



unicef   
for every child

# Two-page user guide for the Maturity Model for Harmful Practices and Policies

## 1. What is the purpose of the maturity model?

The maturity model and assessment tools for harmful practices and policies aim to provide well-articulated benchmarks to measure and monitor changes by level of maturity in a public policy management approach, and to provide a roadmap for improvement towards the achievement of the elimination targets by 2030.

## 2. What is the situation the maturity model wishes to address?

Globally, millions of girls and boys have experienced some form of violence, exploitation or harmful practice that's having a debilitating impact on their development. The situation of children already vulnerable and at risk is exacerbated by the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 resulting in further children being exposed to harmful cultural practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). According to UNICEF, approximately 650 million girls and women around the world today have been married as children, and more than 200 million have been subjected to FGM. These harmful practices are ending childhoods and driving girls out of school and leaving them more vulnerable to domestic violence and a lifetime of poverty.<sup>1</sup>

## 3. What is a maturity model?

The maturity model is a **measurement framework** which helps countries to understand their performance capacities in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals commitments (5.3) to eliminate harmful practices by 2030.

---

**The maturity model enables Government, CSOs and partners to assess the state of Government programmes, approaches and systems for elimination and prevention of FGM and Child Marriage; identify priorities or critical investments, and build consensus around the priority interventions.**

---

It **evaluates progress** towards this goal and implies that progress takes place through several intermediate states on the way to maturity. The model **provides a framework for prioritizing system investment**; it sets benchmarks or milestones, and helps to identify what 'good systems' look like.

The maturity model approach has also been used to measure Child Protection Systems Strengthening, supply chain and administrative data systems.<sup>2</sup>

## 4. How does the model work?

The model is structured around a number of defined Operational/Functional areas (known as Intermediate Outcomes) and different Sub-domains which are defined by different levels of maturity. The sub-domains serve as benchmarks to indicate the level of gradual progression or advancement made within that Intermediate Outcome.

### Intermediate outcomes for Maturity Model on Harmful Practices Policies

<b>Governance and Coordination Structures</b>	Assesses the effectiveness of government structures, including coordination across government departments, between centralizations levels, and between formal and informal actors.
<b>Policy and Legislation</b>	Assesses the effectiveness of the legal and regulatory framework, as well as specific policies related to prevention and elimination of harmful practices
<b>Engagement and Participation</b>	Assesses the extent to which key stakeholders, including children and women, are involved in planning interventions for the prevention and response to harmful practices
<b>Financing and human resources</b>	Assesses the sources, adequacy and availability of funds and human resources to support elimination of harmful practices
<b>Access to services</b>	Assesses the availability and access to prevention and response FGM services for women and children most-at-risk
<b>Data, monitoring and evaluation</b>	Assesses the effectiveness of data collection and monitoring and evaluation systems, whether it is being done nationally into the situation for children and women at risk of harmful practices, and into programmes addressing

For the accelerated scale-up to achieve the SDG 2030 elimination targets, the harmful practices system has to be strengthened within all the elements of the Intermediate Outcomes and Sub-domains. The benchmarks for each level of maturity have been defined and require certain priorities, processes and results to be achieved for each Sub-domain. These are defined recognizing that harmful practices systems evolve through different stages or levels. The harmful practices benchmarks elaborate the characteristics of each of the Sub-domains through the course of four levels:

#### 5. How are the priority actions identified?

Through a consultative process, the maturity model questions are completed using a rapid assessment tool. This automatically identifies the priority areas for intervention based on the level of maturity. Once this has been completed, a validation meeting is required to ensure the information collected is accurate and there is consensus among key stakeholders. This serves to inform the prioritized action plan. The model has been designed so that a user-friendly dashboard is produced, indicating the level of maturity against the Intermediate Outcomes and component Sub-domains.

**1. Weak - Building    2. Average - Enhancing    3. Good - Integrating    4. Excellent - Mature**



### 6. Next steps

Nr.	Proposed next steps	Timeframe
1	Country office shares desk review documents and analysis for UNICEF consultant to write up brief summary of situation of HPs in country context and activities underway.	Following inception call.
2	The country office (harmful practices focal person) populates the Excel model. UNICEF consultant is available to support and will review.	By 26 September.
3	Unicef consultant will produce a summative country document on situation, work underway, status in terms of Intermediate Outcomes from model, and draft prioritized matrix consultation.	Ten days after draft final model submitted – ideally by 8 October.
4	Facilitate consultation/awareness raising meeting with key counterparts on the model sharing draft results, and draft action plan. (Consultant available to present remotely). Purpose of this meeting is to raise awareness on the maturity model and seek their inputs at the initial stages.	Between 10–20 October.
5	Draft model finalized, including user-guide, draft action plan and summative country reports and dashboard.	31 October.

## Endnotes

1 United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Child marriage on the rise in Horn of Africa as drought crisis intensifies’, Press release, 28 June 2022, [www.unicef.org/press-releases/child-marriage-rise-horn-africa-drought-crisis-intensifies](https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/child-marriage-rise-horn-africa-drought-crisis-intensifies).  
 2 See Child Protection Systems dashboard, <https://infogram.com/dashboard-on-the-maturity-of-cps-1h7z2l8k3y7rx6o2live>.

#### Photo credits:

Cover | © UNICEF Nepal-2023-LPNgakhusi

