

## 3.2 CRITERIA, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CHECKLISTS DEFINING ECE INDICATORS AND TARGET SETTING

### Defining and Refining ECE Indicators' Criteria & Considerations

The table below synthesizes the MOOC Modules<sup>1</sup>, guidance on **defining technical ECE indicators and builds on the MOOC to provide illustrative common considerations**. Although these considerations apply to all education subsectors developing the ESP, the criteria in this table is intended to be used by ECE TWG stakeholders to support defining and refining indicators across the results chain hierarchy.

**For each indicator, review the criteria against the indicator to “check” if the indicator is well-defined.**

**Table: Defining ECE Indicators - Criteria and Considerations**

Indicator Hierarchy Type <sup>2</sup>	Criteria for Defining Indicators (Adapted from the MOOC Module 4 Pages 16-17, MOOC Module 5 Pages 14- 16)	Response	Common Considerations for Applying the Criteria with Illustrative Examples
<b>All indicators</b> Are all indicators SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reliable, Timebound)?	<b>Specific</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the indicator specific enough to measure progress toward the results?</li> <li>Is the indicator sufficiently disaggregated (i.e. by sex, age, location, household wealth, and other vulnerability characteristics such as linguistic or ethnic minority, refugee, internally displaced population, children with disabilities)?</li> <li>This refers to avoiding vagueness and ambiguities in the ways indicators are defined and to capture issues of inclusion and equity to be captured if masked in national figures.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Somewhat <input type="radio"/> No	<p>Sometimes more than one indicator is developed which could be interpreted as applicable for measuring the same item. This ambiguity may cause redundancies and inefficiencies.</p> <p>Therefore, <b>an ambiguity “check” may be conducted to ensure the terms used in the indicator are not vague, and are clearly defined, as needed.</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE</b> An activity indicator on “Revised national ECE supervision protocol used by the inspectorate” is likely duplicative of an activity indicator “National supervision mechanisms improved to integrate ECE.”</p> <p>The latter is not specific and could be referring to and measuring the same activity. The latter should be clarified to distinguish from the former or removed.</p>
	<b>Measurable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>this means are the indicators reliable, and a clear measure of results?</li> <li>This means the indicator may be observed, counted, analyzed, etc.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Somewhat <input type="radio"/> No	<p>Sometimes there are one or more limitations related to measuring the indicator which ultimately make the indicator unmeasurable. <b>A “check” may be conducted to determine if there are any limitations that would make the indicator unmeasurable.</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE</b> An indicator is defined such as “the % of pre -primary institutions that meet minimum quality standards.” This would be unmeasurable if factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the assessment criteria for minimum quality standards do not exist</li> <li>there are no plans to develop minimum quality standards included as other activities or sub-activities,</li> <li>inspectors have not been trained on using existing quality standards’ assessment criteria with no plans for this training included,</li> <li>and/or only a small sample of schools and teachers will be observed.</li> </ul>

