

Final evaluation of the Joint Programme
“Improving the welfare and quality of the life in the Kyzylorda region through innovative approaches to delivering economic, social and environmental services to the local population, including those most vulnerable”

Final report

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List of acronyms

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| IR | Inception Report |
| JP | Joint Programme |
| JPD | Joint Programme Document |
| JPMF | Joint Programme Monitoring Framework |
| JPRF | Joint Programme Results Framework |
| MPTFO | Multi Partner Trust Fund Office |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| OECD / DAC | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee |
| PWD | Persons with disabilities |
| RoK | Republic of Kazakhstan |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SME | Small and Medium Enterprises |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| UNDAF | United Nations Development Assistance Framework |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UN EG | United Nations Evaluation Group |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children Fund |
| UN Women | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
| USD | United States dollar |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

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The local staff of the UN Agencies appeared to be very dedicated and motivated. The partners showed often a remarkable level of commitment. All offered support and information to the Evaluation team and contributed to the understanding of the JP activities and results.

Disclaimer

The content of this report is the sole responsibility of the evaluation team and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the participating UN agencies participating in the joint programme, authorities in Kazakhstan nor those of any other party. All effort has been made to ensure that the information given here is correct, and any factual error that may appear is unintended and is the sole responsibility of the evaluation team.

Summary

This document provides an evaluation of the results of the UN Joint Programme “Improving the welfare and quality of the life in the Kyzylorda region through innovative approaches to delivering economic, social and environmental services to the local population, including those most vulnerable”, in accordance with the provisions contained in the evaluation Terms of Reference. The evaluation assesses the level of relevance and effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the joint programme. The project activities of the six participating UN agencies and organizations (UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO) were examined and assessed.

In chapter 1 the main aspects of the socio-economic context are described and updated, in order to identify which aspects have changed and in which direction since the JP was conceived, and how its initial analysis remains valid. The Joint Programme is then shortly described in its structure and main components.

In chapter 2 the evaluation framework is described, coherently with what was set in the Inception Report: scope and objective of the evaluation, as well as its nature and timing, with reference to the

implementation of JP are stated, underlining as the evaluation is to be considered a final evaluation, although some of the activities of the JP were still underway, considering the postponement of the final deadline of the JP. The Evaluation methodology and criteria are described, pointing out the attention given to the effectiveness of the activities and the attainment of the expected results, to the effects of the involvement of the regional and local administration in the implementation of the activities, and to the results achieved at this level. Information and data used for the evaluation are described, and the selection of the activities (cases) to be analyzed in detail is also explained and commented. Chapter 3 gives an account of the activities carried out by the evaluation team, and of the interactions with UN Agencies, Kazakh public administration, partners, and beneficiaries.

Findings are reported in chapter 4: the relevance of the Joint Programme is assessed in relation to the main National strategic and programming documents, and the UN Agencies programming document: a general illustration is given in graphic form, while a more specific narrative is dedicated to the coherence of JPD with the “Kazakhstan 2050” Strategy and with the regional Kyzylorda Territory Development Programme. Somehow different approaches of the UN Agencies to the JP were identified by the evaluation team, and are shortly described, while the main findings refer to the effectiveness of the interventions carried out. Considering the articulation and complexity of the JP it was deemed interesting to introduce an assessment dashboard, specifically referred to the selected cases.

The last chapters of the report present some considerations on the lessons learned, the conclusions reached by the evaluation team and the proposed recommendations.

1. Introduction

The purpose of the evaluation is i) to assess the Joint Programme contribution to the regional objectives, namely with respect to the specific objective of reducing poverty among vulnerable groups – children and their families, rural women, youth, people with disabilities, unemployed and self-employed – through activation of the population in the solution of their own problems, employment generation and specific interventions to promote social inclusion and better access to public services; as well as ii) to identify needs, gaps and outstanding issues in the respective area, and iii) to recognize emerging good practices that worked out well and could be scaled up within relevant programmes in the future.

The Evaluation intends to provide the relevant audiences with an assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and, to the extent possible, impact of the Joint Programme.

Relevance refers to the assessment of consistency, ownership and congruency, technical adequacy, and complementarity of the UN JPD with other initiatives and with the strategic government and regional documents and plans, and the UN Agencies country documents, aiming to assess whether the activities foreseen were appropriate to the context and for the achievement of the strategic objectives of these documents.

Effectiveness refers to the achievement of results planned by the JP, through the activities carried out, highlighting reasons for achievement and non-achievement of results and factors contributing or hindering these achievements. Efficiency is also taken into consideration, underlying the evidence gathered to assess the cost efficiency of the programme implementation.

Sustainability considers the participation of partners in planning and implementing the interventions, and refers to the measures taken to ensure that activities initiated by the programme will be completed and continued after the end of the support provided by the UN Agencies.

Considerations concerning the outcomes and the impact of the JP are also included in this report, as well as some indications related to the management of the programme. The report further includes indications on lessons learnt, as well as some overall conclusions and relevant recommendations.

1.1 Context

Despite the recent overall progress in Kazakhstan, the socio-economic disparities are high between regions, and urban and rural areas, in terms of access to and quality of public services and economic opportunities. The most disadvantaged categories of the people in Kyzylorda region experience one of the most problematic situations, in terms of welfare and quality of life, in Kazakhstan.

Several developments are intended to be addressed by Kazakhstan national programme documents at the national and regional level, namely economy diversification, SME development, reduction of inequities in social well-being and health, development of sustainable practices and enhancement of the local governments. Some are addressed by a number of national development programs including the Territories' Development Programme, Employment Roadmap – 2020, Business Roadmap – 2020; the Education Development Programme for 2011-2020; the National Health Programme “Salamatty Kazakhstan for 2011-2015, and new Health National Strategy “Densaulyk” for 2016-2019 Concept for family and gender policy till 2030 adopted in December 2016; and the Roadmap by the General Prosecutor's Office “Kazakhstan without domestic violence”.

As a result of the above efforts, general indicators of inequality have improved in the last years. For example, the Gini coefficient calculated by 10 decile groups has decreased from 0.225 in 2014 to 0.221 in 2015, which is below the average in Kazakhstan (0.278). The subsistence minimum level in Kyzylorda is below the average country level by 10%. The proportion of the population with incomes below the subsistence level has fallen both in rural and urban areas.

One of the most effective tools in solving social problems was the implementation of the programme "Employment Roadmap2020". Since the beginning of its implementation, state support has covered about 39,000 inhabitants in the region and has created 11,356 jobs in 2014, including 539 people with disabilities. In 2015 12,035 people became employed, among which 311 people with disabilities and 3 oralman obtained jobs. 9,342 new jobs were planned to be created in 2016, as of 1st of October 9,156 people had got jobs (98% of the annual plan), including 217 people with disabilities and 1 oralman. As a result of measures aimed to increase the employment of citizens among the poor, the number of recipients of targeted social assistance fell by more than 1,000 people, and the share of able-bodied citizens of the number of recipients of targeted social assistance fell by 3.1 percentage points (from 32.3% in 2014 to 29.2% - in 2015).

Nevertheless, in Kyzylorda region there are certain areas that continued to need support, especially in areas addressed by JP, including local self-governance, inclusive social development, SME development, promotion of gender equality and improving prevention and response to violence against women, agriculture development, energy efficiency, promotion of equity, improved health services, strengthened public participation, and a more general improvement of well-being.

1.2 The Joint Programme

In this context, the Joint Programme envisaged the following specific areas of cooperation:

- enhancing access to locally provided quality social and economic services, especially for vulnerable groups of population, including vulnerable categories of women, children, youth, elderly, PWDs, repatriates, undocumented and stateless persons;
- increasing the capacity of local decision makers in efficient planning and use of state resources for effective and efficient health and social protection of vulnerable populations, diversification of economy, expanding income opportunities, stimulating productive employment, and sustainable development including protection of natural and cultural heritage;
- piloting innovative approaches of providing health and special social services to women – survivors of violence, children, youth, elderly, PWDs, repatriates, undocumented and stateless persons in rural areas, developing local plans responsive to the needs of the population at the primary health care level, informing the society and professionals on best practices of child care and new participatory mechanisms for community involvement;
- capacity development of the population to improve their wellbeing through local self-governance and capacitating businesses in rural areas;
- empowering local authorities and communities in the application of sustainable environmental practices to respond to existing environmental challenges.

Six UN Agencies implemented the various activities based on their individual comparative advantages and thus potentially increase the operational impact of the Programme:

1. UNDP – economic development, democratic and effective governance, including local self-government development, poverty reduction, social and environment protection, housing and communal services, energy efficiency and sustainable agriculture;
2. UNESCO – safeguarding of local cultural heritage, access to information and sustainable water resources and environmental management;
3. UNFPA –delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled;
4. UNICEF – well-being of children and adolescents and protection of children’s rights as defined under the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
5. UN Women - women’s empowerment and gender equality; and
6. WHO – public health and health system.

1.2.1 Nature and objectives of the Joint Programme

The Joint Programme was developed in 2013 and approved in 2014. The implementation started in July 2014, but some actions were activated rather later. It was intended as a three-year Programme, due to end by December 2016. It was then extended to 2017, but some UN Agencies had already completed their activities within 2016.

JP is a result-oriented collaborative programme jointly developed by the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Akimat of Kyzylorda region, and the above-mentioned six UN Agencies to improve the wellbeing and quality of life in the Kyzylorda region through innovative approaches to delivering economic, social and environmental services to the local population, particularly for the most vulnerable ones and to expand the opportunities of the Kyzylorda Oblast (region) in achieving sustainable and equitable progress in social, health and economic development for 2014-2016.

The total programme budget was 8,713,999 USD. The Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan allocated 6,452,999, which is 74% of the total budget and UN agencies contributed 2,291,000 representing 26% of the core resources.

| UN Agency | RoK resources, USD | % RoK resources on total | Resources of UN Agencies, USD | Total resources, USD |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| UNDP | 3 000 000 | 67% | 1 500 000 | 4 500 000 |
| UNICEF | 2 410 000 | 88% | 344 000 | 2 754 000 |
| WHO | 583 333 | 70% | 250 000 | 833 333 |
| UNFPA | 163 333 | 70% | 70 000 | 233 333 |
| | 93333 | 70% | 40000 | 133333 |
| UNESCO | 203 000 | 70% | 87 000 | 290 000 |
| Total JP | 6 452 999 | 74% | 2 291 000 | 8 743 999 |

Note: data from JPD

The JPD defines a series of strategic objectives to be addressed by the activities foreseen by the UN Agencies in three different components (refer to the table below and the next section). The activities are shortly described and characterized by the outputs that they are expected to produce. For each result one or more indicators are given, which may refer to number of beneficiaries, number of outputs produced, or other parameters.

