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Maestral International: Public Finance for Children

Maestral International is a global consulting agency with a long-standing track record of strengthening the case for investing in children's care and protection. Child well-being is central to sustainable development, driving the long-term prosperity, stability, and resilience of families, communities and nations. Maestral helps governments and partners demonstrate how every dollar invested in children generates significant and long-term returns in human capital, economic growth, and social stability. Our goal is to ensure that resources are directed where they matter most – towards building strong systems and brighter futures for the next generations.

Maestral's Services include:

- Macroeconomic Modeling for Child Protection
- National Budget Tools
- Subnational Costing for Child Protection
- Service Costing for Social Services
- Coordinated Planning for Decentralized Systems
- Making the Investment Case

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Maestral International:
Macroeconomic Modeling for Child Protection


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What is Macroeconomic Modeling

Macroeconomic modelling helps governments understand the medium-term economic implications of investing in child protection and child well-being. By linking the design of child protection systems—including policies, services, workforce, and infrastructure—to national fiscal variables such as GDP, government expenditures, and fiscal space, these models make visible the economic dimensions of child protection reform.

Maestral develops tailored macroeconomic models aligned with national fiscal projections and public finance systems. Our experts ensure models reflect realistic assumptions on population demographics, growth, wages, inflation, service standards, infrastructure needs, and workforce requirements—making them practical tools for budgeting and policy dialogue.

What Maestral offers:

- Models consistent with national PFM classifications and budget structures
- Rapid, high-level projections suitable for early planning and scenario analysis
- User-friendly Excel or Google Sheets tools for government adoption
- Integration of modelling outputs into costed action plans and investment cases
- Deep expertise in child protection systems, allowing models to link policy choices to economic outcomes

The result: credible, country-led models that help governments prioritize resources, mobilize financing, and make the economic case for investing in children.

How it works

These models can help with fiscal planning, scenario analysis, economic advocacy, and system financing strategies. They support governments and partners to justify progressive increases in social sector budgets, prioritize across preventive and response services, and prepare credible, costed national action plans.

Macroeconomic models are high-level cost estimates. They are built using structured assumptions about how many children need services, population demographics, staffing and infrastructure requirements, and basic costs of providing quality support that meet national standards.

Because they rely on aggregated assumptions, macroeconomic models can be prepared quickly and do not require detailed line-item budget analysis. They are especially useful for early-stage planning, rapid fiscal assessments, and discussions on domestic and external financing options. Models can be produced in Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets as a client might prefer.

Why Macroeconomic Modeling Matters

These models can serve as a critical foundation for more extensive work on building robust investment cases, essentially showing that spending on child protection is not simply an expenditure, but a strategic investment that drives economic growth, strengthens human capital, and enhances social development. By quantifying long-term returns these models help shift the narrative - from viewing child protection as a cost to recognizing it as a catalyst for national development.

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Maestral International:
National Budget Tool

What is a National Budget Tool?

A national budget tool utilizes existing public finance structures and mechanisms to identify the investment and recurrent costs required to strengthen child welfare and protection systems. The national budget tool fully mirrors a government's budget guidelines and procedures, including how a government classifies or names its different categories of expenditure. Typically, a national budget tool will require extensive data collection and analysis but will also facilitate the ability of governments to incorporate results into their budget documents and submissions.

How it works

- **Build context-specific assumptions**: Use formal macroeconomic projections, national demographics, caseloads, workforce norms, utilization patterns, geography, and service delivery configurations to parameterize the model.
- **Cost the full system**: Estimate operational costs (e.g., personnel, supervision, training, transport, commodities, administrative overheads), and capital investments (e.g., buildings, vehicles, information systems) to meet standards.
- **Fit national public financial management structures**: Structure outputs to match government charter of accounts and program classifications for easy integration into budgeting.
- **Scenario analysis (option)**: Compare the financial implications of different service delivery scenarios e.g., baseline vs. scale-up, prevention vs. response mixes, and urban vs. rural cost differentials, flag financing gaps and efficiency options.
- **Simple, maintainable tools**: Delivered in Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets with clear inputs, assumptions, and dashboards so local planners can update over time.
- **Ownership**: Co-develop with governments to embed methods, improve data quality, and strengthen routine budget dialogues.

Maestral develops National Budget tools that are tailored to local realities and grounded in deep child protection systems expertise. Our approach ensures costing reflects the true service and workforce needs at local level.

