and coordination, preparedness for crisis and disaster situations, and monitoring and evaluation

3 See also IIEP-UNESCO (2010a).

4 The key points in this section are taken from the GPE and IIEP-UNESCO (2015b). Sections in *italics* are added to convey issues related to pre-primary.

5 In some circumstances, it may be helpful to conduct an institutional analysis for the pre-primary subsector (see also Module 3). Such an analysis would examine and create a shared understanding of the capacity constraints faced in the design and implementation of pre-primary education policies, plans and programs. It would also provide the basis for preparing capacity development plans that provide strategic actions to overcome weaknesses in the administration of the pre-primary subsector.

The UNICEF Conceptual Framework (2019a) suggests the need for institutional capacity for administrative and financial management at the central, regional, and local levels to be developed, and linkages between different levels to be strengthened. Again, this is especially important in decentralized systems, in which local governments may be expected to budget and finance various aspects of pre-primary service provision.

- The **profiles (in particular the competencies) of officers:** Qualifications, skills and training, incentives, gender

*The coherence and quality of the pre-primary subsector requires not only funding for services but also investment in the **management staff** who are responsible for planning, in-service training, monitoring and regulation at the central and local levels (UNICEF 2019a). In addition, staff in many other supporting units are key drivers of a strong pre-primary subsector. Examples include active policy units, a training and curriculum authority, M&E and quality assurance units, a corps of pedagogical advisers (coaches, supervisors or inspectors), planning departments and EMIS units. Many of these structures are already present in education systems, but they may lack the necessary competencies, particularly with regard to the specifics of pre-primary education. Therefore, it is crucial to give special attention to the recruitment and training or re-training of individuals who form part of the ECE support systems.*

- Analysis of **aid effectiveness principles:** To what extent external resources (and implementation modalities) support the development of national systems and capacity

Ensuring that key stakeholders are involved in supporting the implementation process through the annual joint sector review process not only supports greater donor/government harmonization, but also provides a basis for analyzing and monitoring aid effectiveness principles. For example, international financing for pre-primary that is channeled through various donor projects can result in fragmented implementation and related challenges associated with implementation and reporting of results.

The draft education sector plan should be reviewed against each of the above factors. For example:

- The efficiency of revenue mobilization may be a particular concern if the plan relies heavily on the government's capacity to raise internal revenue. If the plan proposes that a higher percentage of the government education budget be allocated to pre-primary education, this raises the issue of whether the management and leadership capacity in the ministry is able to effectively advocate for reallocation of funds.
- In the same way, it is important to reflect on the extent to which implementation can be efficiently ensured by the management capacities of the ministry (at both central and decentralized levels) and its partner organizations. The level of technical capacities to implement pre-primary at provincial and/or district levels must be considered. Offices at

decentralized levels must receive the necessary guidance and training to oversee plan implementation within their areas of responsibility and to conduct their own medium- and short-term planning within the overall national plan framework.

- Depending on the overall analysis of the capacity to implement the ESP, and the pre-primary components, it may be necessary to rethink and possibly revise the ESP's objectives and ambitions. Additionally, including a capacity-development chapter in the plan (or a capacity development priority program within a subsector) that addresses the core capacity constraints in the system should be considered.

These issues are all the more critical for the pre-primary subsector, where governance tends to become more and more decentralized (see Box 1).

BOX 1.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF DECENTRALIZATION FOR THE PRE-PRIMARY SUBSECTOR

"In many countries, the governance of pre-primary services is decentralized/deconcentrated. In the decentralization process, it is important to ensure that early childhood services are part of a well-conceptualized state policy, which on the one hand, devolves real management powers and funding to local authorities and on the other, ensures a unified approach to different aspects of the subsector (such as regulation, workforce development, and quality assurance). In the interests of equivalent access and quality across a country, clear agreements need to be reached between central and local authorities about system aims, funding processes and program standards. Strengthening broad processes of decentralization, public administration, and institutional reform is essential to develop the capacities of the decentralized system in budgeting and financial management for pre-primary education."

Source: UNICEF 2019a.

3.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PRE-PRIMARY

Having the right monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place is critical for ensuring that the education sector plan, and pre-primary programs specifically, are on track to achieve set objectives. This section provides an overview of the concepts and purpose of monitoring and evaluation, as well as major M&E processes, tools, and systems.⁶

Before we begin, some clarification on a possibly confusing point. So far in this MOOC, we have focused on the *preparation process* of the ESP, and we still do so here. The ESP document will include a clear M&E framework that will ultimately support proper M&E activities and plan implementation, once the plan is adopted. So this section covers how to develop the M&E section of the ESP, as part of plan preparation. It does not focus on actual plan implementation.⁷

3.1 Concepts and purpose of M&E

What exactly is monitoring and evaluation?⁸ Monitoring is the internal management process by which information about plan implementation is regularly gathered, analyzed and reported, in the interest of identifying strengths and weaknesses and formulating practical proposals for action, to reach the planned results. Monitoring aims to answer these basic questions, among others:

- What is the level of inputs (resources) used? How (efficiently) inputs are being used?