As the table shows, the JP is a complex programme. Many of the activities have involved different beneficiaries and stakeholders, distributed on the territory of the Region.

| Objectives / Outputs / Components | Specific outputs | Indicators | Activities |
|--|------------------|------------|------------|
| 1. Economic Development and Effective Governance | 2 | 9 | 16 |
| 2. Social-economic Development of the region and Employment Increase | 6 | 29 | 29 |
| 3. Environmental Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Housing and Communal sphere | 3 | 12 | 17 |
| Total | 11 | 50 | 62 |

Note: data from JPD; in the table, definitions of Objectives / Outputs are simplified from the full definition in JPD

The Programme is based on the UNDAF and overall aims to support the national development goals including the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Joint Programme contributes to the following outcomes: Economic and Social Well-Being for All, Effective Governance, Environmental Sustainability. It supports the Regional Development Programme for Kyzylorda Region, the Second Stage of the Concept on Local Self-Governance Development, as well as the Concept of Kazakhstan's transition to Green Economy.

1.2.2 An overview of the role of the UN Agencies in the interventions of the Joint Programme.

As said above, the JP is targeted to improve the quality of life of the population in Kyzylorda region. It approaches mainly three areas / components:

- diversified economic development of the Region through capacitating the local government to plan for diversified and balanced economic growth and for the increase of efficiency of state policy on the formation of the economic growth focal points, support to the local development system and small businesses.

- reduction of inequities and disparities in social well-being and health by capacitating local authorities and civil society in addressing the negative social gradients, increase of employment opportunities and ensure availability and improved access to quality health, justice, education and social services for the vulnerable families, their children and vulnerable population groups.
- development and application of sustainable development practices in response to the current problems caused by climate change, natural and man-made aspects of development, including energy efficiency in the housing sector and sustainable environmental management.

As mentioned, the JPD defines a series of strategic objectives to be addressed by the activities foreseen by the UN Agencies in three different components, defining them as Outputs, corresponding to UNDAF outcomes:

1. Economic Development and Effective Governance
2. Social-economic Development of the region and Employment Increase
3. Environmental Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Housing and Communal sphere

The table below provides an overview of budget allocation per component:

| UN Agency | Component 1 (US dollars) | Component 2 (US dollars) | Component3 (US dollars) | % Component1 | % Component 2 | % Component3 |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| UNDP | 180 000 | 130 000 | 990 000 | 14% | 10% | 76% |
| UNICEF | 0 | 324 000 | 20 000 | 0% | 94% | 6% |
| WHO | 0 | 220 000 | 30 000 | 0% | 88% | 12% |
| UNFPA | 0 | 70 000 | 0 | 0% | 100% | 0% |
| UN Women | 0 | 40 000 | 0 | 0% | 100% | 0% |
| UNESCO | 29 000 | 29 000 | 29 000 | 33% | 33% | 33% |
| Total JP | 209 000 | 813 000 | 1 069 000 | 10% | 39% | 51% |

Data are from JPD

Each Agency produced, according to their own internal procedures, a **Work Plan**, in some cases on yearly base, detailing the specific actions or activities to be carried out in the period and the expected results.

Work plans were drafted and put in place separately and autonomously by the participating Agencies. Contents and timing of the Work plans were defined according to each Agency regulations (not all Agencies share the same fiscal year, as well as not all foresee the same format of work plans). In correspondence with these plans, activities and results achieved were monitored.

Every year an **Annual Consolidated Progress Report** has been produced, in order to communicate and disseminate information on the results of the JP. The reports are consolidated at JP level, and include different paragraphs, concerning the different Agencies. These Progress Reports are focused on the most relevant achievements, while a comparison between the results achieved with the results planned is not foreseen.

1.2.3 General considerations on the JP approach

In general, a few aspects can be underlined, as follows:

- the JP adopts what could be defined an incremental approach, as most of the activities foreseen don't seem to be addressed to trigger structural changes, or to introduce paradigm shifting innovation, but to improve specific situations or to experiment / introduce "process" innovation;
- most actions – beside aiming at achieving significant objectives in their implementation - appear to have somehow a demonstrative value, introducing "local" innovation and making available additional resources to produce well defined output, that can certainly impact on the specific beneficiaries, but more than that, they provide opportunity for experimentation and learning. This demonstrative value is also relevant as it can be used to promote high level dialogue between the UN Agencies and the Government at national level;
- some actions are explicitly defined as pilot, to be replicated / extended / standardized, in the same area, towards other beneficiaries, or in other areas and Regions; in this case the sustainability assumes an extremely relevant importance.

A very general underlying consideration is that the possibility of overcoming the difficulties and the constraints to socio-economic sustainable development is very strictly related to the capacity of the regional and local governments to plan, manage and implement the relevant policies. Consequently, the JP endeavors to achieve results in this respect in two different ways:

- involving the regional and local government in the implementation of the activities of the JP, and promoting ownership of these activities, and
- addressing a certain number of activities and referring a certain number of specific outputs directly to the creation of skills and competences in the public administration.

This JP, together with the other JP regarding the Region of Mangystau, represents a relatively new experience for the participating UN Agencies in Kazakhstan. It is to be considered that other international institutions have carried out, and may carry out in the future, somewhat similar intervention, focused on regional level¹, and they might make use of the experience gathered by UN Agencies.

¹ At the beginning of January, when this evaluation was under way, a project in the Region of Aktobe financed by the World Bank, was announced

2. The evaluation of the Joint Programme: approach and methodology

2.1 Scope and Objective of the evaluation.

This evaluation covers in its scope all the outputs of the JP, and makes use of information concerning the period 2014 – 2016.

The overall objective of this final Evaluation is i) to assess the JP contribution to the regional objectives, namely with respect to the specific objective of reduced poverty among vulnerable groups, employment generation, social inclusion and better access to public services; as well as ii) to identify needs, gaps and outstanding issues in the respective area, and iii) to recognize good practices that worked out well and could be extended / replicated within relevant programmes in the future.

This evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the indications of the ToR, the provisions contained in the JPD, and the respective regulations, rules and procedures of the UN Agencies, according the UN Evaluation Group norms, principles and standards, as described in Chapter 2.3.2. This Evaluation mainly seeks to assess the level of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the interventions, as well as the validity of the Programme components.

The evaluation focuses on the following areas of investigation in the JP:

- Development of state local governance, effective public sector at local and central levels, self-government development and civil society empowerment;
- Increasing living standards of poor people and expanding opportunities for actively overcoming poverty, creating opportunities for innovative and inclusive business projects as well as participation of youth in decision-making;
- Public health, including reproductive healthcare (increasing availability and quality of medical services, improving investment policy in the public health sector, introduction of results-oriented medical services financing and payment systems, reducing child mortality in the region, introducing early identification and intervention to reduce number of children with disabilities);
- Social protection (targeted effectiveness, expanding of social services sector, introduction of state standards, quality of special services, introducing integrated social protection mechanisms);
- State of housing and communal sphere and application of energy efficient practices, as well as population and other stakeholders awareness of the best practices in this area.

2.2 Use of the evaluation

The Evaluation feeds into management and decision-making processes and aims to provide applicable information to the participating UN Agencies, Government of Kazakhstan, local administrations in the Kyzylorda Region and other stakeholders about relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and, to the extent possible, impact of the programme results.

The Evaluation also identifies lessons learned from the Programme interventions with a view to ascertaining the suitability of such interventions in future work. As a tool for evidence-based practices, the Evaluation results will serve as a clarification not only for the sustainability and exit strategies, but also for determination of the next steps interventions in the Region and expansion of strategic interventions into other regions of Kazakhstan. Identification of most relevant outcomes of the JP, and indication of lessons learned and recommendations for a coming-up JP in other regions of Kazakhstan are therefore relevant aims of the evaluation.

Findings and recommendations are meant therefore to be useful, in terms of future programming, in order to provide indications for:

- the planning of similar JPs in other Regions of Kazakhstan, and namely in West Kazakhstan;
- the enhancement of interventions carried out by single Agencies, taking stock of the lessons learned in the JP, that has put in place mechanisms of implementation and coordination, that in some cases were unusual or unprecedented for the implementing Agencies.

It is also possible, beyond the JP approach, but rather focusing on the regional dimension of the intervention that the evaluation may contribute to the evolution and development of implementation, monitoring and evaluation practices within the different participating UN Agencies, and in perspective towards a more homogenous approach of the UN Agencies.

2.3 Evaluation methodology

2.3.1 Methodological approach

The evaluation was based on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and to the extent possible, impact) as well as on the UNEG norms and standards. The methodology applied for this evaluation has been results-oriented and evidence-based using a mixed methods approach, including quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The evaluation has held a participatory approach all along the process. The evaluation has been carried out in three main phases: the inception phase, encompassing a structuring stage and a desk review; the implementation phase; and the reporting phase. There were two sub-phases of data collection: 1) a desk review and 2) fieldwork involving key informant interviews.

The desk review phase has largely been completed prior to the field mission in the region. The desk review provided the necessary context for the field evaluation, preparing the Evaluation team for the development of data collection tools, and identifying data gaps, specifically regarding the development disparities between women and men.

More generally, the following methods and tools have been used for data collection:

- Start-up meeting with UNDP in Astana to clarify the object, scope and objectives of the evaluation, as well as main expectations of the main evaluation users;
- Desk review of all major policy and strategy documents (at both UN and Government levels), as well as of programme documents, logical framework, relevant monitoring and evaluation reports, etc.;
- Portfolio analysis of the activities funded by the JP;
- Analysis of the available quantitative data;
- Semi-structured interviews with key informants at the central level;
- Definition of Case studies;
- Field visit to Kyzylorda region, including interviews, group discussions, direct observations;
- De-briefing meetings after the field work.

The desk review has looked at the documents provided by the UN agencies. The Evaluation team has reviewed all relevant sources of information, such as specified above and any other materials that the evaluation team has considered useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team has provided to the evaluation team for review is included in Annex 7.1. The Evaluation team has added supplemental documents to the desk review identified during the evaluation mission to Astana.

The interviews have followed precise interviews guidelines² and protocols, based on the evaluation questions, and have always respected the independence and the rights of the interviewees.

The same approach was adopted for the group discussions, which were implemented in order to favor a higher degree of active participation of the stakeholders and to increase the number of actors that could express their views on the implementation and results of the JP.

In terms of location, the Evaluation team focused data collection in Astana, Almaty, Kyzylorda, and in Zhanakorgan, which were identified in the inception phase as specific locations for the programme operations and management.

The Evaluation team examined evidences from all data sources using a combination of pre/post, descriptive, and qualitative analysis. All findings are supported with quantitative programme performance monitoring data when possible, as well as other programme documentation, interviewee statements, and other secondary data identified during the fieldwork phase. The findings from these analyses were used to triangulate findings in response to each evaluation question, allowing the Evaluation team to substantiate conclusions. Information obtained in interviews and group meetings has been supported / validated by visits to final beneficiaries, as well as careful analysis of the monitoring data provided.

It is worth noting that, given the high number of activities foreseen by the JPD, as shown in the table in chapter 1.2.1, while the scope of the evaluation extends to the entire complexity of the JP, it has been necessary to focus the analysis on a limited number of actions, considered as case studies, whose implementation and achievements the evaluation have analyzed in more detail. In chapter 2.3.5 the methodology for the selection of the activities is described, and a proposal of actions to be selected was put forward.

Such specific focus on a limited number of actions is also appropriate, in our view, with reference to understanding and assessing the effect of the JP on the capacity of the regional and local public administration in planning, managing and implementing development interventions similar or identical to those included in the JP. Concentrating on a relatively limited number of cases allow representatives of the public administration, as well as stakeholders and beneficiaries, to identify specific improvements and professional or organizational acquisitions, rather than referring in general to the effects of the entire activity of the JP.