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			<p>Furthermore, if indicators such as those related to classroom observation are not intentionally integrated within existing data collection protocol (e.g., EMIS protocol, household surveys, demographic health surveys, etc.) and/or the budget envelope for ECE is not sufficient to conduct observations in all institutions, the indicator’s observable data may not be attainable or realistic (see below) “Attainable” and “Timebound” criteria).</p>
	<p><b>Attainable:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do the indicators measure something that is feasible and realistic to implement?</li> </ul> <p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there the necessary human, financial, and technical resources for implementing this?</li> <li>Is the time necessary to achieve this indicator available?</li> </ul>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Somewhat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Often a combination of activities and inputs are needed to achieve the desired outcome.</p> <p><b>The comprehensive combination of activities and sub-activities will need to be outlined to identify all the activity indicators and inputs needed for the ESP Results Framework.</b></p> <p><b>Once inputs have been detailed, a feasibility “check” – including checking the proposed target- should be conducted to identify if the human and financial resources are available or need to be added to complete the activity.</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE</b> An indicator may be “Number of teachers trained on the revised ECE curriculum” with a target to train 100% of all ECE teachers in one year – is this feasible?</p> <p>Another example: increasing the % of students with one year of pre-primary education with a target of 100% (covering all children nationally) in 2 years, as per the example below in the target setting section of this tool, is likely not attainable.</p> <p>To attain intended outcomes, additional resources not historically considered in plans and budgets such as to invest in behavior change communication activities or investment in infrastructure and teaching and learning materials, such as to accommodate and include children with disabilities, may be needed.</p>
	<p><b>Relevant:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the indicator relevant to the intended outputs and outcomes?</li> </ul>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Somewhat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>The first level of relevance for an indicator is to check if the indicator is relevant to the result it seeks to measure, so <b>a relevancy “check” may be conducted.</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE</b> If the activity is on classroom construction, the pupil to trained teacher ratio is not the most relevant indicator.</p>
	<p><b>Timebound:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are data available at reasonable cost and effort? This includes identifying if there is an existing data collection mechanism for collecting data. If not, consider if it may be easily added to existing mechanisms.</li> <li>Do data collection and analysis efforts align with when data is needed for reporting and planning cycles?</li> </ul>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Somewhat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Indicators sometimes do not include the “time” component or are not attainable due to failing to <b>consider factors such as resources needed, time needed, human capacity needed, and/or considerations such as how to reach the most marginalized populations.</b></p> <p><b>Indicators to include in EMIS must be carefully considered.</b> Sometimes trying to add too many indicators without <b>ensuring that the indicators are meaningfully integrated into the protocol used in conjunction with EMIS leads</b> to low-quality, limited or no data on the indicators to be measured.</p> <p><b>EXAMPLE</b> Data on teacher attendance is of great interest but is not commonly available. <b>Indicators may be collected but may not be analyzed and reported on time to be used for planning.</b></p>

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Impact Indicators (i.e. Indicators for Policy Priorities)	Do the indicators support measuring long-term and aggregated results? Do the indicators measure changes in the population targeted (disaggregated sufficiently)?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Somewhat <input type="radio"/> No	<p>The below considerations from the <a href="#">MOOC Module 5 (Page 16, Section 3.3.2)</a> were intended for identifying ECE Key Performance Indicators, however as KPIs are often (but not exclusively) defined from impact and outcome indicators. As such, these considerations are relevant to support adequately defining impact and outcome indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to concentrate on measuring results of overall goals and objectives.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Be easily understandable by decision makers and common users.</li> <li>• Be commonly agreed upon by the different stakeholders and development partners, to ensure easy coordination and cooperation later.</li> <li>• Be linked to international frameworks indicators, such as SDG 4.2 in the case of pre-primary</li> </ul>
Outcome Indicators (i.e. Indicators for Strategies)	Do the indicators measure intermediate changes at the level of direct beneficiaries (e.g., at the pre-primary service provider or child-level)?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Somewhat <input type="radio"/> No	<p>The below considerations from the <a href="#">MOOC Module 5 (Page 16, Section 3.3.2)</a> were intended for identifying ECE Key Performance Indicators, however as KPIs are often (but not exclusively) defined from impact and outcome indicators. As such, these considerations are relevant to support adequately defining impact and outcome indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to concentrate on measuring results of overall goals and objectives.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Be easily understandable by decision makers and common users.</li> <li>• Be commonly agreed upon by the different stakeholders and development partners, to ensure easy coordination and cooperation later.</li> <li>• Be linked to international frameworks indicators, such as SDG 4.2 in the case of pre-primary</li> </ul>
Output Indicators (Indicators showing the Activities' Results)	Do the indicators support measuring the immediate and concrete consequence of the measures taken and resources used?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Somewhat <input type="radio"/> No	<p><b>Regarding logic and coherence of the theory of change, output indicators may need to be “checked” to identify if they well- correspond with outcome indicators in a coherent and compatible way.</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE</b> For instance, in attempt to consolidate strategies, strategies may include too many unrelated outputs and activities.</p> <p>A strategy on “National pre-teacher training modalities are improved” has an activity on harmonizing national ECE curricula. One activity indicator is “Number of curricula used by non-public preschool service providers harmonized with public curricula.”</p> <p>While training on curricula use forms part of teacher training, this curricula harmonization activity and related indicator on curricula used in-service may be better suited to measuring the concrete consequences of a strategy and corresponding activity on curriculum development and implementation.</p> <p>Alternately, the strategy, itself, could be revised to be broader such as “National pre- and in-service teacher training modalities and curricula are improved and harmonized.”</p>
Input/Activity Indicators	Do the indicators support measuring the financial, administrative and regulatory resources provided by government or donors?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Somewhat <input type="radio"/> No	<p><b>A “check” may be needed to ensure activities’ indicators are not combined with targets.</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE</b> For example, the indicator “Community mobilization and advocacy efforts conducted per preschool catchment zone on a quarterly basis to strengthen preschool demand” combines an activity (community mobilization and advocacy efforts) with the target (all preschool catchment zones). A refined activity indicator would be “Number of preschool catchment zones which have conducted community mobilisation and advocacy efforts.”</p>

