FEASIBILITY REPORT ON THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INSTITUTE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN SEYCHELLES AS A

UNESCO CATEGORY II CENTRE

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List of Abbreviations

AfECN	Africa Early Childhood Network
AUC	African Union Commission
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016 – 2025)
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
GEQAF	General Education Quality Assessment Framework
IBE	International Bureau of Education
ICQN	Inter-Country Quality Note
IECD	Institute of Early Childhood Development
IICBA	UNESCO International Institute of Capacity Building in Africa
IIEP	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
NAP	National Action Plan
NICU	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
PPBB	Performance Programme Based Budgeting
SABER-ECD	System Approach for Better Education Results for Early Childhood Development
SELF	Seychelles Early Learning Framework
SF-ECCE	Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of early childhood care and development in Sub-Saharan Africa

Early childhood development programmes vary in coordination and quality with inadequate and inequitable access especially for children younger than three years (Black et al, 2017). Estimates based on proxy measures of stunting and poverty indicate that 250 million children (43%) who are younger than five years in low and middle income countries are at risk of not reaching their full developmental potential. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest prevalence of children at risk of not reaching developmental potential at 70% in 2004 and 66% in 2010 (Black et al 2017). This calls for increased multi-sectoral coverage of quality programming that incorporates health, nutrition, safety, responsive caregiving and early learning opportunities (Black et al 2017). Equitable early childhood policies and programmes are equally important for meeting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for children to develop intellectual skills and creativity required to become healthy and productive adults.

Approximately 130 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa (20% of its total population) face significant challenges of deprivation, among them poverty, food insecurity, stunting, malnutrition, health risks, violence, and conflict including war. As a result of these challenges, the children are often at risk and ill prepared physically and mentally for school (African Union, 2014). Research has shown that school readiness not only depends on children's cognitive skills, but also on their physical, mental and emotional health and ability to relate to others (Neuman & Devercelli, 2012, Hair et al, 2006).

Young children's development is further influenced by diverse and multiple stakeholders. The various sectoral policies that affect early childhood development (ECD) outcomes should include healthcare and hygiene, education, poverty alleviation and social and child protection (Neuman & Dervecelli, 2012). The policies can target pregnant women, children, caregivers, or the family as a whole. Interventions therefore can take place in the home, at preschool or childcare centres, hospitals or community centres.
Neuman and Dervecelli (2012) and Naudeu et al (2011) argue that a national Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy is three fold. First, the policy presents a country's vision for its young children, making visible the goals, objectives, and strategies needed to make the vision a reality. Second, a national ECD policy clarifies the responsibilities of different actors or agencies. Third, the national ECD policy provides an opportunity to define the respective roles of the public and private actors in important areas including funding and service provision. Policy guidelines are therefore critical in providing direction on programmes and service provision for children.

UNESCO, through the second flagship of its Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2014 – 2021), focuses on strengthening education systems for sustainable development in Africa by improving equity, quality and relevance. This can be achieved through (a) providing technical assistance and strengthening national capacities to improve teacher policy formulation, implementation and assessment of teaching needs, with particular focus on policies relating to attracting and retaining teachers in rural and disadvantaged locations; (b) developing capacities of national teacher training institutions to deliver quality training using blended strategies, including information communication and technology (ICT); (c) supporting the capacity development of head teachers and school principals for effective pedagogical leadership and

quality learning outcomes; (d) supporting the development of national and regional qualification frameworks for education personnel..

Education is an effective investment for achieving equitable and sustainable development, realizing gender equality which must become a priority in the effort to promote not only the right to education for all, but also to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. . As part of this agenda, target 4.2 of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on education, seeks to ensure that by 2030, all boys and girls have access to quality early childhood development, care and preprimary education, and to be ready for primary education.

1.2 Overview of early childhood care and development in Seychelles

At the first UNESCO World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) held in Moscow in 2010, Conference participants adopted the Moscow Framework for Action and Cooperation, which outlines a number of challenges to be tackled to achieve ECCE goals. It is also at the end of this Conference that the Seychelles vowed to fulfill the rights of all young children to develop their full potential through a sound investment in ECCE as an indispensable foundation for lifelong learning. ECCE has proven benefits in health, nutrition, learning, gender equity, greater employability and earnings, and an overall better quality of life (Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) National Action Plan 2019-2020). Thus, providing quality care and early learning opportunities for children in their formative years of development can provide them a firm foundation in education that will influence how they perform in other levels and work towards lifelong learning.

In 2017, Seychelles had a population of 95,843 (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2018). The country has high literacy levels, at 91.8%, with free health services and low maternal mortality at 99.5% of births attended by skilled personnel. There has been progress in reducing child mortality with the infant mortality rate falling from 18.5 per 1,000 live births in 2013 to 10.7 per 1,000 live births in 2015 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Regional comparisons on health indicators in 2007-2011 indicate that Seychelles was doing better than its neighbouring countries in relation to infant mortality, under five mortality and maternal mortality rates (World Bank, 2013).

In 2015, there were 24 registered daycare centres in Seychelles catering for children between 0-4 years with a total of 1,214 children (49% male and 51% female). There were 152 staff members working in public day care centres. It is observed that there was gender parity on children attending day care. Apart from daycare services, the Ministry of Education provides two free years of preprimary education. In 2015, there were 2,986 children enrolled in Crèches (50% male and 50% female), with state enrollment representing 89% and private enrollment representing 11%. This shows that although early childhood education is not compulsory, almost all children of preschool age are enrolled in crèches. In addition to day care centres and crèches, there are 80 registered home-based childminding services regulated and managed by the IECD (reported by CEO, IECD during the feasibility study, August 2019).