² See Annex 7.2

2.3.2 Reference to UNEG General Norms for evaluation

As for the coherence of the approach adopted with the UNEG General Norms for evaluation, in the table below, a comment is given for all the norms deemed relevant for our work.

| UNEG General Norms for Evaluation | Notes on Report Evaluation Methodology |
|--|--|
| Norm 1: Internationally agreed principles, goals and targets | Although Sustainable Development Goals are mentioned in the ToR simply in the Introduction: <The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are highly relevant for the programme especially in terms of SDGs localization. ...>, while no mention of SDGs is made in setting Objectives and Tasks of the Evaluation, the Relevance analysis includes a paragraph dedicated to the coherence of the JP with the SDGs |
| Norm 2: Utility | The evaluation report addresses, together with the assessment of the action implemented within the JP, the issues that from the Evaluator point of view, represent elements to be taken into consideration for the planning and management of possible further programmes of similar structure, width and ambition. Thus considerations on coordination and monitoring of the programme are also discussed, on the basis of the results of the interviews to the Agencies and of the evidence of the implementation. |
| Norm 3: Credibility | The evaluation has adopted a well-defined methodology, involving both quantitative and qualitative methods and triangulating different lines of evidence. The most judicious use of the best available and valid data and information has been done by the team, within the strict timeframe of the evaluation. The exercise has always been transparent and highly participatory, trying to turn the evaluation itself into a learning process. |
| Norm 4: Independence | All experts involved had no links with UN Agencies and Kazakh government. For the sake of independence and of avoiding any possible hint of conflict of interest, no relations were kept with UN Agencies personnel during the period of evaluation activity except those registered in the report, as making part of the task. Similarly no relations with Agencies were kept during the period of evaluation of the draft reports, although it extended to a rather long stretch of time. |
| Norm 5: Impartiality | Openness and criticism were adopted in all interactions with UNDP, at all levels, and with other UN Agencies: also anecdotal elements gathered during the field work were reported. Suggestions and invitations to take into consideration specific actions, activities, beneficiaries were all taken up, as far as it was compatible with the schedule agreed. The evaluators have always made a specific effort not to be influenced by any personal biases. |
| Norm 6: Ethics | The evaluation team related with all the counterparts – UN Agencies and JP personnel, implementers involved, beneficiaries, stakeholders - with the utmost respect for their efforts and achievements, and appreciated all results obtained as significant. No relations other than exchange of information were kept. No evidence of unethical behavior was gathered, and, even less, kept from the knowledge of the client. |
| Norm 7: Transparency | Full disclosure of all activities carried out, of their results, and of the obstacles possibly encountered were guaranteed by the evaluation team throughout the activities of evaluation. All members of the evaluation team were involved in direct contact with the client when needed |
| Norm 8: Human rights and gender equality | Evaluation field work included activities with the Agencies and beneficiaries most directly involved in the Human Rights field. At the same time, the evaluation has given attention to the respect of human rights from the JP. As for respect of gender equality – within the working group a gender balance was respected; in the Evaluation work constant attention was given to this aspect, and remarks included in the report where deemed relevant |

| | |
|---|--|
| Norm 9: National evaluation capacities | In the perspective of contributing to building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at country level, national experts were involved as much as possible in all phases of work. |
| Norm 10: Professionalism | As mentioned with reference to all norms mentioned, evaluation was conducted with professionalism and integrity. |
| Norm 11: Enabling environment | This norm refers mainly to the UN Agencies and therefore does not seem relevant for external evaluators |
| Norm 12: Evaluation policy | This norm refers mainly to the UN Agencies and therefore does not seem relevant for external evaluators |
| Norm 13: Responsibility for the evaluation function | This norm refers mainly to the UN Agencies and therefore does not seem relevant for external evaluators |
| Norm 14: Evaluation use and follow-up | This norm refers mainly to the UN Agencies and therefore does not seem relevant for external evaluators |

2.3.3 Evaluation criteria

An assessment of programme performance is carried out, based against expectations set out in the Programme Results and Resources Framework which provides performance and impact indicators for implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. As already mentioned above, the evaluation has covered the criteria of: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and, to the extent possible, impact.

The evaluation of **relevance** has mainly been based on the analysis of the key documents, comparing the contents of the JPD with the main Kazakhstan strategic documents, both general and sectoral, where relevant, Kyzylorda regional development programme, UNDAF and Country programmes of the participating Agencies. Issues concerning relevance have been explored also during the semi-structured interviews to the UN Agencies.

The analysis has ascertained the coherence with the priorities of the UN system, the Government and the region as well, but also the coherence between the different levels of programming, and the appropriateness of the selection of the activities to be implemented; the relevance of the JP is shown as much as possible in graphic form in Chapter 4.

A similar analysis has been conducted also for some representative actions or initiatives selected for more in-depth understanding.

The **effectiveness** of the results, for what concerns the effects on the beneficiaries, has been analyzed on the basis of the information supplied by the monitoring systems and by the information gathered in the field work, and further exam of the available documentation after the field work.

Where possible the change produced by the interventions on the capacity of the public administration has also been considered.

The effectiveness is analyzed on the entire range of activities, making reference to the information as set out in the Annex 7.5, and with reference to a certain number of actions, that have been analyzed more in depth, as case studies, in particular during the field work (see Chapter 4.5 and Appendix).

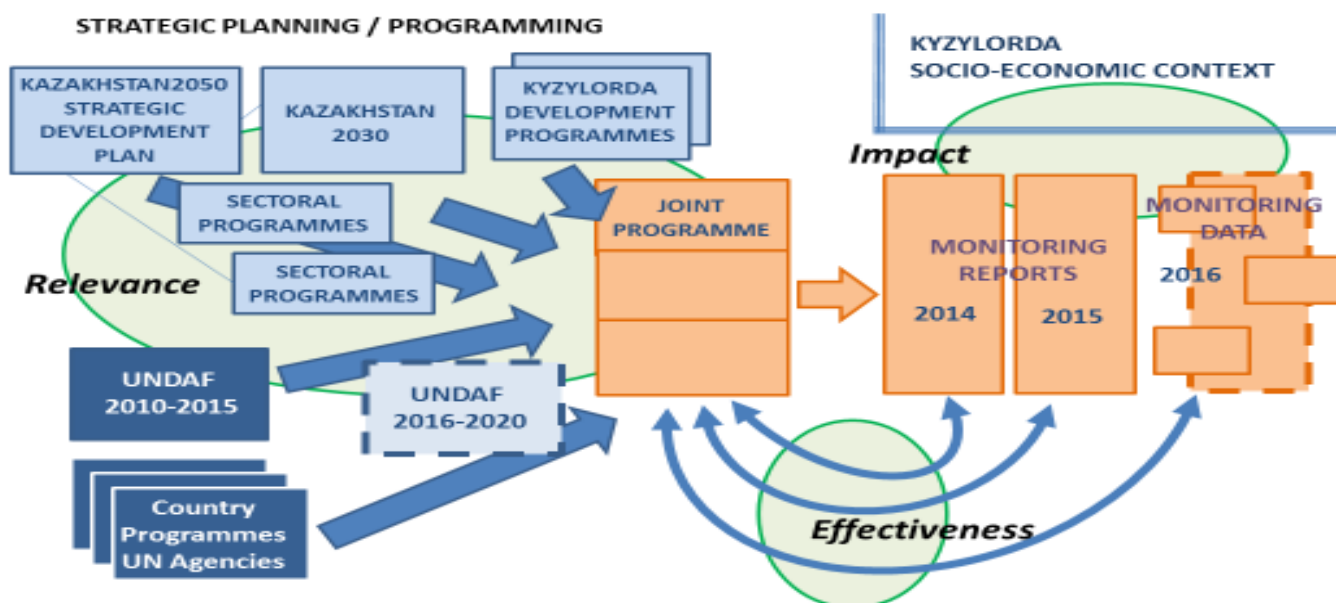
The **efficiency** has been considered making reference to the progress in the financial implementation of the JP taking into consideration the choice of partners and methodologies of implementation, the direct involvement of institutional partners and stakeholders in the management of the activities.

The **sustainability** of the results has been analyzed according to:

- specific Government decisions taken for ensuring this continuity by public authorities at different levels
- changes in behavior of the partners in the programme – stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries – in planning and implementing their activities based on the specific information gathered and the skills developed in the implementation of the measures of the JP
- creation of expectations and advocacy in the citizenship that has experimented and/or has become aware through or as a consequence of the activities of the JP of existing or potential opportunities of which it was not aware before.

The **impact** has mainly been analyzed from the angle of added value that the joint programme brought to enhance the capacity of the Government of Kazakhstan.

The figure below shows how the different criteria play and interact. Sustainability refers to the continuity in time of the actions of the programme, and therefore could be expressed by a third dimension in this scheme.



All criteria can be referred to investigating the effects of the JP as a whole, and the effects of single activities or cases, which were analyzed more in depth.

The following table presents some considerations about how the different criteria work at the two different levels, which are then developed further at the level of findings in Chapter 4.

| Criteria | At JP level | At level of single activity / result / case |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Relevance and coherence | Relevance and coherence between the JPD and the strategy document of the RoK is analyzed at JP level | No relevance and coherence analysis is carried out at the level of single activity, other than making sure that the activities belong to the program |
| Effectiveness | The analysis of the effectiveness of the whole JP covered the entire range of activities, making reference to the information gathered from the monitoring reports, and the information and data for each year of the Programme, from 2014 to 2016. A more analytical approach would require that there are systemic results that the JP as such intends to achieve, besides the contribution to different policies and programmes. | Effectiveness has been analyzed at this level: considering that the cases analyzed represent a significant portion of the JP, this may indicate that most of the activities have been effective, having reached the planned objectives |
| Efficiency | Efficiency at JP level has been considered taking into account the progress of the JP and its timely completion | Efficiency has been considered at level of single activity on the basis of the information supplied during interviews with local representatives of the UN Agencies |
| Sustainability | Sustainability of the whole JP is not really possible to be assessed if not for some systemic effect both in the relationships between RoK government and UN Agencies, while the complexity and diversity of the programme make it in itself scarcely sustainable, and sustainability not a proper objective for the overall program | The sustainability of the single actions has been investigated, identifying a series of elements indicating a good sustainability of some of the most relevant activities. |
| Impact | A specific impact identified by the evaluation is the attainment of results and advancement in the high level dialogue between UN Agencies and RoK government, based on the effectiveness and demonstrative effect obtained by individual significant activities. | Impacts appear to be not yet understandable at the level of single activity, except where the actions have a specific demonstrative effect and have triggered systemic changes in the sector affected, and in the decisions of the regional / local authorities. |

2.3.4 Data sources and collection methods.

As already mentioned, an initial source of information is the Results Framework stipulating a hierarchy of UNDAF outcomes, Joint Programme outputs, indicators and baselines. The activities of the JP are described and characterized by the outputs that they are expected to produce (Table 1. Results framework). For each result one or more indicators are given, that may refer to number of beneficiaries, number of outputs produced, or other parameters (Table 2. Joint Programme Monitoring Framework JPMF). Target results are clearly defined and measurable in terms of quantity or quality, according to the different cases. Activities are also defined, with reference to outputs, in Table 1, but in <indicative> terms: the Results Framework gives also indications concerning the Resource allocation to each indicative activity.