What Maestral offers:

- Budget outputs structured to fit national public finance systems for seamless integration
- Clear, user-friendly Excel or Google Sheets models that national planners can maintain
- Scenario analysis to inform strategic planning and resource allocation
- Co-development with government teams to build long-term capacity and ownership

The result: inclusion of child protection in the national budget dialogue and transparent and progressive increases of sectoral allocations.

Why Budgeting Matters

National costing models help finance ministries, line ministries, domestic agencies, external funding partners, and civil society to understand the resources required to support effective child protection and well-being. They can be paired with subnational models to determine the costs at different levels of government. National models facilitate assessment of the overall fiscal burden and, where possible, can make the linkages between expenditures and outputs/outcomes more transparent.

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Maestral International:
Subnational Costing for Child Protection


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What is Subnational Costing

Sub-national costing tools help local authorities at decentralized levels understand the resources required to deliver quality child protection and child welfare services. They make visible the full cost of meeting service standards, expanding coverage, and improving outcomes for children and families in their communities. This approach produces practical, credible, locally owned numbers that support annual planning, resource mobilization, and performance management, while maintaining alignment with national policy and budget classifications.

Maestral develops subnational costing models that are tailored to local realities and grounded in deep child protection systems expertise. Our approach ensures costing reflects the true service and workforce needs at local level.

What Maestral offers:

- Budget outputs structured to fit national public finance systems for seamless integration
- Clear, user-friendly Excel or Google Sheets models that local planners can maintain
- Scenario analysis to inform strategic planning and resource allocation
- Co-development with government teams to build long-term capacity and ownership

The result: credible, locally owned budgets that help governments prioritize resources, advocate for funding, and strengthen child protection services.

How it works

- **Align to standards and mandates**: Map national policies and standards to sub-national roles and service delivery modalities.
- **Build context-specific assumptions**: Use local demographics, caseloads, workforce norms, utilization patterns, geography, and service delivery configurations to parameterize the model.
- **Cost the full system**: Estimate operational costs (e.g., personnel, supervision, training, transport, commodities, administrative overheads), and capital investments (e.g., buildings, vehicles, information systems) to meet standards.
- **Fit national PFM structures**: Structure outputs to match government charter of accounts and program classifications for easy integration into annual and medium-term budgeting.
- **Scenario analysis**: Compare the financial implications of different service delivery scenarios e.g., baseline vs. scale-up, prevention vs. response mixes, and urban vs. rural cost differentials.
- **Simple, maintainable tools**: Delivered in Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets with clear inputs, assumptions, and dashboards so local planners can update over time.
- **Ownership**: Co-develop with governments to embed methods, improve data quality, and strengthen routine budget dialogues.

Why Subnational Costing Matters

Subnational costing gives policymakers a clear, evidence-based understanding of what it takes to deliver quality services for children. It strengthens planning, reveals funding gaps, supports resource mobilization, and enables more efficient and equitable allocation of local budgets, aligned with national policies and frameworks. Ultimately, it ensures that investments in child protection are guided by real needs, realistic costs, and locally owned solutions.

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Maestral International:
Service Costing for Social Services

What is Service Costing for Social Services

Governments around the world are working to build robust social services that keep children safe, support families, and help communities thrive. Yet decision makers often lack a clear understanding of what these services cost, the level of investment required to meet quality standards, and the returns such investment can generate. Service Costing provides this clarity. Service costing models translate a country's policies, service standards, and delivery approaches into practical operational and fiscal terms. They estimate what it takes—financially—to deliver effective, safe, and accountable services.

How it works

Service costing is a structured, evidence-based way to determine the full cost of delivering high-quality social services—from prevention to response. It looks at workforce requirements, caseloads, infrastructure, training, supervision, administrative overhead, and the unit costs needed to meet national standards.

The process begins by mapping how services are intended to function—clarifying roles, responsibilities, and the standards that guide practice. From there, the required inputs are identified, including the workforce, infrastructure, training, supervision, equipment, and overhead needed to meet these standards.

Costing then draws on demographic patterns, workforce norms, governance structures, and service-utilization data to create realistic assumptions that reflect the local context. These inputs are converted into estimates of operational and capital costs, showing what it takes financially to deliver effective, safe, and accountable services at scale. To support government planning, the results are organized according to national public finance structures so they can be easily integrated into planning, budgeting, and reporting.

Maestral's approach to costing services provides governments and funders with a practical tool for fiscal planning, budget advocacy, and prioritizing investments.

