Appendix II
Annex II

Instruments for the assessment of evidence

As detailed in the main body of the methodological appendix (Appendix II, "Description of the methodology utilised for the collection, assessment and utilization of the scientific evidence"), not all studies reporting the results of the evaluation of a strategy in terms of the desirable outcomes were included as part of the base of evidence. Only the studies that were assessed to be 'good' or 'acceptable' were. This Annex presents the instruments that were used to undertake this assessment. As discussed more in depth in the methodological annex, they are based on the instruments currently considered as best practice in the field.

Instrument for the assessment of systematic reviews and meta-analysis

	Criteria	Score	Explanation
A	**Clear, transparent and sufficient inclusion criteria for study selection**		
A.1	Clear, transparent and sufficient criteria for population		
A.2	Clear, transparent and sufficient criteria for intervention		
A.3	Clear, transparent and sufficient criteria for comparison		
A.4	Clear, transparent and sufficient criteria for outcome		

	Criteria	Score	Explanation
A.5	Clear, transparent and sufficient criteria for study design		
B	**Transparent, broad and diverse methods for literature search**		
B.1	Is a systematic process of search clearly described (e.g. databases searched, no. of references followed up and excluded, search term specified, etc.)?		
B.2	Did the search include multiple research strategies (e.g. databases, reference lists, hand-search of journals, etc.)?		
B.3	Did the search include peer-reviewed published materials?		
B.4	Did the search include grey literature and/or unpublished studies?		
B.5	Did the search include non-english sources?		
B.6	Was publication bias addressed and estimation of it reported?		
C	**Methods used for data extraction and study coding**		
C.1	Is the data on methodology presented with sufficient detail?		
C.2	Is the data on participants presented with sufficient detail?		
C.3	Is the data on intervention characteristics presented with sufficient detail?		
C.4	Is the data on dependent variables presented with sufficient detail?		
C.5	Is the data on effect sizes presented with sufficient detail?		
D	**Data analysis and interpretation**		

	Criteria	Score	Explanation
D.1	Is the methodology of analysis of the data clearly explained?		
D.2	Has the quality of the included studies been assessed?		
D.3	(If yes to D.2), was more than one assessor used in assessing the quality?		
D.4	Are the results of the included studies clearly displayed?		
D.5	Are the reasons for any variation in the results of the studies accounted for?		
D.6	Is the process for handling missing data described?		
D.7	Have the authors avoided double counting of primary data?		
D.8	Please indicate other weaknesses, if any (e.g., presence of other types of bias)		

Instrument for the assessment of studies using a comparative design (e.g. randomized and non-randomized control studies)

	Criteria	Score	Explanation
A	**Randomization and comparability of the groups**		
A1	Is the study described as randomized? (Please record also was randomization at individual or at cluster level)		

	Criteria	Score	Explanation
A 2	Is the allocation of participants to intervention and control groups described? (if yes, please describe how, including the possible randomization rules used or matching, and record also if the process appears to be appropriate)		
A 3	Is the comparability of the groups assessed in the analysis, by assessing potential confounders or the baseline similarity of outcome variables? (record also what confounders were used)		
B	**Blinding**		
B 1	Does the study describe any method for blinding of participants and/or personnel? (If yes, please specify what)		
B 2	Does the study describe any method for blinding of outcome assessors? (If yes, please specify measures used to blind outcome assessors from knowledge of which intervention a participant received, and provide any information relating to whether the intende		
C	**Attrition (losses to follow-up)**		
C 1	Is attrition reported? (Please record the retention rate at the longest follow-up (numbers and %) and also record the length of the follow-up time)		
C 2	Were reasons for attrition reported or discussed?		

	Criteria	Score	Explanation
C 3	If the study used cluster randomization, did they report attrition for individuals and clusters?		
C 4	Are exclusions reported? (Please record the retention rate at the longest follow-up and also record the length of the follow-up time)		
C 5	Were reasons for exclusions reported or discussed?		
C 6	If the study used cluster randomization, did they report exclusions for individuals and clusters?		
C 7	Was the study free of attrition bias (consider amount, nature or handling of incomplete outcome data)? (e.g., did the reasons for attrition differ between intervention and control group?)		
D	**Other sources of bias**		
D 1	Was analysis conducted at the level of randomization?		
D 2	Was sufficient information provided on the fidelity of the interventions, and on who received what interventions (Performance bias)?		
D 3	Was the study free from other risks of bias? Please describe any other possible concerns not addressed in the other domains of the tool.		