Each Agency produced, according to their own internal methodology and approach, a Work Plan (some on yearly base), detailing the specific actions or activities were to be carried out in the period and the expected results.

Annual Consolidated Progress Report were produced every year, based on the information provided by each Agency, to communicate and disseminate information on the results of the JP. The reports are consolidated at JP level: these Progress Reports are by their very nature focused on the most relevant achievement. Progress Reports for 2014 and 2015 have been provided at the beginning of the assignment, while for 2016 the evaluation team had to refer to the contribution available during the Evaluation, as drafts or as a sparse documentation, provided by each Agency.

All this information was tabled and verified, to provide a general overview of the programme planning, implementation, results.

Further information was provided by the UN Agencies during meetings and field visits; some communication materials were particularly useful to identify the issues considered of particular significance by the UN Agencies and the specific respondents / interviewees.

The structure of the information provided and the timing of its availability have affected significantly the evaluability of the JP, particularly from a quantitative point of view. Since the field visits were planned and implemented during the month of December 2016 Annual Consolidated Progress Report was not yet available to orientate the selection of initiatives / cases to be visited and analyzed more in depth. UN agencies provided 2016 monitoring activities and interim reports to assess T 2016 implementation.

Overall the evidence was clear for the actions and initiatives surveyed in detail; very positive feedback was received from interviewed stakeholders and beneficiaries as services were provided in a timely and efficient manner.

2.3.5 Identification of the activities (cases) to be analyzed in detail

It was foreseen to select a certain number of initiatives to be analyzed more in detail, through meetings with the UN Agencies local staff, stakeholders, partners and final beneficiaries.

In order to ensure that the evaluation would have taken into in-depth consideration a satisfactory section of the projects, the evaluation team intended to meet representatives of the following activities / initiatives

- the 3 most significant activities in terms of total budget;
- at least one action for each Agency involved in the Joint Programme;
- 2 relevant actions aimed at improving the general environment, and / or the wellbeing of the beneficiaries;
- 2 relevant actions aimed at providing valuable experiences, skills and competences to the beneficiaries;
- 2 actions directly aimed at improving the capacity of the public administration or of other actors to contribute to reach the general objectives of the Joint Programme;
- at least 2 actions that have the nature of pilot projects, or that are considered to be replicable by the administrations involved, or by the UN Agencies;
- at least 2 actions for each component / objective of the Joint Programme;
- at least 2 actions, chosen at random, in order to include a certain level of randomization in the process, and to avoid to exclude from the possibility of in-depth analysis all the actions that don't come on top of the list on the basis of the selected indicators.

Eventually this approach was not fully implemented, due to time constraints. However, a final verification allows to consider that the above requirements were sufficiently satisfied by the group of initiatives that were surveyed in the field work.

3. The evaluation process

3.1 Activities carried out

The schedule of the activities to be undertaken in Kyzylorda region was defined together with UNDP. More specifically:

- it was confirmed that the total duration of the evaluation could not exceed 2 months, as stated in the ToR,
- it was requested that the field work in the Region of Kyzylorda should be conducted before the winter season holiday as set out in ToR;

A detailed list of meetings and interviews is given in Annex 7.4.

The Inception phase was based mainly, considering the time constraints, on a careful review of the ToRs, the review of the available programme documents, and with the full participation of the evaluation team members.

Meetings and interviews with the participating Agencies were organized in the second week of December, and were functional to the general understanding of the JP, but also to the preparation of the field work and the planning of the interactions with local representatives, stakeholders and beneficiaries. A summary of the main contents of the meetings is given in Annex 7.3.

All the meetings were conducted in a very collaborative spirit and approach, and – considering the complexity of the JP, and also of the single components and contributions of the different Agencies – resulted very useful to progressively getting an overview of the JP, and specific indications on the most relevant activities to be investigated on the field.

The field work of the evaluation team was conducted from 9 to 13 December 2016. Very positive cooperation was ensured by local representatives of the UN Agencies and by the stakeholders and beneficiaries that were interviewed.

In the following period the most important activity was the analysis of the materials and information gathered during the field work, and of the monitoring information received from UN Agencies.

3.2 Limitations of the evaluation

There were no significant limitations of the evaluation activity in its fruitful work both at central level with the representatives of UN Agencies, as well as with all other counterparts. Some constraints were related to the very strict and rigid schedule, in particular for the field work, and the diversity of information and data on the activities carried out by the UN Agencies.

The resources available for the evaluation and the strict schedule to be respected have limited the number of interviews with UN, stakeholders and beneficiaries. Time for the inception analysis was shorter than desirable. Some of the interviews with the Agencies had to be conducted after that the inception report had been drafted and even after the field work: their results could not be used to plan and manage the field work, and to orientate the interviews with partners and beneficiaries in the field. These serious time constraints have also somehow influenced the selection of the activities to be analyzed more in depth. The evaluation team had proposed in its initial work plan, and modified in the inception phase, some criteria for selection, aimed at properly selecting the activities to be analyzed and the meetings to be organized at local level during the field work. The methodology for the selection of the initiatives could not be completely followed because of these constraints in resources and time.

The analysis was conducted at the end of the year 2016. 2016 Annual Consolidated Report was not released yet by MPTFO since the deadline for the report is 31st May 2017. The evaluation team reviewed 2016 progress based on the interim reports and evidence received from UN agencies. Extension of the programme to 2017 implied that a certain number of activities were still under way at the beginning of the year. Data and information were provided when available from the Agencies, often after the field work.

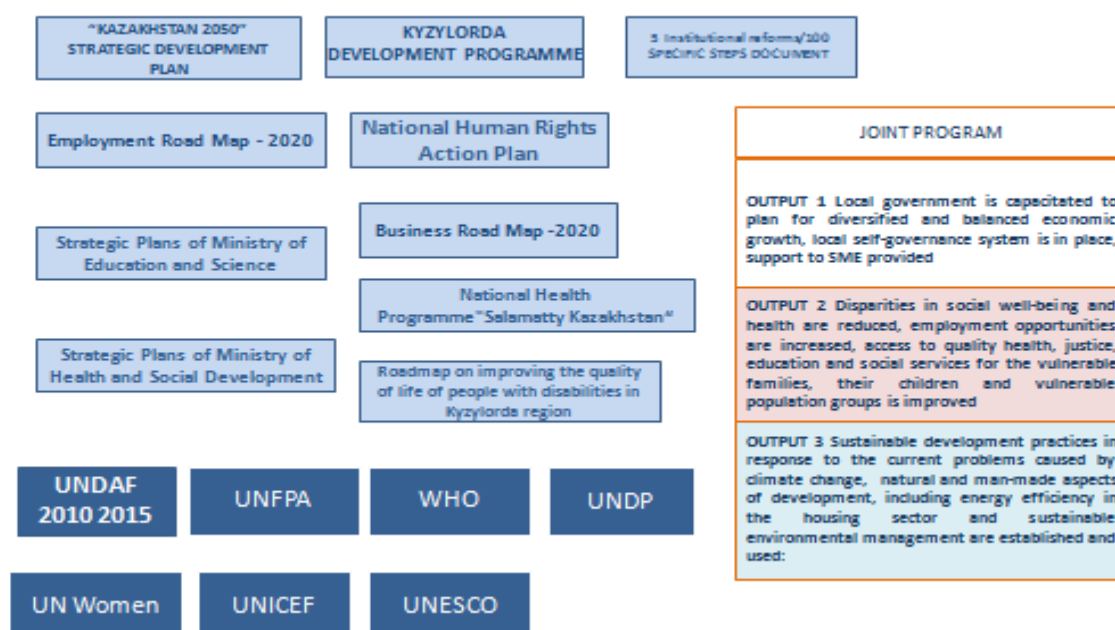
4. Findings

4.1 Relevance of the Joint Programme

4.1.1 Relevance analysis

The relevance of the Joint Programme Document was verified against the planning and strategic documents indicated in the ToR and listed in the tables below. The tables show how different strategic documents have contributed to the identification of specific outputs of the JP in Kyzylorda region, how the outputs of the JP in Kyzylorda region properly address the issues identified in the country, as expressed in the programming documents, and how the UN Agencies intervention relates to other interventions carried out by the Government.

The first table in this page is a general table, showing the structure of the JPD and listing all the documents that were analyzed. The following tables refer to each component of the JP, and show in a graphic form the consistency between each of them and the priorities of the JPD.



In more detail the three general Outputs identified by the JP are related as follows to objectives and priorities of the different strategic documents and of the programming documents of the UN Agencies