⁶ Section 3 focuses mainly on the *monitoring* processes of the plan, as that is what is relevant to the actual M&E framework included in the ESP and what contributes to successful plan implementation. Evaluation is a longer-term activity, generally completed at the end of the plan implementation period, so these processes will only be touched upon.

⁷ The actual monitoring processes are carried out regularly as part of the broader plan implementation cycle (see figure 2 in Module 2).

⁸ Section 3.1 is adapted from IIEP-UNESCO (2010b).

- What is the level of activities implemented? Are activities being carried out as planned?
- Are the predefined *outputs* being produced as planned and efficiently? *Are we on track?*
- Are expected *outcomes* met?
- What are the issues, risks and challenges that we face or foresee that need to be taken into account to ensure the achievement of results?
- What corrective actions might be needed to ensure delivery of the intended results?

Evaluation is a longer-term in-depth assessment of plan and programs—usually conducted by an external evaluator—that is used to inform decisions on the next education sector plan.

Specifically, the monitoring and evaluation of ESPs have the following objectives:

- To guide plan implementation: The results of M&E demonstrate the pertinence and efficiency of interventions, and serve as tools to reorient parts of the plan when necessary.
- To create accountability through (1) clear repartition of roles; (2) accountability of actors for successes and failures; (3) identification of actors in difficulty to improve efforts to support them.
- To learn what works well and what does not work well: M&E is the process by which an organization collectively acquires the necessary knowledge to develop in a changing environment.
- To improve policy and practice: M&E’s results help improve future policies and plans.

Monitoring and evaluation are complementary activities. As such, they need to be planned together.

3.2 The M&E process

Monitoring is done mainly by using the different types of **indicators** chosen for measuring progress in reaching the objectives and targets as indicated in the **M&E results framework** (see section 3.3.1). The information on the progress of these indicators is collected and analyzed and the results presented in the form of **progress/review/performance reports** produced at regular intervals. These reports serve as a basis for collective reviewing, which involves collectively analyzing and discussing the reports and deciding on any follow-up actions, to ensure proper implementation of programs and activities.

Monitoring provides an opportunity to identify and make needed policy adjustments. Monitoring, especially when new priorities are being implemented, such as a focus on expanding pre-primary, may often point to a clear need for changes in policies, priorities and activities, including re-assessment and re-design. “Such changes occur frequently because implementation problems are often greatly underestimated during the stage of policy planning. Therefore, in addition to trying to anticipate such problems at earlier stages, it is important to conduct **regular progress monitoring** and to **use feedback loops** for course corrections and

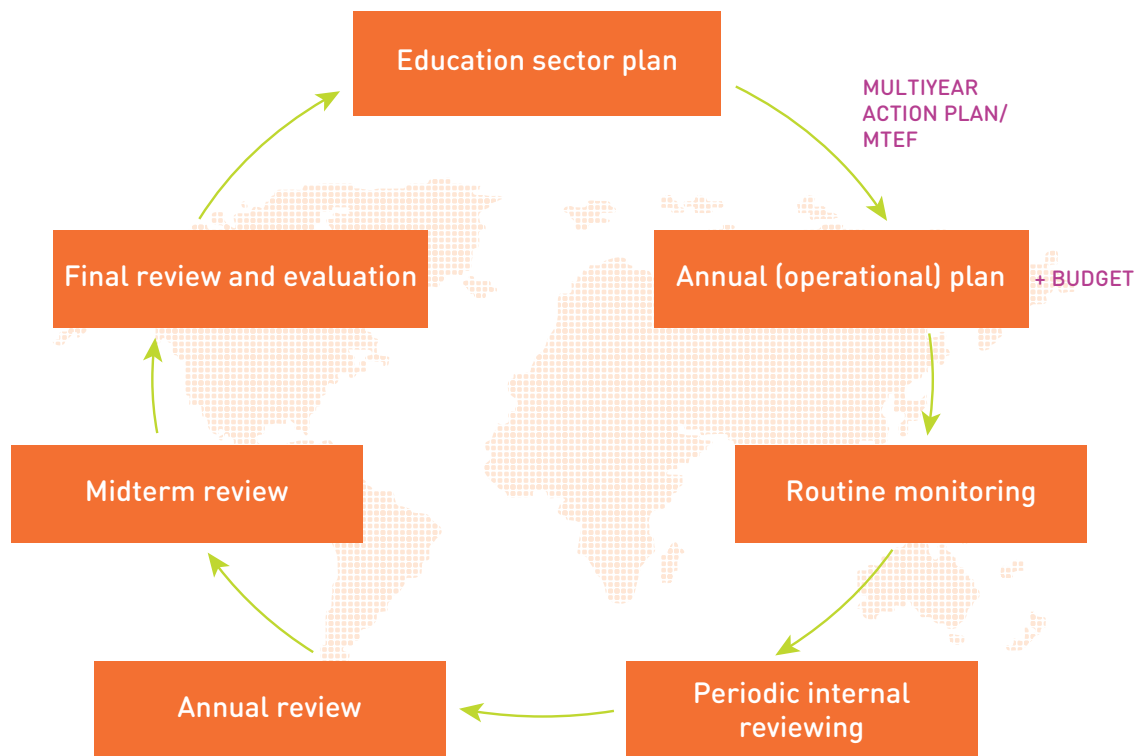
improvements” (UNICEF 2019a). The implementation oversight structures discussed in the previous section can be particularly useful in supporting this.