What Maestral offers:

- Practical service costing models that translate national policies, standards, and delivery approaches into clear operational and financial requirements
- Context-specific cost estimates based on demographic patterns, caseloads, workforce needs, infrastructure, training, supervision, and overhead
- User-friendly Excel models aligned with national public finance structures, enabling governments to update, adapt, and use the tools for planning and budget advocacy

The result: practical, cost estimates that help governments plan effectively, advocate for sustainable financing, and strengthen social services **at scale.**

Why Costing Social Services Matters

Service costing gives governments a clear picture of what it takes to deliver quality social services. This enables governments to plan strategically, invest wisely, and build stronger systems to support the well-being of children and families. Costing can also become the foundation of a nationally costed action plan or a deeper investment case that connects social services to broader development goals.

Maestral International:
Coordinated Financial Planning for Decentralized Systems

What is Coordinated Financial Planning for Decentralized Systems

In many countries, child and family welfare improvements rely on coordinated action across national ministries, local governments, NGOs, and international partners. With many actors contributing within decentralized systems, effective planning depends on strong coordination to ensure efforts and resources align around common goals. Coordinated financial planning provides a structured approach to align the actions and budgets of diverse actors with national reform priorities. It makes linkages between activities and resources transparent, helps harmonize plans across levels of government, and creates a common structure for planning, budgeting, and monitoring progress toward national child and family welfare goals.

Maestral supports governments in developing coordinated financial planning models that align actions, roles, and resources across decentralized systems and stakeholders.

What Maestral offers:

- Planning structures grounded in national priorities and adapted to decentralized governance
- Continuously updated catalogues of tasks and interventions linked to strategic documents
- User-friendly planning modules for local authorities with built-in financial needs assessments and budgeting tools
- Automatic plan documents, summaries, and infographics that streamline communication and decision-making
- Collaborative development with government teams to strengthen capacity, ownership, and long-term sustainability

The result: a practical, flexible planning system that brings alignment to decentralized implementation and strengthens national child reform efforts.

How it Works

This approach brings together national priorities, local authority responsibilities, and partner initiatives into a single, coordinated planning system. It uses catalogues of nationally agreed interventions and tasks that are continuously updated to reflect strategic documents and policy shifts. Local plans draw from these catalogues, ensuring activities remain aligned with national goals.

Two interconnected modules support this system:

- A **support module** containing national and regional catalogues of tasks and interventions, managed and regularly updated.
- **User modules** for local governments and other actors to develop plans, including financial needs assessments, implementers, timelines, and comparisons of needs with available budgets.

The user modules draw directly from the support module, ensuring consistent information and clearly defined roles. Automated features—such as financial calculations—simplify planning and reduce preparation time. Plans are built on an accessible, collaborative platform to support easy updating and shared use.

Why Coordinated Financial Planning Matters

Coordinated financial planning brings coherence to planning and budgeting across local authorities, ministries, NGOs, and partners by aligning actions with national priorities and making financial needs and gaps more visible. By harmonizing roles and resources, this approach improves the efficiency of public spending, strengthens the implementation of child and family reforms, and helps ensure that children and families receive consistent, high-quality services.

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Maestral International:
Making the Investment Case

What is an Investment Case

An investment case is an evidence-driven model that shows what resources are required to deliver effective, equitable, and sustainable child protection services. It provides a structured methodology for analyzing the current system, costing improvements, and demonstrating the social and economic returns of investment. An investment case gives governments clear, evidence-based justification for financing child protection and the social service workforce (SSW). It identifies the true cost of delivering quality services, highlights the long-term savings from preventing violence and neglect, and quantifies the consequences of inaction. By showing how strengthened SSW capacity leads to better child protection outcomes and contributes to stronger human capital, the investment case supports more strategic policy and budgeting decisions and reinforces children's rights.

How it works

Developing an investment case follows a structured process. It begins by consulting stakeholders to define and map both the SSW and the broader child protection system. Budget and expenditure reviews help identify current investments, patterns of spending, and funding gaps.

Using appropriate costing tools, scenarios are developed and costed to show what it would take to strengthen the workforce and improve service quality. An economic evaluation links workforce improvements to better child protection outcomes—such as reduced early marriage, improved birth registration, or lower rates of violence—and, where possible, translates these gains into monetary or utility-based values.

The final output provides clear, actionable evidence to guide policy, budgeting, and advocacy, leading to stronger child protection systems and better outcomes for children.