Table output 1

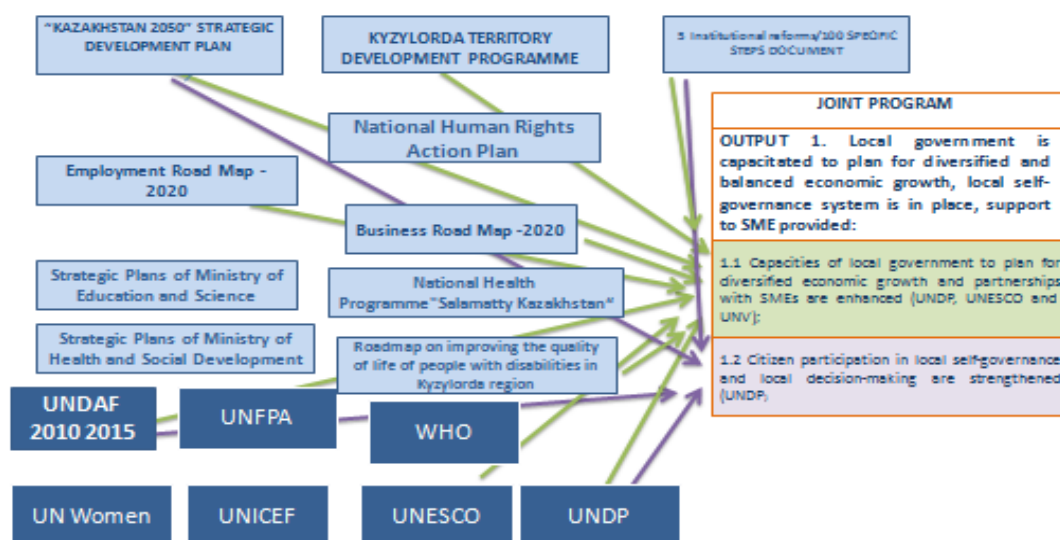


Table output 2

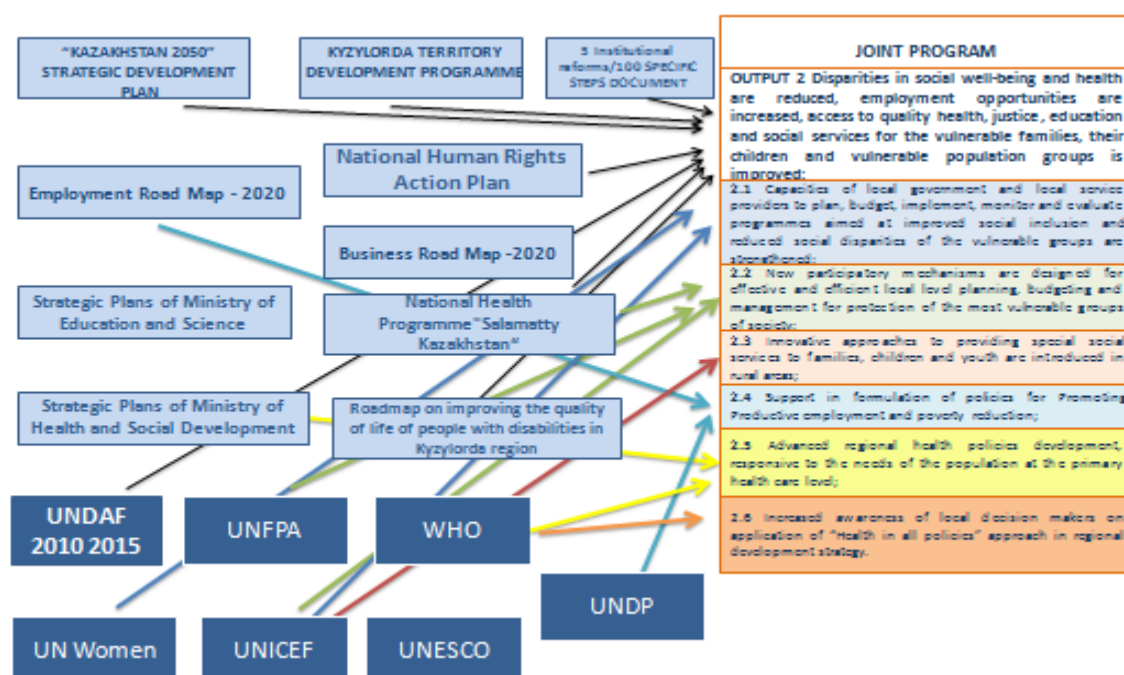
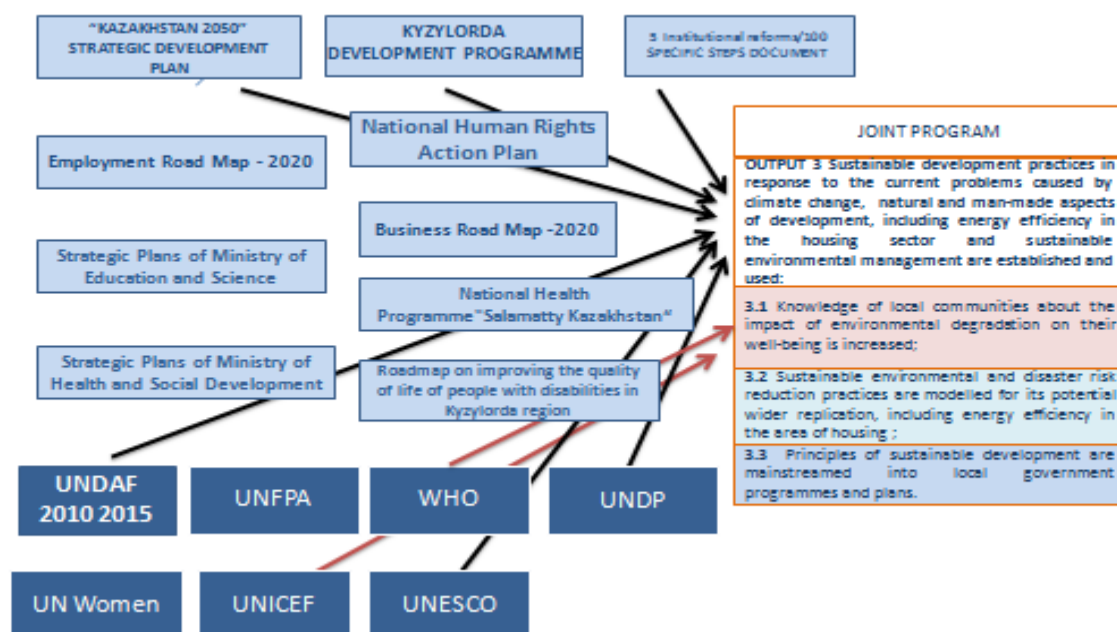


Table output 3



For two of the most relevant strategic documents a narrative analysis of the Coherence with the UN JPD is given in the next pages. Other planning and strategic documents were analyzed, as shown above, but no narrative is included in this report: this does not imply a different relevance of these documents on the contents of the JPD. This paragraph gives simply a more detailed description of how the contents of the JPD are related and consistent with the strategic choices of the government at national and regional level.

Based on the analysis of the context carried out in chapter 1.1, the Outputs can be considered to remain relevant throughout the implementation phase, considering the changes that took place in the development of Kazakhstan and at regional level.

The role played by UN Agencies interventions in introducing the Government to the best global practices in socio economic intervention has been confirmed in many interviews and meetings at local level; some more specific consideration to the relevance of some of the interventions at national level is also given in the Chapter on Outcomes and Impact.

While the decision about the selection of the Region, the overall structure of the JP and the main contents of the interventions had been made by the Agencies and the central Government, and thus seemed to be planned mainly in a top down fashion, the design of the intervention seems to have taken into account the specific needs of the beneficiaries at local and regional level, being thus grounded on shared priorities. In addition, decisions concerning implementation were mainly taken at local / regional level. At the same time, it appeared that the point of view of the single Agency could certainly have much more impact and relevance in the dialogue with the regional authorities being included in the framework of the JP.³

The attitude of the representatives of the UN Agencies at local level was indeed effective in order to promote the participation of beneficiaries. Partners were selected taking into account their experience in promoting the participation of vulnerable and less favored citizens in the initiatives.

To sum up, the JP is certainly **relevant** for the attainment of the overall strategic objectives of Kazakhstan, of the Kyzylorda region, and of the UN Agencies taking part in the Programme, as well as to the needs of the people living in the region.

4.1.2 Coherence of the UN JPD with “Kazakhstan 2050” Strategy

As the Joint Programme in Kyzylorda region relies on the priorities of the key national programme “Kazakhstan 2050” Strategic Development Plan, many objectives correspond, and may be indicated as follows:

- Development of small and medium enterprises of the goal 2 “Comprehensive support of entrepreneurship – leading force in the national economy” corresponds to Output 1.1 of the JP Capacities of local government to plan for diversified economic growth and partnerships with SMEs are enhanced.
- Development concept of local self-governance of the “Kazakhstan 2050” corresponds to Output 1.2 Citizen participation in local self-governance and local decision-making are strengthened. Both the JP and the strategic document objectives are to involve local population in addressing issues of the area and so in self-decision making process.
- Action to move to modern water-saving agricultural technologies of the Policy regarding water resources coincides with output 3.3 Principles of sustainable development are mainstreamed into local government programmes and plans.

³ Meeting with representative of Regional Akimat – Annex 7.4 – Meeting 8

New Principles of Social Policy objectives, specifically in respect to the rights of women and children, modernization of the labor policy, health sphere are reflected in:

- Output 2.1 of the JP Capacities of local government and local service providers to plan, budget, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes aimed at improved social inclusion and reduced social disparities of the vulnerable groups are strengthened;
- Output 2.2 New participatory mechanisms are designed for effective and efficient local level planning, budgeting and management for protection of the most vulnerable groups of society;
- Output 2.3 Innovative approaches to providing special social services to families, children and youth are introduced in rural areas;
- Output 2.4 Support in formulation of policies for promoting productive employment and poverty reduction;
- Output 2.5. Advanced regional health policies development, responsive to the needs of the population at the primary health care level.

The whole output 2 of the JP with the aims to reduce disparities in social well-being and health, increase employment opportunities, and improve access to quality health, justice, education and social services for the vulnerable families, their children and vulnerable population groups, corresponds to the third direction of the Strategy 2050.

4.1.3 Coherence of the UN JPD with Kyzylorda Territory Development Program

The JP activities try to reach goals of the Kyzylorda Territory Development Programme (hereinafter referred as the regional document), which is also certainly the main basic document addressing development issues of Kyzylorda region. Here are some of them:

- Improving the health of the population and reduce burden of socially significant illnesses, area Healthcare, direction 2 Social development of the regional document, which corresponds to JP Output 2.6. Increased awareness of local decision makers on application of “Health in all policies” approach in regional development strategy;
- Ensuring sustainable population employment and rendering social services to the population of the region, area Social protection of the population, Direction 2 Social development of the regional document, relates to JP Output 2.4 Support in formulation of policies for promoting productive employment and poverty reduction
- Development of market infrastructure providing effective functioning of small and medium entrepreneurship, trade, direction 1 Economy of the regional document corresponds to

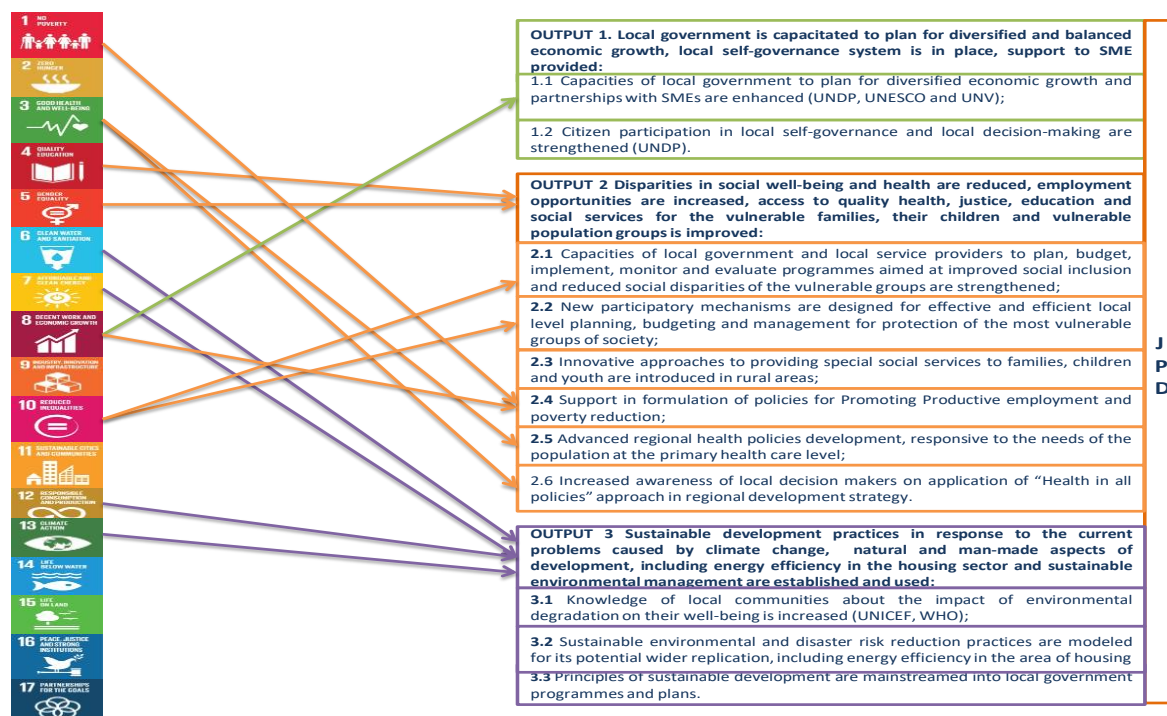
Output 1.1 Capacities of local government to plan for diversified economic growth and partnerships with SMEs are enhanced, which indicators directly related to encourage and develop SME.