At certain moments (mainly at midterm and/or at the end of the planning cycle), specific evaluations can also be requested. Evaluations are different from regular monitoring. They generally focus on a more in-depth analysis of the more fundamental policy questions that relate to the overall goals and long-term impact of the plan (rather than on more direct management questions). Furthermore, they are generally produced by (or at least in association with) external experts to guarantee a higher level of objectivity.

As mentioned, different types of reviews are required at different points of the plan implementation, each with specific purposes and backed by specific reports. Figure 3 summarizes the overall strategic planning cycle with a focus on how M&E activities affect and influence planning. Key aspects of the monitoring reporting and review processes are briefly explained in Table 1.

FIGURE 3.

ESP MONITORING AND EVALUATION CYCLE



Source: Adapted from IIEP-UNESCO 2010b.

TABLE 1.

M&E REPORTING AND REVIEW PROCESSES

	WHEN	PURPOSE	CONTENT	BY WHOM?	FOR WHOM?	ECE CONSIDERATION
Periodic progress report/periodic internal review	Prepared periodically during the year (frequently on a quarterly basis).	Support the routine supervision of plan implementation within the different departments of the ministry.	Should contain information about the progress made in carrying out the different activities during the period under consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of implementation of activities • The interim results obtained • Possible proposals for corrective action and improvement 	Progress reports ought to be prepared by each department on the basis of the information provided by the officials directly in charge of specific activities. Reports used for organizing internal ministry reviews.	For internal ministry use.	The pre-primary department will bear the main responsibility for these reports. Depending on activities in the plan may also need to gather and include information from private providers of pre-primary education. The education ministry (or other relevant ministry) should be monitoring private providers to make sure that they are adhering to any established standards.
Annual performance report/annual reviews	Annually.	Systematically assess the progress made toward achieving the ESP objectives and the implementation challenges encountered during the year (more comprehensive and more systematic than periodic progress reports). Serve as basis for preparing the Annual operational plan and budget for following year.	Should systematically compare achievements for each program (including financial aspects) with the annual and medium-term results and targets.	Prepared by each department on the basis of the information provided by the officials directly in charge of specific activities. Submitted to the strategic monitoring committee as basis for reviewing.	Internal use but also for giving feedback to the stakeholders (in particular the development partners) through the annual joint sector review meetings.	A wide range of stakeholders should be invited to take part in any annual review meeting. This is especially important for the pre-primary subsector as it generally has a more diverse group of stakeholders, including other ministries, nongovernmental organizations and private providers.
Midterm review/evaluation reports	At mid plan	Careful examination of results obtained and problems encountered to support decision-making and possible revision of the targets and programs foreseen for the second term of the plan	Same nature as the annual performance reports, but they are more methodical and more in-depth.	Prepared by the education ministry but often complemented by evaluation studies carried out by external evaluators, or by a team of ministry staff and evaluation specialists from outside.	Internal use and for giving feedback to the stakeholders.	Provides a good opportunity for an evaluation of the pre-primary subsector, especially if there has been a change to policy or if the ministry is considering a change in ECE policy.
Final review and evaluation reports	Depends on the main focus of the plan. If impact is the major focus, then the evaluation may need to be conducted a while after the plan has been implemented.	Intends to evaluate final results and impact, their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, but also to analyze the reasons why certain results have been achieved and not others, and to derive lessons for possible policy revision and for preparing the next planning cycle.	The final review (or evaluation) report looks back at the whole plan period.	Often performed by external experts to increase the objectivity of the evaluation. They may also be of a mixed nature, involving both internal and external actors.	Internal use and for giving feedback to the stakeholders.	If a final evaluation is conducted, the pre-primary department and its stakeholders should review the methodology and questions and provide any needed inputs to make sure that concerns related to pre-primary are included within the scope of the evaluation.

3.3 ESP M&E tools

Three tools help guide the monitoring and evaluation processes: (1) the M&E results framework (2) the key performances indicators, and (3) the annual operational plan. Since one of the main purposes of monitoring is to make sure that the ESP is being implemented and is on course to meet its set targets, these tools are particularly useful because each derives from or is included in the ESP. Systematic use of these tools will also facilitate the review processes described above.

3.3.1 M&E results framework

The M&E results framework consolidates into one single matrix the various outcomes and related outputs of the ESP used to track achievement of the plan's objectives and targets.⁹ The framework is aligned with the structure of the ESPs' logframe/program design—the organization of the plans goals, programs, and activities:

- It transforms the results chain of an intervention into indicators that measure the degree to which results at various levels are achieved.
- For each result, it provides a specific indicator, along with its baseline, and intermediate and final targets, as well as the source of information, its frequency (in term of collection) and the unit responsible for reporting.

Different types of indicators are required to assess progress toward results. If we look again at the results chain¹⁰ and how indicators are used, we can see that the type of indicators need to relate to the different levels of the results chain that we want to measure. Importantly, the indicators must reflect the different levels of desired results, as indicated in the logframe (or equivalent program design).