Given the importance of learning in the early years, the Government of Seychelles is investing in early childhood education. The Seychelles Early Learning Framework (SELF) was developed to enhance ECCE in various settings for children from conception to seven years, which is normally until primary two (Republic

of Seychelles, 2015). In Seychelles, childminding is a popular community service. However, it is a demanding service which requires a childminder to provide reliable, high quality services that contribute to the development and education of children. To enhance quality service delivery, the government of Seychelles developed the childminding standards that provide guidelines on childminding (IECD, 2016). The Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) plays a critical role of ensuring that childminding standards are observed through providing pre-registration training for childminders. The training focuses on ten standards relating to: early learning, interaction, health, nutrition, children's rights and protection, staffing, physical environment, family and community engagement, and administration. Building capacity of registered childminders for quality services is a major priority of IECD.

1.3 Feasibility Study to establish the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) as a Category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO.

The IECD was established in 2014 in Victoria, Mahé Island through the IECD Act of 2014, serving as the IECD is the institutional anchor of early childhood development in the country.

The Government of the Republic of Seychelles submitted a proposal to UNESCO in June 2019, to establish the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) as a Category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO. IECD's mandate is to provide co-ordination, leadership and strategic direction for early childhood development at national level, and advise the Government on policy issues and programmes relating to early childhood development. It is also responsible for regulating childminding services for children aged 0-4 years; undertaking research to inform policy formulation, programme and standards development; and promoting and advocating the importance of early childhood development. The centre aims to lead quality assurance in ECCE and be recognized as a model of good practice regionally and beyond. The UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) designated the IECD as the Best Practice Hub for ECCE in 2017.

A feasibility study to evaluate designating IECD as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO was carried out in August 2019, including an on-site mission to the centre from 19 to 21 August, in coordination with the Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO. The study focused on analyzing the mandate and functions of the institute, its governance, infrastructure, operational structure, legal framework, global and regional relevance as well as its programmatioc linkages and envisioned cooperation with UNESCO.

A desk review of key documents was carried out, as listed in the he annex. Discussions were held with the IECD Chief Executive Officer, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Chairpersons of the Sectoral and Technical Teams for ECCE and Designated Minister and Chairperson of the High Level ECCE Policy Committee during the on-site visit. The conversations revolved around capacity development, financing, legal and policy frameworks, involvement in regional, sub-regional and global ECCE affairs and partnerships with the Government and the private sector. Apart from IECD, field visits also included Victoria Hospital, Trotter's Stop Primary School and Day Care as well as Perseverance Primary School to enhance understanding of what happens at the ECCE centres and support services for newborns and their mothers at the children's ward coordinated by IECD.

The feasibility study's assessment of IECD was based on the criteria for admittance to category 2 status outlined in UNESCO's Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres (document 37 C/18 Part I). The main findings and conclusions of the feasibility study are presented in this document.

2. RESULTS OF THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Governance

The IECD Act 2014 sets out the governance structure for the centre and makes provisions for a Board of Directors which provides oversight for the IECD. The Board members are appointed by the President of Seychelles with representation from the ministries responsible for social affairs and community development, education and health. The Board also has a representative from a non-governmental organization, the Attorney General's office and two persons with expertise and experience in early childhood. The Board meetings are held on a quarterly basis. The main functions of the board include:

- Approving the programmes, activities and management plans of the IECD;
- Authorizing the signing of documents, including agreements, on behalf of the IECD;
- Ensuring that the IECD performs its functions within the policy framework of the government;
- Preparing the budget, accounts and reports of the IECD;
- Ensuring that necessary mechanisms are in place to coordinate the development and monitoring of inter-sectoral early childhood education and care programmes and initiatives; and
- Establishing special committees to assist the IECD in its mandate when necessary.

The IECD Act further provides for a position of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is an ex officio Member of the Board appointed by the President with experience and expertise in early childhood. The CEO, subject to the control of the Board, is responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the Board and for the management of the affairs of the IECD. The CEO performs other functions as the Board may from time to time assign, as well as signing documents on behalf of the board and delegate to employees of the institute duties and responsibilities.

In addition to the governance framework, a High Level ECCE Policy Committee was set up in 2011. The Committee consists of Ministers with portfolio responsibilities for finance, education, health, local and community development and social services under the chairmanship of the then Vice President of the Republic of Seychelles (from 2011 to 2016) and the Designated Ministers since 2017. The Committee is instrumental in defining the policy direction for ECCE, overseeing the implementation of the ECCE Framework and ensuring sustainability of the ECCE system. It affirms government commitment, provides political leadership, and drives and integrates collaborative ECCE strategies across key portfolios through shared responsibilities. It forms part of the inter-sectoral coordination and mechanism in ECCE in Seychelles. It also serves as a platform to identify bottlenecks and raise concerns in the implementation of the ECCE policy.

Another structure under the governance framework has been the setting up of Sector-based Technical Teams for ECCE in 2012, following the introduction of the Seychelles Framework on ECCE. The main objective is to provide a platform for professionals to work together to lead the implementation of ECCE

and its action plans in their respective sectors/ministries, and advise the Minister on internal ECCE matters for action. This is another interactive task which IECD has undertaken to build and harness a positive working relationship with ECCE Sectors.

As a coordinating mechanism, the National Coordinating Committee was formed to ensure collaboration and to maintain the necessary linkages with different sectors, agencies, other stakeholders and the High Level ECCE Policy Committee. The Committee plays a pivotal and effective role in inter-sectoral coordination of multi-sectoral programmes, provides specialist inputs and support during implementation and evaluation of national plans for ECCE. Monthly meetings under the leadership of IECD are convened and periodic reports are submitted to the High Level ECCE Policy Committee. The Coordinating committee is made up of chairpersons of the Sectoral Technical Teams chaired by the IECD CEO.