4.1.4 Coherence of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The programme is highly relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for. This can be seen from some examples, where outputs of the JPD correspond to the most part of the SDGs, such as:

- Goal 3: “Good health and well-being” corresponds to Output 2.5 Advanced regional health policies development, responsive to the needs of the population at the primary health care level; Output 2.6 Increased awareness of local decision makers on application of “Health in all policies” approach in regional development strategy.
- Goal 6 “Clean water and sanitation”, Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy, Goal 12 “Sustainable consumption and production correspond with Output 3 of the JPD with the objective of Environmental Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Housing and Communal Sphere;
- Goal 8 “Decent work and economic growth” corresponds to Output 1.1 Capacities of local government to plan for diversified economic growth and partnerships with SMEs are enhanced; Output 2.4 Support in formulation of policies for Promoting Productive employment and poverty reduction;

The figure below shows more detailed correspondence between JP outputs and SDGs.



4.1.5 Different approaches of UN Agencies to the JP

A further consideration needs to be highlighted and concerns with the internal coherence of the Programme: during the field work, and in particular during the interviews to the UN agencies staff responsible for the JP⁴ it became evident that the agencies have different approaches to the joint implementation of the programme⁵. The different approaches can be schematized as follows:

- The JP is a closely knitted series of intervention, with a very clear strategic coherence, discussed at high level by the UN Agencies together with the Government of the RoK; although articulated in a large array of different and diverse actions, it keeps some very well defined focus (that is summarized in the JPD, and that put together socio-economic development, environmental issues and priorities related to human well-being, especially of vulnerable groups, and effectiveness and competence of the public administration especially at local level)

⁴ Discussed in more details in the section of this Report titled 'Summary of the main results of the meetings [with UN agencies]'.
⁵ Discussed in the section of this Report 'Summary of the main results of the meetings [with UN agencies]'.

- This position was expressed strongly by UNDP and other Agencies – underlying the importance of many, even apparently minor, initiatives as functional, and very effective, in giving opportunities to promote high level dialogue with the Government of Kazakhstan;
- also the WHO representative underscored the relevance of actions and indicators in the area of health as strongly representative of the overall socio-economic development of the country, at which all actions of the JP were coherently aimed;
- The JP is an opportunity for the Agencies to carry out their policies, discussed and agreed upon with the Government of the Kazakhstan, with relevant additional resources and a focus on regional development challenges
- The JP is a rich and complex series of intervention, with a certain degree of coherence and coordination, agreed by UN Agencies together with the Government of the RoK; it has to be properly coordinated to avoid contradictions and overlapping, and to minimize the differences in working procedures and style by the UN Agencies, but has to be agreed in detail but each Agency, especially those that have a relevant amount of resources to use, with Government counterparts and local authorities and stakeholders
 - In this approach, coordination and joint monitoring of the activities are the most relevant aspects of the joint nature of the JP
 - together with the leverage provided to Agencies that have more limited resources by the fact of being part of a wider coalition, that can be useful to obtain attention and support both at national and regional level.

These different approaches – that are not necessarily contradictory – have been present in the planning and in the deployment of the Programme, side by side, and have met diverse expectations from the different counterparts. The level of cooperation at local level among the different Agencies did not appear particularly strong, confirming the latter approach may have been somewhat prevailing.

Closer cooperation has taken place between UN Agencies that have similar mandates, and that in the context of the JPD share common outputs, and have managed to build common intervention on the ground. Activities of the JP planned as common activities between two or more Agencies are rather few: while UNDP conducted on its own 31 activities, and 2 with WHO⁶.

In all cases however the Programme activities have been carried out through a strong cooperation with local authorities – Regional Akimat and local Akimat – and with local counterparts and stakeholder. In this sense it has resulted in a Joint Programme.

⁶ This was noted by the team through interviews of the UN Agencies and evidenced during the field visits.

4.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness has been assessed on the basis of the information supplied by the monitoring framework and by the information gathered in the field work (including individual interviews, group meetings, but also direct observations made by the team), and possible successive interactions from remote.

The effectiveness is considered:

- on the entire range of activities, making reference to the information gathered from the monitoring reports and the information and data for each year of the Programme, from 2014 to 2016 (as far as the availability of the information as allowed the team to do so)
- with reference to a limited number of actions, selected by the Agencies, that are sufficiently close to the sample of activities that was indicated in the Inception report, as explained in more detail at chapter 3.5.2; the selection was trying to include activities with different characteristics, according to an agreed set of indicators, as explained in the next chapter.

The main **evaluation question** concerning effectiveness that finds a reply in the more general analysis is the following: do outputs correspond to the planned objectives at the end of the JP?

The analysis of the information gathered from the monitoring reports and the information and data for each year of the Programme, from 2014 to 2016, as shown in Annex 7.5, shows that a satisfactory level of effectiveness is reached by the JP, even if at the moment of our analysis not all activities were completed.

Concerning the more limited number of actions analyzed in more detail a wider range of criteria, factors and aspects are investigated, and additional questions find a reply, such as:

- What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended Outputs?

Intended Outputs were achieved where a systemic approach was adopted rather than an approach based on the support to specific projects.

A relevant example is provided by the interventions in the field of health and well-being. These interventions showed among other aspects, how well-being and health are strong indicators, and main results, of development programmes, as underlined in the interviews to the representatives of UN Agencies.

- Have the outputs of the activities benefited the identified target groups, and specific groups with special needs?

While a certain number of activities were directly targeted to groups with special needs (see in Appendix 8.2, 8.3, and 8.6) it was noticeable that also other activities benefited persons with special needs (in Appendix 8.4). Improvement in the conditions at school, thanks to saving allowed by Energy saving initiatives, made easier to children with disabilities to attend regularly school classes (Annex 7.4 Visit n. 7).

- Have the activities benefit in equal way both genders / groups with special need? Have these groups reached the same results as other activities?

Most of activities benefited both genders while some were specifically geared to women (Appendix 8.6); the local staff of the UN Agencies and the implementers (see Annex 7.4) were mostly women.

- Have the outputs of the activities directly referred to the Public Administration obtained the expected results, and increased the capacity of the Public Administration? Has the management of the activities aimed at identified target groups, and specific groups with special needs, improved the capacity and performance of the Public Administration? Have the activities attention to benefit in equal way and the activities aimed at groups with special need promoted this attention in Regional and local government?

Not all activities were intended in the same way to reinforce capacity of Public Administration; this positive effect however has been detected in a significant amount of the activities studied: activities concerning local self-government were relevant and successful (App 1), while in the health and educational sector the introduction of new systems and protocols certainly increased the effectiveness of the public bodies involved – schools, hospitals, etc (App 2, 3, 5)

As previously described the evaluation team has been able to make use of the data contained in the JPD. These data have been tabled together, trying to compare the indicators defined during the planning of the JP with the results achieved, as they have been recorded in the Progress Reports. In doing so the Evaluation team has tried to connect the information concerning the indicators with the activities carried out, that have brought to the achievement of these results. Since the planning phase not all indicators were related to specific activities, while the Progress Report, being narrative documents, tend to refer to activities, this has proved quite complex. However the quantitative results, as it is possible to notice examining the Effectiveness table in Annex 7.5, are quite reassuring, and indicate that the examination of the results appear to be quite thorough.

The results are tabled per UN Agency, year - 2014, 2015 and where possible 2016. The table is in Annex 7.5: it can be said, using in particular the results registered at the end of 2015, that on the whole **the JP has achieved the expected results.**

At the end of 2014, 16% of the activities had reached the expected results, while another 30% were on track, or had fall short the expected target, for a total of 46% of activities that registered somehow positive results.

The following year, in 2015, targets were achieved in 38% of cases (+22%) or were on track, or partially successful in another 36% of cases (+9%): together positive results had been reached by 74% of the activities.

At the same time the activities that did not reached the results decreased from 37 to 2%. The activities that did not show information on their progress, passed from 18% to 25%.

The comparison with 2016 is more difficult because the data are only partial. Consequently, the number of activities that cannot be assessed is much higher, reaching 54% of the actions.

Only 4% of the actions do not achieve results, among those of which we have information: successful activities are therefore the 42% of the total, of which 23% reached the final result already at the end of the previous year (2015?), 9% have reached the results in 2016, and another 9% have partially achieved the expected results. If we consider these actions as a sample, we can expect at the closing of the JP, and at the completion of the monitoring, that the actions fully successful would be 56%, 10% will end up as unsuccessful, while the remaining 34% would achieved partially the expected results.

Overall, for the considerations mentioned above, we consider the Effectiveness of the JP to be **satisfactory**, and in some cases **highly satisfactory**.

4.3 Efficiency

The **evaluation of efficiency** was implemented, using the information supplied by the monitoring framework and by the information gathered in the field work, and possible successive interactions from remote.

The efficiency is considered

- on the entire range of activities, considering the information gathered from the monitoring reports and the information and data for each year of the Programme, from 2014 to 2016
- with reference to a limited number of actions, selected by the Agencies, that are sufficiently close to the sample of activities indicated in chapter 2.3.4;

Concerning efficiency, where and when possible attention has been given to the following question:

- Have the Outputs been achieved at an acceptable cost, compared with alternative approaches with the same objectives?

Despite detailed data on the costs with a breakdown, to be compared with quantitative data on results achieved (number of people served / beneficiaries, for example) were not available for all specific activities, it would seem that the UN Agencies have chosen quite efficient and well proven working methodologies. The partners selected for the implementation of the activities were for the most part well established actors at local level, reducing the need for the establishment and the organizational start-up of the activities, given the experience and the existing know-how of the partners; many of them had already taken part in similar activities⁷.

The direct involvement of the local administration and local institutions in the implementation of the activities, reduced the complexity of the implementation itself, and helped contain costs⁸. The success of activities similar to Technical Assistance, compared to activities financing projects, such as support to new SMEs, helped to improve the system for the provision of services to citizens, ensuring that the results could go beyond the duration of the JP and ensuring lasting benefits with

⁷ In particular, the Evaluation Team was impressed by the local partners chosen to implement such activities as local self-government grant component and the government sponsored the Recreation Center for Disabled Children in the village of Talsuat. We also found well prepared Almaty-based UN Women partner, NGO Crises Center 'Podrugi', and the Kyzylorda-based partner of the UNFPA component, NGO 'Orkennietty Kazakhstan' (discussed in more details in the Annex 8 of this Report).

⁸ Government support of JP activities was evidenced during field visits. We found it most substantial in case of local self-government and activities in support of social services and health (Discussed in more details in the Annex 8).

the introduction of more efficient and effective systems: sustainability in these cases translated also in increased efficiency of the intervention⁹.

At JP level, as opposed to the level of individual activities, monitoring data show, in the comparison between 2014 and 2015, a progressive improvement in the rate of realization, corresponding to a progress in the use of the financial resources available to the JP.