Table 2 provides a categorization of indicators with reference to the results chain and related targets for pre-primary education.

9 There is no standard name for the results framework. It can be called a results matrix or a monitoring matrix, among other names, in some ESPs.

10 For a simple explanation of the results chain, please see Annex 1 in Module 4.

TABLE 2.

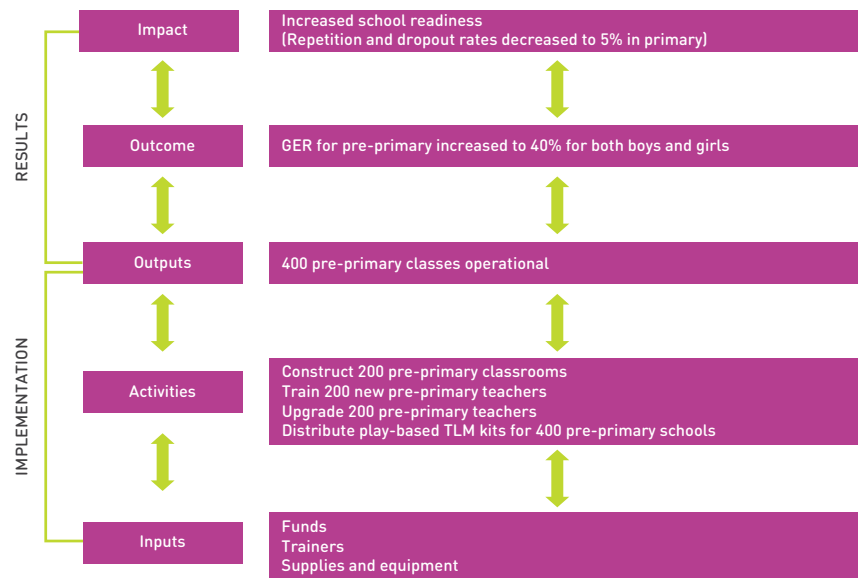
CATEGORIZATION OF INDICATORS WITH REFERENCE TO THE RESULTS CHAIN

INDICATORS OF...	WHAT THEY MEASURE	EXAMPLES
Input/activities	Financial, administrative and regulatory resources provided by government or donors	<i>Share of budget devoted to pre-primary</i>
Output	Immediate and concrete consequence of the measures taken and resources used	<i>Number of preschools classroom built, number of educational planners trained in ECE, number of ECE teachers trained</i>
Outcome	Intermediate results generated relative to the objectives of an operation at the level of direct beneficiaries	<i>Preschool enrollments, levels of children school readiness</i>
Impact	Long-term and aggregated results or changes in the segment of society targeted by an operation	<i>Dropout and repetition rates in primary, results of early grade learning assessments for children who completed one year (or more) of pre-primary education</i>

Figure 4 illustrates an M&E results chain for pre-primary education, showing the chain’s indicators and related targets, which are based on the example provided in Module 4, Table 2.

FIGURE 4.

EXAMPLE OF AN M&E RESULTS CHAIN FOR PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION



Generally, the M&E results framework has a narrative component/process that describes how the partners will undertake monitoring and the accountabilities assigned to different individuals and agencies (Tools4dev 2019). In some cases, a planning/calendar matrix for key monitoring and evaluation activities is also provided. All these components form the M&E framework or M&E plan, a dedicated section of the ESP.¹¹

Table 3 provides an interesting illustration. In this example, an extract from Rwanda’s ESP Sector Monitoring Matrix related to the ESP pre-primary outcome, only outcome level results are being presented.

TABLE 3.

EXTRACT FROM RWANDA’S ESP SECTOR MONITORING MATRIX, RELATED TO PRE-PRIMARY OUTCOME

Sector outcome: improved access to school readiness programs by 2017/18, accompanied by expanded access to three years of early learning for 4- to 6-year-olds

SECTOR OUTCOME INDICATOR	BASELINE (2012-13)	TARGETS					MEANS OF VERIFICATION	RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPORTING
		2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018		
GER in pre-primary (M/F)	12.9% M: 12.4% F: 13.3%	15.7%	19.8%	23.8%	26.9%	29.9%	EMIS + NISR population projections	MINEDUC
NER in pre-primary	12.7% M: 12.3% F: 13.2%	14%	17%	21%	25%	28%	EMIS + NISR population projections	MINEDUC
% sectors with school-readiness programs	Baseline to be determined in 2014						District reports	MINEDUC
New ECD centers	399	771	447	363	466	393	EMIS	MINEDUC
% primary schools with a pre-school section	39%						EMIS	MINEDUC
% pre-primary teachers and caregivers trained*		4%	8%	12%	16%	20%	TDMIS	REB

Source: Rwanda, Ministry of Education 2013.

* Annual percentage of total caregivers who are trained, not cumulative total.

¹¹ Note that depending on the country different terms may be used. “M&E framework” may refer to the overall M&E plan/ M&E section, or refer to the M&E results framework/monitoring matrix.