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			<p><b>Additional considerations for activity indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do they have pre-existing data collection methods or not?</b> They often do not have pre-existing data collection methods. In that case, the above criteria on Attainability and Timebound are especially important to “check.”</li> <li>• <b>Are multiple data sources and coordination mechanisms in place to consolidate data across data sources?</b> These indicators might have multiple different sources and/or limited existing coordination mechanisms or processes to consolidate data across sources (e.g., different civil society and faith-based partners providing ECE services in addition to public ECE service providers in different districts).</li> <li>• <b>How frequently will the data be consolidated and reported and by whom (individual institutions and collectively across partners)?</b> Activity indicators will need to be more regularly updated than higher level results as they will be used for more frequent monitoring.</li> </ul> <p>Note: Depending on the country context, activity indicators may be developed during the operational planning phase.</p>

<sup>1</sup> These are the course readers for the modules of the massive open online course (MOOC) on [Mainstreaming Early Childhood Education into Education Sector Planning](#).

<sup>2</sup> For more information and examples of ECE indicators across the hierarchy type, refer to the [refresher on ECE indicators](#).

## Checklist and Example: Applying ECE Target Setting Recommendations

The ECE TWG may use the checklist's considerations to set, revise, and validate targets.

Target Setting Considerations Checklist	
<input type="radio"/>	1. ECE targets correspond with SMART indicators (all targets)
<input type="radio"/>	2. Trend analysis is conducted to assess target attainability based on proposed indicators (policy priority and strategy targets only)
<input type="radio"/>	3. ECE targets are inputs to the simulation model and are further refined through an iterative process using evidence from simulation models (all targets)
<input type="radio"/>	4. International benchmarks are used to validate ECE targets' attainability (policy priority and strategy targets only)

**EXAMPLE** The following example from Sao Tome e Principe below illustrates how the checklist may be used.

Policy Priority	Indicator	Baseline (2019)	Target (2022)
By 2023, Provide universal, compulsory, inclusive, equitable and free access to pre-school education for San Tomean children (4-5 years)	Net Enrollment Rate in Pre-School Education (4 to 5 years)	78,6%	95%

The same reference numbers in the checklist are used to illustrate the example below:

1. The target is to reach 95% of Net enrolment ratio in 2023. It's difficult to reach universal enrolment (100%) in 4 years so the target's indicator is realistic (16 points increase in 4 years by 2022). It is timebound (up to 2022 to achieve the target), and performance against the targets will be monitored every year using population projections and EMIS data. During the [Joint Sector Review](#) and through the annual performance report, gaps between achievement and targets will be explained. A few solutions should be proposed to overcome identified challenges in achieving targets.
2. The target was defined through a collaborative approach with the ECE TWG, though no detailed information was available on how simulation data was used to determine this target.
3. The target is evidence-based, as it was validated based on identifying other countries' achievements.