In 2015 the number of activities that had not reached the expected results, and had therefore not made efficient use of the resources allocated, decreased to a mere 5%¹⁰.

As shown in chapter 4.4 all the activities surveyed in detail showed a satisfactory level of efficiency, in line with what planned.

The Evaluation team came to the conclusion that most of reviewed projects achieved results at acceptable costs and overall showed commendable cost efficiency. We consider the Efficiency of the JP to be **satisfactory**, with limited exceptions.

⁹ Examples of technical assistance interventions include successful adoption of UNDP-sponsored assistance and methodologies by the Rehabilitation Center for Disabled People in the village of Talsuat, suicide prevention techniques and other cases examined by the Evaluation Team during field visit.

¹⁰ These conclusions are based on analysis of the JP Annual Progress Reports.

4.4 Sustainability of the Joint Project results

Sustainability, that is the extent to which the activities initiated by the programme will be continued and possibly developed after the end of the programme itself, depends on

- specific Government decisions taken for ensuring this continuity by public authorities at different levels; this includes
 - decisions concerning the allocation of resources by the local authorities involved, in order to continue the activities in the future, or to extend it to other beneficiaries or territories
 - decision concerning the legislative or regulatory framework, where activities that have been carried out at experimental level by the JP become part of the institutional framework
 - decision concerning policies, that can be influenced by high level dialogue between the Government and UN Agencies, in which the activities of the JP can be relevant as demonstrations and experimentations;
- changes in behavior of the partners in the programme – stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries – in planning and implementing their activities based on the specific information gathered and the skills developed in the implementation of the measures of the JP
 - the most significant of these changes are those that becomes new approaches, standards, systems: that is to say that become part of the organizational behavior, possibly of the organizational structure, including in this definition procedures, protocols, systems and forms of communication, etc.
- creation of expectations and advocacy in the citizenship that has experimented and/or as become aware through or as a consequence of the activities of the JP of existing or potential opportunities of which it was not aware before.

During the field work we have found solid evidence of these having happened as a consequence of the activities of the JP.

- in terms of decisions
 - allocation of resources were already decided by local authorities in a few cases and were under consideration in some others¹¹;
 - decisions concerning the legislative or regulatory framework were taken the experimentation of the mechanism of the law on Local Self Government have given the opportunity to identify aspects of the law that could be amended¹²;
- in terms of working methodologies and expectations
 - new systems and protocols have been introduced in hospital practice concerning strategic planning, maternity care, juvenile suicide prevention, alternative measures for adolescent offenders, etc.¹³;
 - most of these new systems are based on new skills developed in the activities of the JP, are rooted also in new behaviors and protocols adopted by the operators, are reinforced by system of networks between operator of different areas (health and education, in the case of suicide prevention; judiciary and social service in the case of alternative measures)¹⁴;
 - in terms of expectations and advocacy, it seems likely that experimenting mechanisms for participation at local level would promote further requests of similar involvement for the future, as well as requests from other communities in and outside the region¹⁵.

All activities contributed to the objectives at regional, and local (city / rural) levels. Results and lessons learned in the implementation of the JP, and of several activities can be implemented in other regions, and some projects played as catalysts for further actions and institutional developments, also in terms of new or improved legislation and/or regulations. The overall Sustainability of the JP is thus **satisfactory**.

¹¹ For instance, as part of activities aimed at making public space accessible to disabled people, Kyzylorda city government decided to support JP interventions in this area by allocating additional resources to establish elevator in the building of the Regional Department of Social Protection and finance other similar initiatives concerning public buildings.

¹² These plans / data were communicated to the Evaluation team during meetings at the Regional Akimat, Department of Economics and Budget Planning.

¹³ This information was communicated to the Team during filed visit to the Kyzylorda City Polyclinic N1 and at the meeting with Zhanar Kozharipova, Deputy Head of the Regional Health Care Department.

¹⁴ Multiple examples substantiating these observations were collected by the Evaluation team during filed visits including such areas as training teachers and psychologists in adolescent suicide prevention techniques, school teacher involved in SRH, law enforcement officers trained in prevention of domestic violence against women, local doctors and personnel of polyclinics involved in JP activities aimed at decrease of child mortality and other examined areas/ activities.

¹⁵ This information was communicated to the Evaluation team during meetings with local authorities in Zhanakorgan district and at the regional level during meetings at the regional Akimat.

4.5 Assessment dashboard for selected projects

The assessment of the activities that have been analyzed more in depth has been conducted according to a much wider range of elements, both quantitative and qualitative, that are the following

- effectiveness, measured by
 - operational indicators
 - institutional indicators
- relevance, in terms of
 - potential beneficiaries, or audience covered
 - possible area of influence
- sustainability, in terms of effects on
 - institutional framework
 - operational capacity
 - replicability
- efficiency, measured by
 - attainment of expected results, using the resources planned,
 - where available, costs of the activity surveyed compared to results obtained and to international practice.

It may be useful to underline that this assessment is based on the results of direct interviews and visits during the on-field activities; however not all activities included in the interviews and visit plan – as shown in Annex 7.4 - are included in the assessment, but only those that resulted interesting, that is to say adequately documented. Impacts were not specifically tabled because they could not be ascertained for all the actions, being most of them still underway, and more time would be needed in most cases.

Most of the interviews have taken place at the site of the activity, and have involved two experts of the team, usually the international expert and the national experts, in order to cover a wider series of elements and ensure the consideration of different views.

The activities are assessed on a scale 1-4 according to these criteria, with the following results: of 10 actions surveyed, 3 can be considered very successful, obtaining more than half of marks in the top category; 5 actions are successful, at various degrees, with a prevalence of marks in the second-best category; only 2 actions appear to be not completely satisfactory in terms of achievements.

These results correspond rather precisely to the results obtained on the whole array of actions, although through a different set of indicators.

Legenda

| | |
|--|---|
| | Results better than planned: highly satisfactory |
| | Results as expected: satisfactory |
| | Results lower than expected: moderately unsatisfactory |
| | Results unsatisfactory |
| | Not applicable / not relevant |

| № | Intervention | Output | Agency | Sustainability | | | Effectiveness | | Efficiency |
|----|---|---|--------|--|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | | Institutional framework | Operational capacity | Potential for replication | Operational indicators | Institutional indicators | Financial indicators |
| 1. | Activities in schools with a focus on energy efficiency and better conditions for children | Output 3.2. Sustainable environmental and disaster risk reduction practices are modeled for its potential wider replication, including energy efficiency in the area of housing and communal services Indicators 3.2.1 and 3.2.4 | UNDP; | Improved | good | good | results are better than planned | results as planned | results are better than expected |
| 2. | Activities in support to local self-government | Output 1.2; Indicator 1.2.1. Awareness of rural population on the possibilities provided by local self-government; and Indicator: 1.2.2 Number of successful projects implemented within self-governance scheme | UNDP | Good; projects (constructed facilities) transferred to the local govts | good | good | results are as expected | results are as expected | results as planned |
| 3. | Loans for Small Businesses | Output 1.1; Indicator: 1.1.2 Number of successful business projects supported In addition: indicators: 2.4.1; 2.4.2; 2.4.3; 2.4.4; 2.4.5 | UNDP | n/a | good | n/a | results are as expected | results are as expected | results are as expected |
| 4. | Grant programme to support social inclusion projects / most vulnerable/ site visit to Rehabilitation Center | Output 2.4 Support in formulation of policies for promoting productive employment and poverty reduction Indicators: 2.4.1; 2.4.2; 2.4.3; 2.4.4; 2.4.5 | UNDP | improved | good | good | results are better than expected | results are better than expected | results as planned |

| № | Intervention | Output | Agency | Sustainability | | | Effectiveness | | Efficiency |
|----|--|--|--------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| | | | | Institutional framework | Operational capacity | Potential for replication | Operational indicators | Institutional indicators | Financial indicators |
| 5. | "Justice for children: support of the children in conflict with the law" /Interview with juvenile court judge | Output 2.2 Indicator 2.2.3: Ratio of juveniles diverted to alternative services at the pre-trial stage to the number of committed crimes in pilot sites | UNICEF | newly developed | good | good | Results as planned, limited impact | Results as planned | results as planned |
| 6. | Planning family and reproductive health | Output 2.2. Indicator2.2.6: Number of young people empowered to advocate behaviours to prevent unwanted pregnancies and HIV transmission. Indicator2.2.7; 2.2.10 | UNFPA | results as planned | results as planned | good | results as planned | results as planned | results as planned |
| 7. | "Universal progressive model of patronage nursing system" to reduce the mortality of children under 5/site visit to Kyzylorda City Policlinic N1 | Output 2.3 Innovative approaches to providing special social services to families, children and youth are introduced in rural areas Indictors 2.3.2; 2.3.4 | UNICEF | Improved | good | good | | results as planned | results as planned |

| № | Intervention | Output | Agency | Sustainability | | | Effectiveness | | Efficiency |
|-----|---|---|----------|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | | Institutional framework | Operational capacity | Potential for replication | Operational indicators | Institutional indicators | Financial indicators |
| 8. | Prevention of suicide among adolescents | Output 2.3 Innovative approaches to providing special social services to families, children and youth are introduced in rural areas Indicator 2.3.3. Suicide prevention programme introduced to decrease suicidal behaviour among adolescents. | UNICEF | Improved | support from authorities/ involved parties | was developed | results as planned; relevant impacts | results as planned; relevant impacts | results as planned |
| 9. | Prevention of Domestic Violence / NGO Crises Center "Podrugi" | Output 2.1; Indicator 2.1.4: Local public allocation for implementation of Law on prevention of domestic violence in relation to support to survivors of domestic violence increased by 15% by 2016 | UN Women | newly developed | A need in continued support by authorities as well as NGOs and community members | developed | results are better than planned | results as planned | results are better than planned |
| 10. | Interview with the Deputy Head of the Social Services Department /participant of the training in demographic planning | Output 2.2; Indicator 2.2.8: Number of local government specialists trained on Population and Development inter-linkages and effective socio-economic planning and monitoring of regional development programs, taking into account needs of vulnerable groups of the population | UNFPA | Improved | good | Not relevant | results as planned | results as planned | results as planned |

4.6 Outcomes and Impacts

The JP aimed at reaching the most significant outcomes in a few main directions, as foreseen in the JPD:

- Strengthen the capacities of local government to plan for the economic development of the region, stimulate productive employment and enhance entrepreneurial skills of the rural population, especially in the core settlements;
- Support to the system of self-governance by working with state and civil institutions in order to create conditions in which important local issues can be addressed by local population;
- Strengthen the capacity of local institutions at every level including health system (focus on integrated care across all health system levels, from the primary health care level to effective and efficient hospital care), sexual and reproductive health, child protection, cultural heritage to provide better services to the population, especially those in most need (women, children, youth, elderly, PWDs, repatriates, etc.);
- Introduce innovative approaches in the region with regards to the well-being and protection of vulnerable groups of population, including children and youth, support to their social and economic inclusion, creation of social infrastructure and ‘barrier free’ environment;
- Promote sustainable environmental development, including piloting water, energy efficiency in housing and communal sectors, environmentally oriented and adapted usage of land and other natural resources and disaster risk reduction practices.