Selecting indicators

Tracking, analyzing and reporting on indicators is costly and takes time and capacity. Therefore, planners should carefully consider the type and number of indicators to include in the results framework.

The most important criteria for choosing indicators are that they can measure what they are supposed to measure (validity), and that they are in line with the goal or objective of an education sector plan (relevance).

Indicators need to be available in a timely fashion, and regularly, so that comparisons can be made over several years to establish time series and trends. This is generally true for indicators based on data that are collected through the regular school census, or which are made available through usual annual exercises, such as national examinations or budget preparations.

One can also use the **"SMART"** criteria. There are several different definitions of SMART, but UNDP (2009) proposes this one:

- **S**pecific: Is the indicator specific enough to measure progress toward the results?
- **M**easurable: Is the indicator a reliable and clear measure of results?
- **A**ttainable: Are the results in which the indicator seeks to chart progress realistic?
- **R**elevant: Is the indicator relevant to the intended outputs and outcomes?
- **T**ime-bound: Are data available at reasonable cost and effort?

3.3.2 Key performance indicators

Another important component for proper monitoring and evaluation of the education sector plan is the **table of key performance indicators (KPIs)**. The KPIs are a *selection of indicators* that reflect the main objectives pursued in a plan. Their results should be included in the annual performance monitoring of the plan. The KPI matrix is particularly useful:

- It provides a quick overview of plan achievements.
- It gives a comprehensive picture of the education system performance, but at the same time it remains focused on the main objectives.
- It concentrates on the result level—the overall objectives (or goals) and strategic objectives (outcomes).
- It provides information not only on national averages (as is often the case) but also on subnational disparities (gender, urban/rural, region, and so on).

KPIs should be limited in number, preferably no more than 20–30 for the entire ESP. As the scope of ESPs expand and data information system improve, more KPIs, including ECE-related ones, might be added. But because the KPI table is meant to show an overview of education system performance, too many indicators is not advisable: The table might become more difficult to interpret and create confusion, thus taking attention away from the essentials.

Therefore, the selection of KPIs to include will be based on a number of requirements. For example, the selected KPIs should do the following:

- Relate mainly (but not exclusively) to outcomes. They should concentrate on measuring results of overall goals and objectives.
- Give a comprehensive picture of the education system as a whole (including pre-primary), while at the same time maintaining focus on critical challenges reflected in the priority programs.
- Be easily understandable by decision makers and common users.
- Be commonly agreed upon by the different stakeholders and development partners, to ensure easy coordination and cooperation later.
- Be linked to international frameworks indicators, such as SDG 4.2 in the case of pre-primary.

Each country will need to develop its own relevant indicators that address the issues identified in the education sector analysis and the objectives set out for the priority programs. Box 2 provides examples of pre-primary key performance indicators found in four country ESP KPI matrices.

BOX 2.

EXAMPLES OF ECE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Georgia Consolidated Education Strategy and Action Plan 2007–2011

- Pre-primary gross enrollment rate (as a % of the 3–5 years old)
- Pre-primary gender parity index
- Pre-primary school life expectancy
- Pre-primary pupil-teacher ratio
- Public current expenditures on pre-primary education as a % of GNP

Lao PDR Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2016–2020

- ECE enrollment of 5-year-old children
- ECE enrollment of 3- to 5-year-old children
- Proportion of enrollment in private school
- ECE pupil-classroom ratio
- ECE pupil-teacher ratio

Nepal School Sector Development Plan 2016–2023

- Gross enrollment ratio (GER) in early childhood education and development (ECED)/PPE
- % of ECED/PPE teachers with required qualification

- % of ECED/PPE teachers with one-month training
- % of grade 1 new entrants with ECED/PPE experience

South Sudan General Education Strategic Plan, 2017–2022

- Early childhood development and education (ECDE) GER (%)
- GPI (F%/M%) in ECDE, GER
- Share of pupils with disability, ECDE (%)
- Share of ECDE teachers qualified (Government)
- Pupil-class ratio, Government, ECDE
- Number of ECDE schools receiving capitation grants

3.3.3 Annual Operational Plan

The preparation of annual operational plans (AOPs) is very helpful for the successful implementation and monitoring of a medium-term sector plan. The AOP is an annual work plan that can be derived from a multiyear sector plan (see section 2.1); it indicates the precise targets to be reached during a given year and spells out in detail the activities to be undertaken, when, and by whom. Thus, the AOP serves as the basis for periodic progress reporting so that monitoring the medium-term plan implementation can occur later on.¹² Note that in countries where there are effective annual operational plans, there is a tendency to not have multiyear action plans, to avoid overburdening the whole planning process.

To be fully useful, these plans must be closely linked to annual budgets. Unfortunately, the two processes are often disconnected, and in many instances AOPs are prepared without any indication of the resources that will be available. Therefore, it is very important to create coherence between the structure of the plan and the structure of the budget. Strategic plans ideally are program based, and whenever a strategic planning approach is being adopted, the need is rapidly felt to also take on a program-based approach to budgeting.