Infrastructure

The IECD is currently located in a building that houses other government entities. The premises comprise of individual and open office spaces, a large meeting room, reception area, storage, display area for publications and administrative forms, and a canteen. The IECD is in the process of expanding its offices to include additional cubicles. Although the IECD has functional office space to dispense both material and administrative services, it has acquired land in a central location for construction of a building devoted exclusively to IECD's work.

Operational Structure

The IECD works in partnership with line Ministries or organizations responsible for ECCE services, locally and internationally. The core functions of the IECD are delivered by three sections within the organization that have specific roles as follows:

a) Regulatory Affairs Section (Homebased Childminding Service Unit) responsible for:

- granting registration under the IECD Act of 2014;
- ensuring that childminders comply with guidelines and standards of childminding service and childminding establishment as may be prescribed by regulation;
- reviewing and providing training and professional development for operators and staff;
- monitoring and evaluating the home-based childminding services; and
- performing other related functions as may be prescribed by regulations.

Regulatory Affairs Section (Centre-based Childminding Service Unit) responsible for:

- granting registration under the IECD Act of 2014;
- assisting with the review and formulation of standards and regulations;
- reviewing and providing training and professional development for operators and staff;
- ensuring compliance with guidelines and standards as may be prescribed by regulations;
- monitoring and evaluating the centre-based childminding services; and
- performing other related functions as may be prescribed by regulations.

b) Programme Coordination and Research Section is in charge of:

- implementing, monitoring and evaluating early childhood development programmes and projects;

- undertaking research on early childhood development in order to provide relevant data for evidence-based policy formulation and programme development;
- coordinating with main stakeholders (government and others) regarding the development and review of standards in early childhood development;
- advising relevant ECCE related institutions on policy matters relating to early childhood development;
- advising on and assisting in the organization of training and professional development in early childhood development;
- advising parents, educators and ECCE related institutions on matters pertaining to early childhood development; and
- collaborating with international organizations or bodies to develop technical ECCE areas. This also includes IECD participating in these developments.

c) Advocacy and information section in charge of:

- promoting national standards, best practices including environments conducive to the wellbeing and holistic development of a child;
- mobilizing funds for the purpose of fulfilling the functions of the institute;
- collecting, maintaining, analyzing and disseminating data and information on ECCE;
- promoting understanding of the importance of early childhood development and provide information and advice on good practices; and
- ensuring collaboration with relevant national and international authorities pertaining to early childhood development matters, including sharing of the know-how, practices and experience of IECD.

Financial sustainability

The IECD receives an annual budget from the Government of Seychelles for its operations in relation to the implementation of its programmes and staff salaries. The budget allocation is linked to the targets of the Performance Programme-Based Budgeting (PPBB) system as outlined in the IECD's budget summary in table 3. Overall, IECD receives an annual budget from the Government of the Seychelles for its operations concerning programme implementation and salaries, which amounts to around USD 9,000 per year. It also receives funding locally, from the National ECCE Trust Fund, Children's Special Fund, corporate organizations through their corporate social responsibility programmes and private businesses, as well as international grants, such as from the World Bank.

Table 3: IECD Budget Summary for 2019

Consolidated Position	**2019**				**2020**	**2021**
SR'000s	**Total to be appropriated**	Compensation of employees	Use of Goods and Services	Capital	Forecast	Forecast
P1: Governance, Management and Administration	3,943	1,387	2,555	-	4,013	4,033

P2: Early Childhood Care and Education	3,897	1,530	2,367	-	4,000	4,037
P3: Coordination, Evaluation and Research	519	414	106	-	522	522
P4: Advocacy, Communication and Information	654	418	236	-	675	687
Total	**9,013**	**3,749**	**5,264**	**-**	**9,211**	**9,279**

Operationally, IECD has a unit which manages and administers its budget including the externally received funds. The programme areas funded include:

- *Governance, management and administration*. The purpose of this programme is to provide overall governance, leadership and management of the IECD and centralized human resource, administration and financial management support services. In addition, the programme seeks to have an appropriate monitoring and evaluation structure in place to assess the overall performance of the organization in line with established key performance indicators.
- *Early childhood care and education*. The programme seeks to develop and implement regulatory policies and structures for early childhood services for children between 0 to 4 years. It sets standards for registration, training, inspection, monitoring and ensures compliance by service providers.
- *Coordination, evaluation and research*. The programme seeks to develop, coordinate and evaluate the National Action Plan (NAP) for ECCE in collaboration with ECCE sectors. The programme also includes monitoring support provisions in the implementation of the NAP, within the programme emerging research studies are undertaken to provide relevant data for policy dialogue, and subsequent policy review, development and formulation.
- *Advocacy, communication and information.* The purpose of the programme is to advocate for ECCE standards and policies that support health, nutrition, security and learning, which provide for children's holistic development. It also promotes standards and attainment of standards, collects, disseminates, and maintains information and statistics on ECCE as appropriate and advises on the establishment of environments conducive to the holistic development of children. It promotes importance of ECCE and communicates information on good practices to all stakeholders and the population in general.

