



# Progress Brief: M&E Framework Implementation Plan in Rwanda

## Introduction

In 2021, the Government of Rwanda (GOR) undertook a midterm review to assess the progress of the health, nutrition, and early childhood development (ECD) programs as part of the monitoring progress towards maximizing children's potential. The midterm review aligned with the objectives of the National Early Childhood Development Program (NECDP) Strategic Plan 2018–2024 and the Strategic Plan for the Integrated Child Rights Policy in Rwanda (ICRP) 2019–2024. As a result of the review, the National Child Development Agency (NCD) developed a rolling three-year NCD operational plan (2022/3–2024/5) that integrates objectives and activities from the NECDP and ICRP Strategic Plans. The NCD operational plan (2022/3–2024/5) reflects six new strategic directions in line with the GOR mandate and underscores the need to develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan.



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During the same period (FY23), the Data for Impact (D4I) project supported NCD to develop an M&E plan (MEP) for the operational plan. The NCD MEP is a national-level harmonized mechanism for performance monitoring and evaluation with an agreed-upon set of activities, outputs, and outcome indicators for tracking progress over the three-year implementation period (2022–2025). The NCD MEP addresses standardization, measurability, accountability, transparency, accuracy, responsiveness, and learning.

## MEP Objectives

The goal of the MEP is to facilitate the collection of quality data to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the NCD operational plan (2022/3–2024/5) and to inform decision-making processes. The MEP defines data needs and data management and outlines the processes to ensure the strategic objectives of the operational plan are met so that quality data can be used for decision-making at all levels. The MEP objectives are:

- Strengthen the NCD capacity for leadership and coordination of M&E activities.
- Strengthen M&E partnership and collaboration at the national and decentralized levels—districts, sectors, cells, and villages—to enable information sharing, dissemination, and use.
- Improve the availability and use of data in decision-making processes at national and decentralized levels.
- Facilitate the documentation of progress, challenges, and lessons learned to enhance performance through continuous improvement.

## NCD's M&E Structure

The NCD's M&E institutional structure is divided into two levels—the national and decentralized levels.

### National Level

The NCD is mandated to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate all services related to child protection and development in Rwanda. This includes leading the M&E system, promoting the Learning and Research Policy, and developing standards in consultation with stakeholders and partners. Different M&E tools are used for monthly, quarterly, and annual performance M&E purposes. M&E processes involve various staff, including the M&E specialist, data analysts, and other technical specialists including child protection, ECD, and health and nutrition (H&N) specialists.



## Decentralized Levels

Decentralized levels refer to the district, sector, cell, and village levels. The NCD focal person based at the district level, usually the child protection and welfare officer (CPWO), coordinates data collection, enters data into the district-level database, and submits the information to the national-level NCD. The CPWO is responsible for monitoring program activities, coordinating program activities among child development and protection stakeholders, arranging supportive supervision visits for staff involved in M&E activities at the district level, facilitating the use of M&E standardized reporting tools for partners, and disseminating information to staff at lower administrative levels.

Other decentralized entities coordinate with NCD CPWOs to monitor stakeholders' field activities and submit reports. At the community level, frontline workers report on their respective indicators using simplified templates, which align with and feed into existing standard national reporting systems.

## Progress in Strengthening the Child Protection M&E Systems

D4I provided technical support to the NCD and facilitated M&E activities in FY21/22 and FY22/23 (July 2021 to June 2023). Activities and completed tasks are outlined in the table below.