There is no one way of presenting an annual operational plan and budget. Some AOPs are simple work plans in matrix format with very little written text (a small introduction explaining the rationale of the budget, an explanation of the preparatory process, and some general comments on the different budget summary tables and on the possible financing gap); others have substantial narrative sections and can be rather lengthy (with a reminder of overall policies and priorities, a situation analysis for each program, plus a narrative presentation of each program matrix). See Annex 2 for an example of an AOP template.

¹² It normally follows the same structure and the same logical framework format as the program matrices of the medium-term plan, but it is more detailed and precise.

3.4 Effective information systems are required for effective M&E

As discussed in both Modules 2 and 3, capacity constraints in the national education management information system (EMIS) and with regard to the measurement indicators remain a major problem in many countries. In the plan development process, actions should be prioritized to ensure availability of data needed to measure the desired results.

Major sources of data for monitoring, including indicators for the pre-primary subsector, are educational statistics obtained from the school census, financial accounts, human resources databases, and internal documents such as inspection or supervision reports, or minutes of meetings. However, the data for pre-primary might often be unavailable or considered unreliable. EMIS data for example, might include some information on the gross enrollment ratios (GERs) for the government-controlled pre-primary subsector, but it might not include (a) disaggregated and detailed statistics on these services by gender, location or other critical socioeconomic characteristics, or (b) statistics on private ECE services or community-based ECE centers.

The goal is to have a **systematic collection and aggregation** of programmatic and financial information to inform ongoing planning and budgeting. For example, a regular mapping of pre-primary services enables the gathering of data on overall coverage, changes in supply and demand, and identification of areas with the greatest needs (UNICEF 2019a). Doing this, however, requires adding a mapping (or other data collection effort) as one of the priority activities included in the ESP, or it could perhaps be undertaken in association with a joint sector review or midterm review.



4.

WHAT'S NEXT? ESP FINALIZATION AND ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

We have now covered all of the main stages of the plan preparation process, and now enter into the final stages: finalization and endorsement. Once the various parts of the plan have been drafted by the technical working groups (TWGs), they have to be consolidated into a single coherent document. Then follows the appraisal or assessment of the plan, its endorsement by the local education group (LEG) and its final adoption by the parliament. This section succinctly presents these processes, to be adapted to national contexts and needs.

4.1 Plan consolidation

Usually the consolidation of the final plan contents, provided by the different TWGs, rests in the hands of a dedicated core planning team. This team will need to ensure consistency and coherence in results, targets and strategies throughout the consolidated draft, including with the simulation model. The pre-primary working group should also review all parts of the ESP where pre-primary is included to confirm that all main priorities have been addressed, especially if the ESP is structured thematically.

Once the plan has been consolidated, a final large consultation is often held to discuss the final draft and solicit feedback. The full draft plan may also be circulated for comments to key partners such as the LEG, the education cluster, or a nongovernmental organization or civil society consortium. The core planning team will review all the comments, with input from the TWGs and the steering committee, and make needed revisions.

4.2 Plan appraisal process

It is common, although not an obligation for countries not submitting a financial request to the Global Partnership for Education, to have an external evaluator appraise the ESP.¹³ Appraisal reports are generally commissioned by the LEG. They are intended to provide a fair review of the ESP strengths and areas in need of improvement to further strengthen the plan. The idea is that changes will be made to the plan based on the appraisal report. Thus, it is a good practice to conduct the appraisal before partners endorse the plan and parliament adopts it.

The stakeholders should discuss the scope of and the methodology to be used for the appraisal, and develop a common vision of the whole process. The appraisal process should be participatory and grounded in the political and technical dialogue for ESP development. It is good practice to organize a validation workshop of the appraisal report's findings, conclusions and recommendations to feed into the ESP finalization. Therefore, the appraisal should occur early enough in the process to allow time for consultation and improvement of the final version of the ESP.

The appraisal process should be independent of the actors who contributed to the plan's preparation. Having an external evaluator conduct the appraisal helps avoid situations of conflict of interest involving the political decisions that have prevailed in the development of the plan and its future implementation.

Appraisal reports can be preceded by a check of the key features that are considered critical elements of a credible education plan, using the GPE/IIEP pre-check matrix. If the initial check does not appear sufficiently conclusive, the LEG could advise the government to continue the preparation work of the ESP before it is proposed for appraisal. The external evaluators would conclude the appraisal exercise with their own review of the matrix as a summary of their findings.

The appraisal seeks to answer a few general questions:

- Has the plan preparation process been country-led, participatory and transparent?
- Does the plan constitute a solid corpus of strategies and actions addressing the key challenges of the education sector?
- Are the issues of equity, efficiency and learning soundly addressed to increase sector performance?
- Is there consistency between the various components of the ESP?
- Do the financing, implementation and monitoring arrangements offer a good perspective for achievement?

13 Appraisals are required for eligible GPE countries who wish to apply for GPE funding. Although not mandatory in other circumstances, such evaluations can be very useful. This section is adapted from GPE and IIEP-UNESCO (2015a).

BOX 3.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASSESS HOW ECE HAS BEEN TACKLED IN THE ESP

Measure 1. There is a national pre-primary service provision plan based on data and evidence.

- Is the plan informed by evidence and data?
- Does the plan leverage the different types of provision to maximize resources for and coverage of pre-primary services—for example, how is private provision or provision by civil society leveraged?