Legal Framework

The IECD was established in 2014 through the IECD Act of 2014 to guide its operations in promoting the holistic development of children and establish a framework for ECCE. The The IECD Act of 2014 gives the centre an independent legal status as a corporate body and endows it with the following functions:

a) Advise the government on the development of policies, guidelines, standards and regulation on child minding services;
b) Grant registration pursuant to the IECD Act 2014;

c) Ensure that childminders comply with guidelines and standards of childminding service and childminding establishment as may be prescribed by regulations;
d) Monitor and evaluate the childminding establishment and childminding services provided by childminders and perform such other functions as may be prescribed by regulations;
e) Implement, monitor and evaluate early childhood development programmes and projects;
f) Undertake research on early childhood development in order to provide relevant data for policy formulation and programme development;
g) Coordinate with interested institutions regarding the development and review of standards in early childhood development;
h) Advise interested institutions on policy matters relating to early childhood development;
i) Provide training and professional development in early childhood development;
j) Advise parents, educators and interested institutions on early childhood development matters;
k) Promote national standards and best practice including good environments conducive to the wellbeing and holistic development of a child;
l) Mobilize funds for the purpose of fulfilling the function of the institute;
m) Promote understanding of the importance of early childhood development and provide information and advice on good practices; and
n) Ensure collaboration with relevant national and international authorities pertaining to matters of early childhood development including the sharing of IECD's knowledge, experience and practices internationally.

In addition to the IECD Act 2014, the Institute of Early Childhood Development National Standards of Childminding Regulations were developed in 2016 (Republic of Seychelles, 2016) demonstrate that IECD has the legal foundation to manage ECCE activities nationally and the authority to enact any other regulations that will enable it to execute activities that are regional or global in nature.

Regional and global relevance

The IECD is increasingly getting recognition for its work in ECCE by countries in Africa and beyond, and is sharing its expertise and improving its own delivery through regional and international collaboration.

At the national level and in line with its mandate, IECD has been involved in the development and implementation of four national action plans on ECCE, the last for the period 2019 – 2020. It has also undertaken research, with the aim to provide relevant data to informed policy decisions and actions on ECCE. One example is the IECD early learning assessment report of Sept 2018, demonstrating the need to strengthen ECCE teacher training. National conferences on ECCE have been organized in 2011, 2013 and 2015, with a view to sharing achievements and challenges to chart the way forward in ensuring progress. In addition, as part of its efforts for the development of a national programme for children between 0 and 3 years, a number of initiatives were successfully implemented, including the formulation of national standards for home-based childminding services in collaboration with the World Bank; capacity development for more than 200 childminders undertaking registration of services with IECD as a regulator; and conducting inspection visits to ensure compliance with standards to raise quality of childcare services.

At regional level, IECD has participated at meetings related to the implementation of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Africa

Early Childhood Network (AfECN). CESA 16-25 identifies pre-primary education as a neglected sub-sector that deserves special attention, and therefore established the Early Childhood Education Development Cluster ECED. IECD serves as Chair of one of the four working groups under the cluster – on Governance and Accountability, for the period 2019-2020. The centre has also been active in the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), including the Inter-Country Quality Cluster on Early Childhood Education hosted by Mauritius in cooperation with UNESCO. In addition, it has provided technical assistance to Cameroon in 2016 on the development of a plan to improve ECCE delivery, in cooperation with IBE, and also developed an ECCE system prototype in cooperation with this UNESCO category 1 institute, to provide practical assistance to Member States.

At the international level, IECD has been convening a biennial international conference on ECCE (Feb 2017 and Feb 2019). The conferences served as platforms for participating countries to share national achievements and progress, and chart the way forward in making quality ECCE services accessible for all, as well as knowledge sharing through latest research and developments in ECCE globally. In addition, IECD has played a key role in the implementation of activities under UNESCO's General Education Quality Assessment (GEQAF), in particular the ECCE component. Seychelles has been recognized for its leading role among the GEQAF countries, in developing relevant programmes and institutionalizing the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards ECCE in SDG 4.

Programmatic linkages and envisioned cooperation with UNESCO

The IECD is keen to become a UNESCO Category 2 centre, to develop and expand its relations with relevant UNESCO entities. In addition to the already established partnership with the IBE, the centre seeks to cooperate with UNESCO's International Institute of Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) working with teachers in Africa and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 as well as the International Institute of Education Planning (IIEP). IECD proposes to collaborate with UNESCO through sharing best practices on ECCE, including its expertise in capacity development of childminders, preschool teacher training and the development of childminding standards. In 2017, IBE designated the IECD as the Best Practice Hub for ECCE in 2017.

Through collaboration with UNESCO, it seeks to enhance its delivery capacity via ICTs, increased connectivity and blended learning, where it could draw from UNESCO's expertise. IECD could enhance learning opportunities at the national level through participation in UNESCO-hosted MOOCs. Furthermore, it would collaborate with other category 2 institutes and UNESCO Chairs on matters related to ECCE, where relevant. This would help in enhancing multi-sectoral coordination, partnerships and collaboration in ECCE to enhance health, nutrition, child safety and protection as well as early learning opportunities and lifelong learning for all.

IECD's activities contribute to Strategic Programme Objective 1 of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (2014 – 2021) and to the 39 C/5's Expected Result (ER) 1 on education policies and plans for quality ECCE, but also support the work of other ERs, such as ER 5 on teachers, ER 8 on the inclusion of children with disabilities and ER 10 on research.

Challenges experienced by IECD in implementing ECCE programmes

The challenges experienced by IECD in implementing ECCE in Seychelles include:

- Inability to fully implement and enforce the legal frameworks due to limited infrastructure and human resources;
- Unavailability of updated disaggregated statistical information and data on important early childhood development indicators nationally and for reporting purposes;
- Inability of sector stakeholders to undertake their assigned projects in the national ECCE action plans leading to delays in the implementation of the plan nationally;
- Lack of office space to accommodate the growing work demands and regulatory functions; and
- Delays in obtaining relevant information from stakeholders to implement projects and programmes.