Focus Area	Tasks Completed
Policy and strategy documents, systems, and structures	<p>The M&amp;E and technical specialists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participated in the mid-term review of the NECDP Strategic Plan 2018–2024 and Strategic Plan for the ICRP (2019–2024),</li> <li>supported the development of the NCD operational plan (2022/3–2024/5), and</li> <li>participated in the review and validation of the MEP (i.e., the formulation and review of the results framework and target setting).</li> </ul>
Data quality assessment (DQA) and supportive supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NCD M&amp;E team—NCD M&amp;E specialists, M&amp;E advisors seconded by partners, D4I, and the World Bank/Global Financing Facility (WB/GFF) organized and conducted a data quality assessment in 12 districts across the country. D4I supported the NCD to align its data quality assurance (DQA) activities to plan and implement national-level data collection on nutrition interventions for children. Technical assistance included developing the DQA checklist, programming the data quality checklist tool in Kobo district, field testing the tool, and training the national-level NCD technical specialists, CPWOs, and hospital staff across various districts.</li> <li>The objective of the DQA and supportive supervision was to assess the quality of different ECD and children protection data sources including health data systems and registries.</li> <li>The CPWOs, M&amp;E specialists, and technical specialists conducted a 10-day annual DQA for prioritized indicators and held supportive supervision visits using a checklist in 12 districts (for the sectors, cells, and villages that are in each of the 12 districts).</li> </ul>
Monitoring implementation of child protection interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The national-level M&amp;E and technical specialists conducted the following monitoring activities: field monitoring visits, quarterly data aggregation and reporting, and provision of feedback to stakeholders during quarterly sub-cluster meetings (including implementing partners (IPs), CPWOs, and public ministries and agencies that conduct child protection interventions).</li> </ul>
Data management and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The M&amp;E specialists supported the CPWOs to routinely collect data and submit monthly and quarterly reports using standardized reporting forms.</li> <li>The CPWOs and the M&amp;E specialists conducted child development and protection data analysis</li> </ul>



	for use at district and national levels for various stakeholders—NCD, respective ministries, and implementing partners—to track the implementation progress of the interventions.
M&E capacity strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NCD conducted training for both in-service and pre-service CPWOs to improve capacity in data collection, analysis, reporting, and tracking the progress of child-related interventions using indicators outlined in the results framework. D4I supported a preservice M&amp;E orientation for 22 CPWOs who joined the workforce in FY23/24.</li> <li>• NCD conducted capacity strengthening sessions for the national-level M&amp;E team for indicator definitions for the Partner Reporting System (PRS) and NCD MEP, as detailed in the results framework. These sessions provided opportunities for the partners, M&amp;E specialists, technical specialists, and CPWOs to provide feedback on the NCD M&amp;E indicators.</li> <li>• As part of the technical assistance D4I provided to the WB/GFF ECD program, on-the-job mentorship for NCD M&amp;E specialists and other programmatic and technical staff was provided on M&amp;E-related matters as part of their day-to-day interactions.</li> <li>• The M&amp;E team provided continuous support to CPWOs and oriented them to reporting processes and the use of standard reporting templates for submission into the PRS.</li> </ul>
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The M&amp;E team coordinated stakeholders to take part in various technical working groups (TWGs) for child protection, ECD, and health and nutrition.</li> </ul>

## Recommendations to Improve M&E Processes in Rwanda

D4I is committed to strengthening the collection, management, analysis, and use of routine data to support program planning and monitoring of alternative care provision. D4I is proposing the following recommendations for the NCD’s consideration to routinely generate evidence for use, to ensure strengthened capacity among the frontline workers and technical specialists, and to routinely manage quality data for effective decision-making and program outcome improvement:

- **Improve data use practices:** The NCD should plan for data review and learning forums where districts can share best practices for child protection interventions. These forums can use routine data to inform decision-making using routine monitoring systems and information products like the district profile to appraise the working strategies in various districts.
- **Improve coordination and information sharing across NCD and its partners:** NCD should ensure that all relevant stakeholders participate in the sub-cluster forums to leverage implementation of child protection interventions and share progress across the areas of focus or intervention.
- **Review of the MEP:** The NCD should schedule an annual review on the implementation of M&E processes and performance to provide recommendations for adoption in the next iteration of the MEP, aligned with the next National Strategy for Transformation 2.
- **Learn for improved results:** Forums such as TWGs should be used to build synergies to achieve the objectives of the operational plan and MEP. District-level stakeholders can leverage and/or collaborate more, share timely progress updates during TWG meetings, and continually improve implementation for greater impact across NCD programs. A core function of these TWGs should be to champion the harmonization of development partners’ support to the NCD’s strategic objectives.

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