Measure 2. The plan prioritizes availability of services for the most vulnerable groups.

- Does the plan account for potential differences between regions or districts by directing more resources where they are needed most?
- Does the plan account for additional needs for marginalized or disadvantaged groups, such as special educational support and/or language support or other?

Measure 3. The plan sets realistic targets and timelines.

- Are there realistic short-term and long-term targets for service provision and/or expansion of services, taking into account the current state of service availability, access gaps and the system's capacity to deliver or manage provision?

Measure 4. The plan is budgeted adequately.

- Is a realistic budget in place that links planned targets and activities to actual costs (at the national, regional and/or local levels) based on equitable funding formulas? For example, are budget allocations for the recruitment, training, support and deployment for teachers based on actual costs?
- Is the budget process based on multiyear forecasting of expenditures and/or budget data?
- Does the budget consider resources that may be available from other subsectors?

Measure 5. The plan reflects the human resources required for its implementation.

- Does the plan reflect a broad range of staff and professionals working in the subsector?
- Are the human resources needs reflected in the plan informed by analyses and data (for example, demand and supply of pre-primary personnel; pupil-teacher ratios; current/projected turnover of staff; recruitment and training needs)?

Measure 6. The plan addresses the efficient acquisition, management and deployment of physical resources.

- Does the plan reflect needs for physical resources such as pre-primary facilities, classroom equipment curriculum and teaching and learning materials, training materials, and so on?
- Does the plan address efficient use of existing physical resources, such as using and re-purposing existing infrastructures?
- Is the plan for physical resources needed informed by data?
- Does the plan highlight quality features of the physical resources that are needed?

Source: UNICEF 2019b.

UNICEF's *Conceptual Framework* and *Pre-primary Subsector Diagnostic and Planning Tool* provide interesting questions that can be used as a checklist to specifically assess how ECE has been tackled in the ESP. Box 3 highlights some of the key questions from the diagnostic and planning tool.

4.3 Endorsement process

Following the (optional) appraisal, the education ministry will decide how to address the appraisal comments. It is the ministry's decision whether to act on all or only some of the recommendations. The ministry may prepare a letter that documents their decisions on which comments to address and how. Final adjustments are then made to the plan, which can then be submitted to the LEG for endorsement. For Global Partnership for Education development country partners, endorsement by the LEG is a requirement for additional funding. Finally, the plan is submitted to parliament for adoption.

5.

MOVING FORWARD

This module is about improving plan implementation so as to achieve the results spelled out in the ESP, to improve educational outcomes for the system but most importantly for children. Guidance has been given on mechanisms to support, strengthen and encourage implementation. These include organizational oversight structures, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and procedures for regular review and updating of the plan. For the pre-primary subsector in particular, a well-functioning M&E system is essential for (a) promoting and maintaining pre-primary programs and services that are relevant and of high quality and (b) ensuring that the most disadvantaged children are sufficiently targeted. Here, we offer a few suggestions for moving forward with planning for the pre-primary subsector in the context of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Define a clear structure and process to oversee implementation of the ESP.

Structures to oversee plan implementation should also be included in the ESP. These structures are needed not only for monitoring implementation but, most importantly, for supporting it. If the activities are not progressing to plan, then they need additional support (which might be additional training, increased supervision or identification of additional resources, for example). These structures must incorporate all needed levels of oversight, including central and decentralized levels. The pre-primary oversight structures, such as an ECE technical working group, may also include representatives from other ministries or partners who play a critical role in the implementation of ECE priorities. It is important to ensure that these structures are based on existing ones.

Successful ESP implementation also depends on regular monitoring and review. These reviews should take place at regular intervals and at different levels—at both decentralized and national levels. In addition to regular, day-to-day monitoring and periodic review by a strategic monitoring (or oversight) committee, annual reviews with stakeholders and also midterm and final reviews are critical as they should involve a wide range of partners (especially important in the pre-primary subsector) to assess achievements as well as any shortcomings in plan implementation and then to agree on improvements for moving forward with the ESP.

Strengthen operational planning processes.

The 2015 GPE and IIEP-UNESCO *Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation* indicate that a multiyear action plan is needed as either an integral part of the plan or as an accompanying document. The purpose of the action plan is to assist with ESP implementation. The action plan clearly matches ESP activities to the inputs, costs, sources of funding and entities responsible for implementation. This matching is another type of feasibility testing for the ESP. If we know, for example, who is responsible for certain activities, there is a greater chance that those activities will be implemented. Similarly, if financial resources have been identified for particular activities, they also stand a greater chance of being implemented.

Action plans can also form the basis for the ongoing annual operational planning processes. Annual operational plans contain the same type of information (yearly targets, inputs required, costs, sources of funding and entities responsible) and are important tools for monitoring implementation. When pre-primary activities are included in multiple ESP programs, it is important that the department's or subsector's AOP clearly references and includes all relevant ESP activities.

Develop a matrix of key performance indicators to guide high-level monitoring of the plan.