Maestral's expertise in child protection systems and workforce strengthening ensures investment cases reflect real service needs, accurate costing, and credible links to child and human capital outcomes.

What Maestral offers:

- Policy briefs for ministries & governments
- Context-specific workforce and system mapping to identify strengths, gaps, and needs
- Costing scenarios aligned with national standards and public finance structures
- Economic evaluations that connect workforce improvements to child protection outcomes
- Clear, practical models in Excel that governments can maintain, update, and use for planning
- Co-development with government teams to build capacity, support ownership, and strengthen budgeting and advocacy

The result: compelling, evidence-based investment cases that help governments prioritize child protection, mobilize financing, and strengthen their social service workforce at scale.

Why Investment Cases Matter

A robust investment case provides a clear, evidence-based justification for financing child protection and the SSW. It clarifies roles, helps determine realistic staffing and training needs, and highlights the broader resources required to deliver quality services. By linking stronger child protection systems to better outcomes for children—and to long-term social and economic gains—it supports more strategic, efficient, and sustainable public spending.

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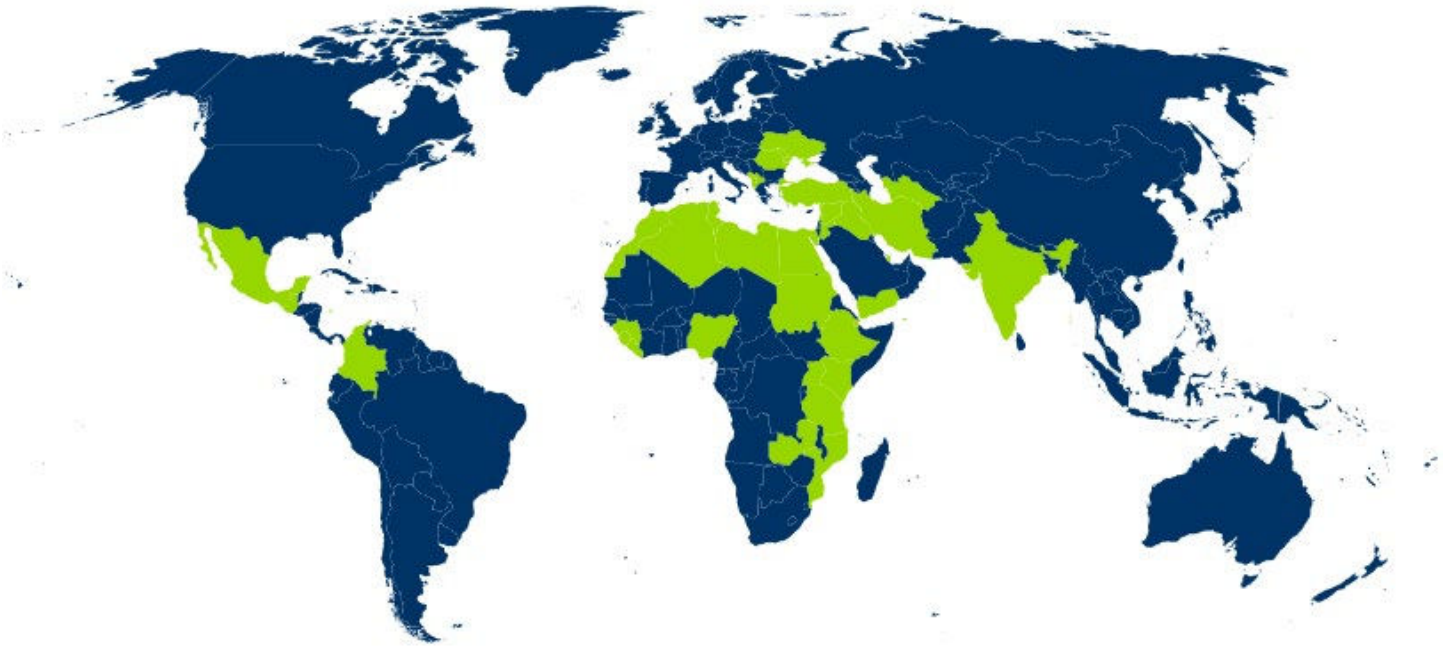
Our public finance experts work globally to support governments to plan, budget, and invest in essential services for children. Stronger financing leads to stronger protection systems and better outcomes for the next generation.



Today's Children. Tomorrow's Hope.

Learn more about Maestral International at www.maestral.org, and contact us at info@maestral.org

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