To mitigate the above challenges, IECD seeks to do the following:

- Operationalize the regulator for childminding services including day care centres and supporting the implementation of the existing legal framework;
- Improve availability of disaggregated data on early childhood development indicators to support decision making by implementing a data management system nationally and systematically collecting these data;
- Improve ECCE services by assisting the sector stakeholders to address gaps they encounter in implementing projects allocated to them in the National Action Plan on ECCE;
- Establish and implement a national communications strategy to promote and increase visibility of ECCE amongst the population and assure quality of early learning programmes and development outcomes in home-based childminding services; and
- The IECD has acquired a centrally located piece of land to construct a larger IECD facility as a long term solution to space. In the interim, IECD identified additional space within the current office building to accommodate more offices for the IECD work force.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The key conclusion of this feasibility study is that the IECD fulfills the criteria for admittance to Category 2 status under the auspices of UNESCO. As a Category 2 centre, plans are underway to collaborate more closely with UNESCO in order to actively engage with Member States in the delivery of SDG 4.2 and Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016 – 2025 (CESA 16 – 25) and enhance networking opportunities in response to UNESCO's Global Priority Africa.

While IECD largely focuses on national level for the time being, the centre is increasingly recognized for its work in ECCE by countries in Africa and beyond. It is involved in various regional and international initiatives, including co-convening a biennial international conference on ECCE with UNESCO's International Bureau of Education (IBE), participation at meetings on CESA 16 – 25 and providing inputs to UNESCO's draft ECCE system prototype. In addition, IECD has played a key role in the implementation of activities under UNESCO's General Education Quality Assessment (GEQAF), in particular the ECCE component. The centre's development and expansion at regional level would complement UNESCO's activities on ECCE in the region. In addition to established cooperation with the International Bureau of Education (IBE), the centre should cooperate with and draw on the expertise of UNESCO's International

Institute of Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), International Institute of Education Planning (IIEP) and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.

In particular, the institute should focus its functions around (i) knowledge production, in undertaking research on ECCE; (ii) capacity development, to provide training to policy makers and teachers in ECCE; (iii) technical support, to promote understanding of the importance of ECCE and provide information and advice on good practices to Member States; and (iv) cooperation, to promote cooperation on ECCE among Member States in the Africa region and contribute to global agenda-setting on ECCE through a biennial international conference.

The IECD Act of 2014 gives the centre an independent legal status as a corporate body. The IECD has legal support and a governance structure as outlined in the Act 2014 and the Standards Regulations 2016 that allows it to coordinate and take charge of early childhood matters in Seychelles. The legal framework allows IECD to receive funding for various activities from the government, but also from external and internal donors. This has made it possible for IECD to successfully implement ECCE activities and programmes in collaboration and partnership with other government agencies.

However, it was observed that IECD has experienced some challenges in implementing ECCE activities in relation accessing updated disaggregated statistical information and data in early childhood, office space, as well as delay in implementation of the national action plans. To overcome these challenges, the centre has identified a series of mitigation measures. However, finances remain a key challenge, with IECD receiving an annual budget of USD 9,000 per year from the Government of Seychelles for its operations. It is therefore strongly recommended that the centre improve its financial sustainability by further diversifying funding sources and mobilizing additional funds by seeking financial contributions from other Member States or private entities in order to expand activities to the regional level.