KPIs are intended to provide a comprehensive overview of education system performance through a focus on overall and strategic objectives. This provides decision makers with a quick overview of achievements and areas where implementation may be lagging. As discussed in section 3.3, KPIs should be limited in number, preferably no more than 30 for the entire ESP. Thus, it is critical to identify at least two or three KPIs for the pre-primary subsector to include in the matrix.

Develop indicators that are relevant and valid, limited in number and use existing information systems (to the extent possible).

The M&E results framework is more detailed than the matrix of KPIs. It should clearly specify the chain of results associated with implementation of ESP priorities. Planners also need to think carefully about which indicators to include in the framework. Including too many may be counter-productive because it may require too many financial resources and too much time and energy to collect, analyze and report on the necessary data. Results will be easier to measure when data are incorporated into EMIS and other ongoing data collection processes. This is true for all subsectors. However, compared to other subsectors, data for the pre-primary

subsector are often unavailable or considered unreliable. The goal is to have a systematic collection and aggregation of programmatic and financial information to inform ongoing planning and budgeting for pre-primary. Developing a limited number of essential indicators and incorporating them into EMIS and other existing systems will help achieve this goal.

End of the course

Over the past 5 weeks you have learned about all of the main phases of the education sector plan preparation process, and the specific considerations for pre-primary that need to be addressed at each phase to ensure proper mainstreaming. We saw that while there is a standardized approach to education planning sector wide, some of the unique aspects of the pre-primary subsector, such as the diversity of its providers, financing sources, program models and standards, and the importance for family engagement, create particular challenges. Issues such as the need for increased coordination, inclusion of specific pre-primary stakeholders, and sufficient technical expertise, as well as the limitation of robust data, and lack of capacity and leadership, will need to be addressed during plan preparation. This course has provided you with the crucial information and tools that will provide you with some understanding on how to tackle these issues, and to advocate so that the key features required for a strong pre-primary subsector are supported throughout the planning process.

CONGRATULATIONS!

**You are now ready to support the development of
a sound pre-primary subsector within your
education sector plan!**



DEVELOPMENT OF MULTIYEAR ACTION PLANS

To operationalize the plan over the medium term, the ESP is translated into a *multiyear* action plan (generally of two or three years), sometimes referred to as an *implementation* plan or *operational* plan.

Multiyear action plans are derived from the program design and costing and financing phases. The starting points for the action plan are the outputs specified in the programs and their related activities as well as the unit costs used for the simulation model (see also Module 4). However, these will need to be adjusted based on the time period of the action plan (for example, year 2 or 3 of ESP implementation). It was quite common for multiyear action plans to be supplemented by annual action plans. However, increasingly we are seeing that in countries where there are effective annual operational plans, there is a tendency not to develop multiyear action plans to avoid overburdening the overall planning process.

An action plan—whether multiyear or annual—generally includes the following information for each activity; however, the particular level of information and detail will vary according to country contexts:¹⁴

- **A clear statement of the activity.** This serves as a reference point in developing a work plan.
- **Time period.** This shows the extent of the match between the annual costs of activity implementation and the available funding.
- **The quantity of inputs.** Inputs are defined as the financial, human and material resources required for implementation. This information is a reference point for the annual implementation report. They can help determine whether the implementation strategies have been efficient.
- **The quantity of the outputs and the unit costs.** Outputs are the products, goods and services that result from the program’s interventions. This information is critical for the annual implementation report; it confirms the target for a given activity over a given period.
- **The overall cost of the activity.** This could be the quantity multiplied by the unit cost. The cost of all action plan activities needs to be within the overall envelope of resources clearly identified (using ministry of finance budget ceilings and confirmed development partner inputs) in the education sector plan.

¹⁴ Adapted from GPE and IIEP-UNESCO (2015b, 23–24).

- **Sources of funding.** It is important to use only those sources of funding that are actually available or are likely to be available based on current projections. Depending on the modality of the support of development partners, some sources of funding may be managed outside the regular national budget process or by local governments, nongovernmental organizations or other entities. If activities funded by these entities are part of the ESP, they should appear in the action plan. The financing information on the action plan needs to be compatible with the financing framework (see Module 3), which is itself compatible with the macroeconomic and budgetary prospects.
- **The entity responsible for implementation.**¹⁵ This gives the responsibility for each activity. The entity listed as responsible for activity implementation should initiate funding requests in time. These should relate as closely as possible to the usual responsibilities of ministries and departments.
- The action plan also includes the **output indicators** from the program to which the activity is contributing.

¹⁵ This can also be done as part of the program design phase, if, for example, working groups also specify the entity responsible for each priority activity included in the ESP.

ANNEX 2.

EXAMPLE OF AN ANNUAL ACTION PLAN AND BUDGET MATRIX

WORK PLAN							BUDGET							
ESP PROGRAM-1:							Activity code	Requested budget			Funding source			
Expected outcome results:								Recurrent	Capital	Total	Government	External partners		
Responsible unit:												XX	XX	XX
Output/Activity	Baseline	Target (annual)	Timing											
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4								
Sub-activity-1.1.1														
Sub-activity-1.1.2														
Sub-activity-1.1.3														
Sub-activity-1.2.1														
Sub-activity-1.2.2														



Grande École

TOUTE LA MATERNELLE

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