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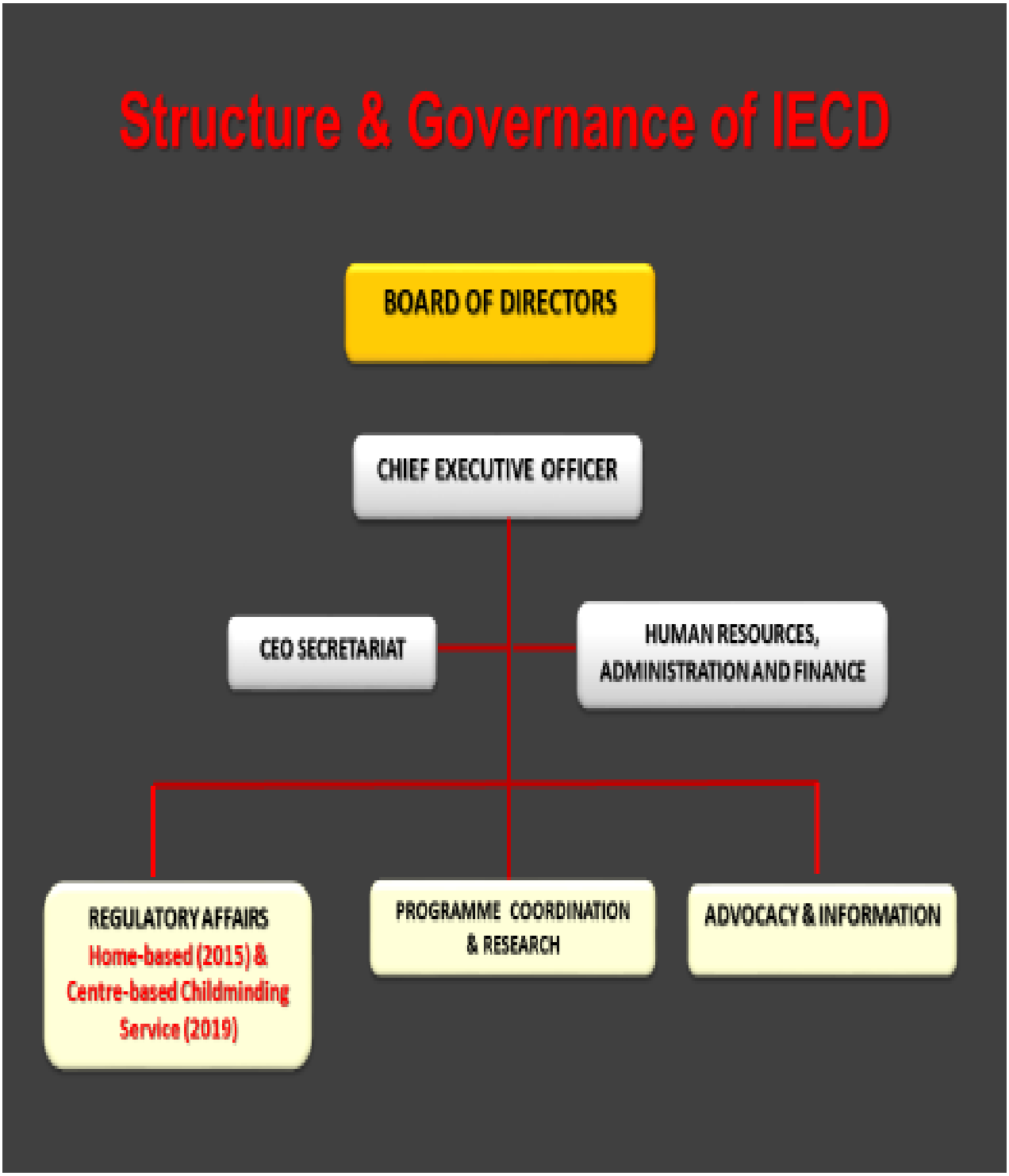
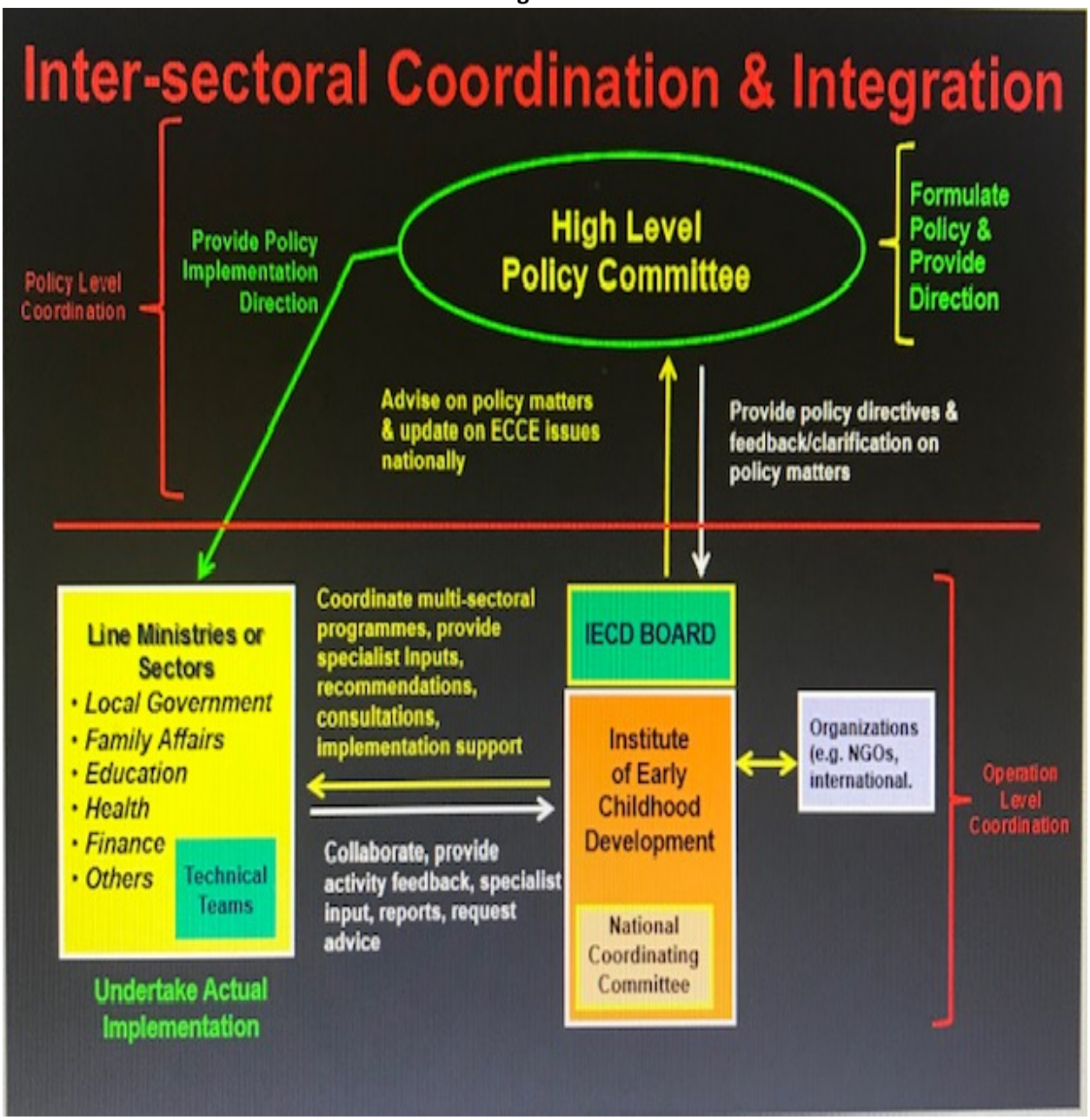
Annexes

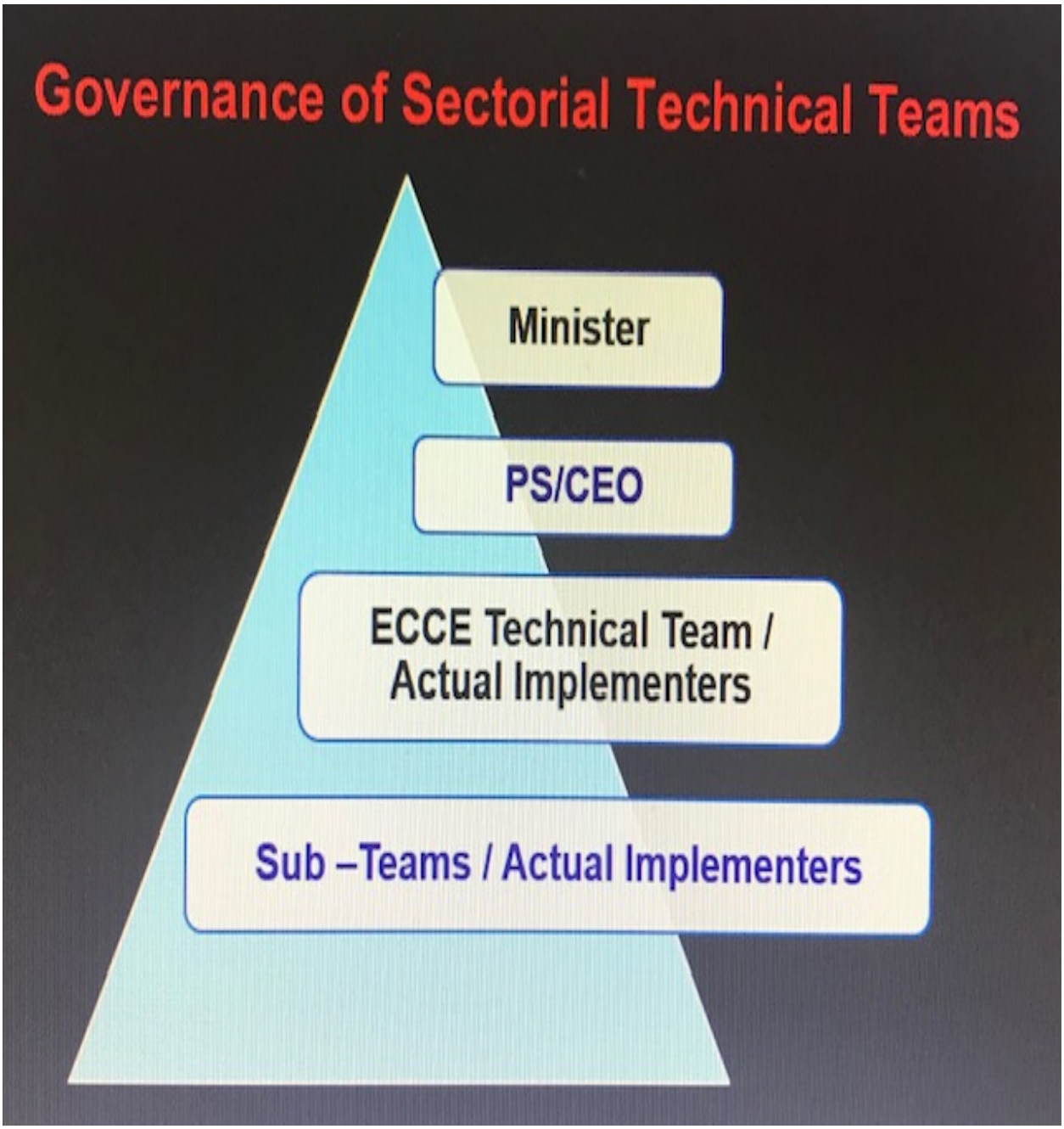
Annex 1: IECD Administrative Structure & Governance



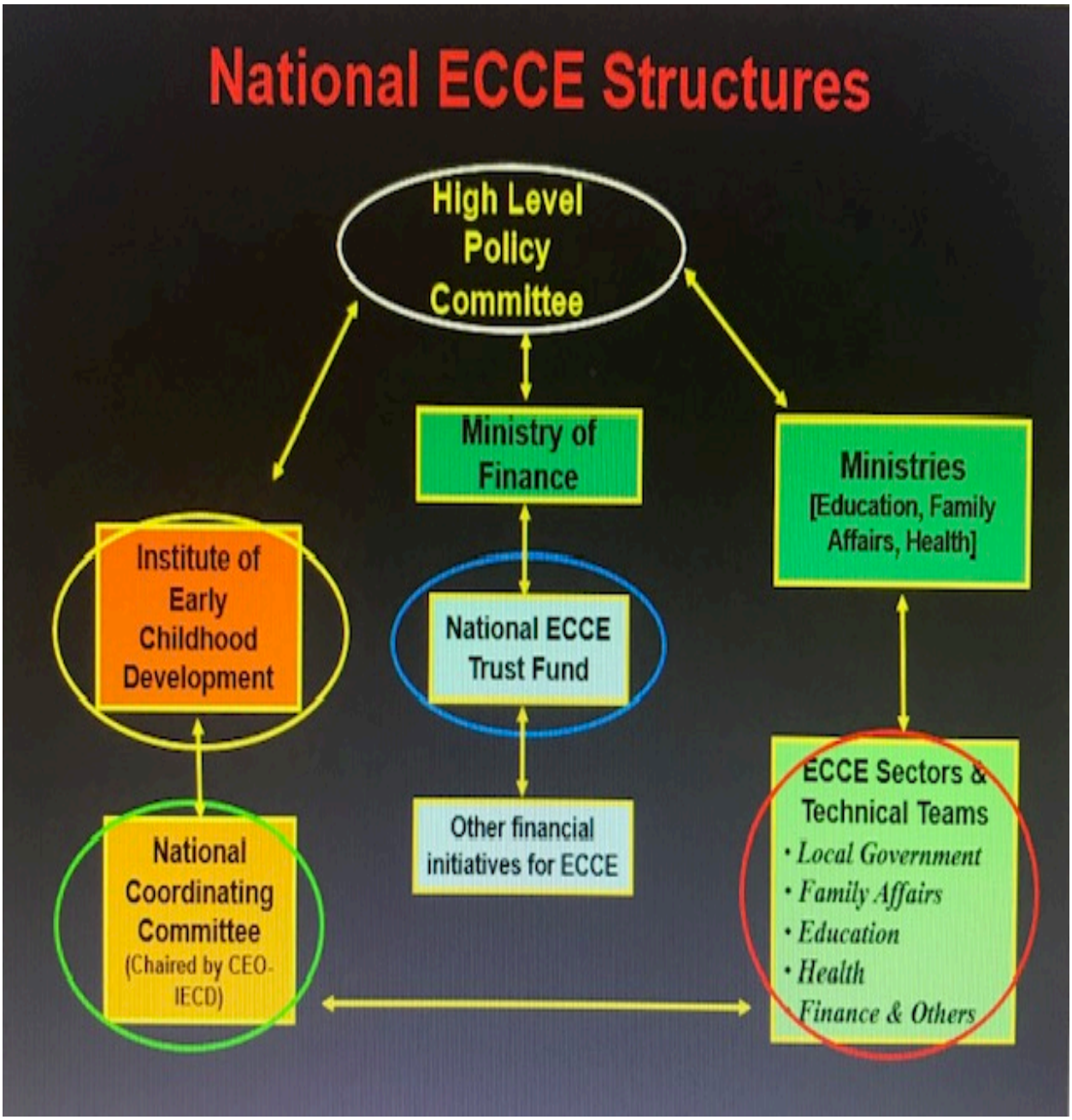
Annex 2: IECD Inter-Sectoral Coordination & Integration Structure



Annex 3: IECD Governance of Sectorial Technical Teams



Annex 4: IECD National ECCE Structures



Annex 5: List of Documents Reviewed and Persons Interviewed

Documents reviewed

S/N	Thematic Area	Documents Reviewed
	Legal and policy frameworks	IECD Act 2014 Public Finances, 2010 (CAP 188A) S.I. 29 of 2010 IECD National Standards for Childminding Services Policy 2015 IECD Strategic Plan 2018-2022 IECD National Standards on Childminding Regulations, 2016 Cabinet Memorandum on the National Standards for childminding 0-4 years Project Memorandum on provision of facilities to accommodate the headquarters of IECD Seychelles, ECD, Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER-ECD, The World Bank) National childminding study Policy briefs 2013 Seychelles framework for early childhood care and education: A multi-sectoral policy document for all stakeholder in ECCE IECD Manual on registration of homebased childminding services National Early Childhood Care and Education Trust Fund Notice 2011 (S.I. 02 of 2011)
	Financing	IECD budget summary 2018 IECD budget summary 2019 IECD Corporate Social Responsibility 2014, 2017 & 2019 IECD guidelines for requesting payment in petty cash IECD internal guidelines for payment procedures IECD donation grant account – guidelines for payments
	Global, sub-regional or interregional relevance	1st and 2nd International Biennial Conference on ECCE (February 2017 and February 2019) reports IECD Participation in IBE-UNESCO Technical Assistance in ECCE to the Ministry of Education Cameroon IECD involvement in the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) ECED cluster Technical meeting Begatelle, Mauritius Memorandum of understanding between the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO and the Republic of Seychelles IECD Article on Seychelles ECCE Resilient System, IBE-In Focus Magazine 2017
	Scope of activities of IECD	Reports for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd national biennial conferences (February 2011, February 2013 & May 2015 reports) National Action Plans, monitoring and evaluation reports (2013/2014, 2015/2016, 2017/208 and 2019 Assessment reports on provision of services in day care centres in Seychelles 2019 Childminding directories on childminding services from service providers

		IECD Terminology Directory in Early Childhood Care and Education 2015 IECD Newsletters and Magazine (Children 1st) IECD Information Note & Organization Structure
	Partnership with government agencies and private sector	IECD National Action Plans for 2013/2014, 2017/2018, and 2019/2020 Roles and responsibilities of various committees and teams: High level ECCE Policy Committee Sector-based Technical Teams National ECCE Trust Fund National Coordinating Committee for ECCE Children's Special Fund

Persons interviewed

S/N	Name	Designation
1	Ms. Macsuzy Mondon	Designated Minister & Chairperson of the High Level ECCE Policy Committee
2	Capt. David Savy	Chairman IECD Board
3	Ms. Shirley Choppy	Chief Executive Officer IECD, Chairperson ECCE Technical Team & National Coordinating Committee for ECCE
4	Ms. Vicky Gendron	Assistant Secretary General, Seychelles National Commission for UNESCO/Senior Liaison Officer International Relations Unit & MEHRD
5	Mr. Cyril Pillay	Chairperson of ECCE Technical Team for Education
6	Ms. Stephanie Desnousse	Chairperson of ECCE Technical Team for Health
7	Ms. Betty-Mai Sofa	Chairperson of ECCE Technical Team for Local Government
8	Ms. Beryl Laboudallon	Chairperson of ECCE Technical Team for Social Affairs
9	Ms. Vereine Louis-Marie	Member ECCE Technical Team (IECD)
10	Ms. Julina Madeleine	Member ECCE Technical Team (IECD)
11	Ms. Lianette Morel	Member ECCE Technical Team (IECD)
12	Mr. Terry Mangroo	Member ECCE Technical Team (IECD)
13	Dr. Andre Leste	Independent Consultant
14	Mr. Egbert Benstrong	Independent Consultant
15	Dr. Philip Govinden	Pediatrician & Consultant-in-charge (Children's Ward/Seychelles Hospital)
16	Ms. Verma Poonam	Owner & Operator Trotters Stop Pre-school
17	Ms. Avilla Meriza	Early Childhood Coordinator, Perseverance Primary School
18	Ms. Alina Monnaie	Crèche Teacher-in-Charge, Perseverance Primary School