During the field work, we found some evidence of potential impacts of the actions analyzed more in depth, above all in terms of:

- **Equity and gender equality:** many initiatives taken by the JP, if further developed and continued, could actually bring about over the time to concrete improvements in terms of inclusion, equity and gender equality. For instance, this is specifically visible in i) the active inclusion of people with disabilities or particularly vulnerable, such as NEETs; ii) experimenting the scheme of social enterprise promoted by the government, and actively sustaining women employment generation; iii) the promotion of energy efficiency in the schools, which in turn created better conditions for the children, specifically allowing children with disabilities to access more easily to school and thus concretely contributing to their school reintegration. More specifically, it is worth mentioning that the activities managed by UN Women, despite not exceeding the target set by the JPD, significantly supported the Kazakhstan Government in the implementation of the new legislation on domestic violence. Similarly, initiatives ending previous school segregation of disabled children have

already been adopted at national level, alongside with the adoption / ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- **Local governance:** local self-government mechanisms were actively promoted, in line with the Law on Local Self Government, and these mechanisms could be used in the future to address issues and take decisions that go beyond the definition of priorities of the JP, in other fields relevant for the local community, and thus generally promoting self-development and local good governance. Mechanisms of local self-government were indeed diffused to other administrations in the Region and gave the opportunity for formulating proposal for the improvement of the Law of Local Self Government.
- **Environmental protection:** an important feature of the JP has been represented by the piloting of energy saving and efficient resource utilization solutions (such as heating rationalization, more efficient lighting in schools and public offices, monitoring, recycling and improving water utilization), which in turn could promote a wider and stronger environmental consciousness and stimulate further actions in the same direction, financed locally. In addition, energy saving initiatives have had significant demonstrative effects for the government, and tend to be replicated, thanks to the technical personnel provided by UNDP, and also with the intervention of other Agencies. The use of the savings obtained with these measures is under discussion with the government.

It is clear from the above that, while working at the regional / local levels, the UN Agencies can effectively stimulate actions at the national level, which single local authorities may not be able to activate.

At the level of final beneficiaries it is even clearer that many of these activities, both on the side of entrepreneurship and economic development, and on the side of social development and health care, have directly and significantly benefited a number of final beneficiaries of each activity. Many of the activities are also functional to increase **social cohesion**. Considering that these activities have also introduced new approaches and systems, it is to be expected that they will continue to produce positive impacts on the citizens of Kazakhstan also in the future.

4.7 Management, organization and monitoring

For what it was possible to ascertain in the field work, the management of the JP is characterized by a certain level of coordination between Agencies working on similar or joint activities; lower level of coordination among other UN Agencies taking part in the JP: coordination therefore seems to be strictly activity based, rather than programme based.

A low level of awareness of the complexity and scope of the JP was noticed among local representatives and partners, with strong focus on the single activities to be carried out by the programme managers¹⁶.

The JP appears to have been decided in its main features at Ministerial / UN Agencies level, and implemented at regional and local level with the involvement of the Akimat and some degree of participation of local authorities and local stakeholders; this resulted in a good level of ownership of the programme, and at the same time in good involvement of the local (oblast and rayon) administration in the programme, for a number of different reasons, that were mentioned in the interviews:

- the programme was coherent with well thought, evidence based Agency programmes, shared at strategic level with the government, and coherent with the Government overall strategy¹⁷
- the activities of the programme, from the point of view of beneficiaries, were responding to real problems, addressing sensitive issues that the beneficiaries themselves were prioritizing¹⁸
- the activities of the programme were considered to be of high quality, and in general were well respected, because based on international experience (in general it seemed that the involvement of UN Agencies and the involvement in some cases of international consultants resulted in a positive bias towards the JP)¹⁹

¹⁶ These observations based on information collected by the Team during filed visits, interviews of the JP implementing staff representing participating UN Agencies and stakeholders of the Programme.

¹⁷ Observations based on analysis of the JP and the government of Kazakhstan strategic documents, as well as the Kyzylorda regional government plans / strategies.

¹⁷ Observations based on analysis of the JP and the government of Kazakhstan strategic documents, as well as the Kyzylorda regional government plans / strategies and on the meeting with the Director of the Department for Macroeconomic Analysis and Forecasting, Ministry of National Economy

¹⁸ Observations based on filed visits and interviews of beneficiaries including SME loan recipients, patients of the Rehabilitation Centers and others.

¹⁹ Observations based on filed visits and interviews of JP participants such as local teachers, psychologists, managers of the Rehabilitation Centers, medical staff and managers of the government health care, social protection, and education sectors, and the local government representatives both in the city of Kyzylorda and in the Zhanakorgan district.

- some of the beneficiaries had been involved in preliminary activities, and had been able to provide advice and suggestions²⁰
- some of the activities had been planned in continuity to, or at least in relation with, other initiatives and programmes carried out in the recent past by the same Agencies or even by other institutions²¹

Other elements are worth mentioning, i.e.

- good satisfaction concerning the flexibility of approach of the local staff of the UN Agencies, and no indications of particular problems with procedures and bureaucracy, no indications of improper behavior in the selection of partners and of beneficiaries, and a few indications of some delays in financial outlays, and in payments from the UN Agencies²²
- high number of very committed and strongly involved local staff of the Agencies, with strong sense of ownership of the activities, capable and willing to give a strong support to the beneficiaries and similar selection of strongly dedicated partners, sometimes with a strong experience in the specific fields of action and ownership of the issues²³
- unequal efforts of communication of the contents and results of the activities carried out, and insufficient initiatives of communication of the overall programme²⁴;
- possibly insufficient attention to monitoring and documentation of the results reached by the action, and insufficiency of a common monitoring framework²⁵.

²⁰ For example, previous involvement of the implementers of activities of support to Small Business appeared to be valuable (App 4)

²¹ Examples include activities concerning disabled people independently planned by the Kyzylorda regional authorities and later integrated / adjusted to the JP (this information was communicated to the Team by the managers of the regional Department of Social Protection).

²² The Evaluation team made this impression as a result of field visit interviews with beneficiaries, including local government counterparts, SME loan recipients, disabled people and others.

²³ The Team highly assessed interviewed local staff of the Kyzylorda UNDP team, UN Women, UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA representatives / partners.

²⁴ Observations based on interviews with participating UN Agencies representatives and field visits interviews, including interviews with regional government representatives.

²⁵ Observations based on interviews with participating UN Agencies representatives and analysis of JP reports and materials.

5. Lessons learned and conclusions

5.1 Lessons learned

Several lessons were learned from the implementation of the JP, both at a general level and with reference to some specific aspects of the programme²⁶. The JP has been a learning experience both for the UN Agencies involved and for the national, regional and local administrations, as well as for the beneficiaries and the local stakeholders and implementers.

At a general level, the approach of the Joint Programme was characterized, more than anything else, by the **regional dimension of the intervention**, and besides that by the **decentralization of the activities in many areas of the region**. For some of the implementing Agencies, active at local level, but often focused on a role of support to the national Government and to the specific sectoral public administration, planning and implementing the JP allowed a deeper understanding of the issues at heart of their activities, and gave the chance for experimenting solutions on a limited scale. The cooperation with regional authorities has become a good practice and also a very important opportunity for learning, both for the Agencies involved and for the regional authorities²⁷. The close relationship between the Agencies and the beneficiaries on the ground proved valuable for most Agencies, as commented during the interviews showing how the opportunity of working at local scale had become important for them²⁸.

For regional and local administrations the JP allowed to understand and make use of the experiences of the UN Agencies, and introduce change at high level of professional quality, including the facilitation of international exposure that resulted appreciated and effective.

At the same time the nature of several activities aimed at **piloting interventions** that could be possibly replicated on a wider scale, and the success of the implementation, allowed the Agencies involved to be more effective in their conversation with the Republican government. UN Agencies were indeed able to bring to the attention of the central government the results achieved, and this evidence influenced the high-level dialogue under way, supporting the decisional process. This resulted in the government joining some international conventions

²⁶For some initiatives, reference is given to the relevant paragraph of this report, for others that have been analyzed by the Evaluation team more in depth, reference to a more detailed report in Appendix (AP-number of the case) is given.

²⁷ Meeting with representative of Regional Akimat – Annex 7.4 – Meeting 8

²⁸ Local programme officer of UNDP and UNICEF, in commenting interviews and cases, clearly expressed this view.

and agreements, or operationally implementing international agreements promoted by the UN Agencies signed by Kazakhstan and not yet completely put into practice.

Some activities supported the Kazakhstan Government in the **implementation of new legislation**, creating opportunities for learning both on the UN Agencies level and on the Kazakh institutions and stakeholders

This was the case of the experimentation of local self-government process in local communities²⁹ where local communities discussed how to prioritize about the implementation of the activities financed by the JP, and decided on them according to the procedures set by the law. It was certainly an important learning opportunity for local communities and local governments, supported also by focused training activities. This emerging practice proved to be a cautious experimentation of self-government, being the financial resources involved seen by beneficiaries and stakeholders as “UN resources”, and therefore not subjected directly to constraints related to resources from the Republican budget; and the meetings enjoyed and relied on the operational support and facilitation by UNDP staff³⁰.

Another activity of the JP, such as those managed by UN Women, supported the Kazakhstan Government in the implementation of new legislation, in this case the law on domestic violence. Experimentation and implementation of new legislation and regulations on themes that are close to UN Agencies missions – seems to bring results, helping the government to turn from a merely legal level to a more operational one, and ensuring support to this effort, in terms of operations, monitoring and evaluation of results, etc.

It is reasonable to think that these experiences were also powerful in suggesting an important role of the UN Agencies in supporting the National government. These activities of facilitation of the implementation of new legislation can be seen as an important area of work for the UN Agencies.

The interventions in the field of health and well-being showed among other aspects, how well-being and health are strong indicators, and main outcomes, of development programmes, as underlined in the interview of the WHO representative in Astana³¹. This is an approach that the JP has allowed the Regional authorities to experiment and appreciate, as WHO actions have addressed key challenges of the health system in Kyzylorda oblast. The aim was to improve the health status of the population as an ultimate goal, and to improve the experience of the population in contact with the health services.

²⁹ Appendix 8.1

³⁰ This was evidenced during our meetings with local community representatives and local authorities in the Zhanakorgan rayon.

³¹ Interview with Melita Vujnovic, the WHO representative for Kazakhstan.

In the case of the activities geared at suicide prevention in adolescents (UNICEF), another important lesson can also be mentioned, i.e. the **importance of replicating successful experience** deriving from previous programmes, appreciating how performance can be reinforced by learning / improving by doing (the activities on suicide prevention were originally started in the East Kazakhstan programme, and then extended to Kyzylorda JP, continuously improving the implementation procedures, and putting in motion a virtuous chain of transfer of know-how).

The activities mentioned above, such suicide prevention – where the focus was on the screening of risk factors of suicidal behavior, and on the introduction and support to strategic planning in hospitals, showed also the importance of **focalizing on “system building” measures**.

These measures, if appropriate and appreciated by the beneficiaries– education and health personnel in the case of suicide prevention and hospital staff for strategic planning, resulted in the adoption of new protocols and organizational solutions, entering in the standard or mainstream approach and activity.

Energy saving and other environment related actions³² can be considered as good practices, based on successful experimentations of possible public investments with great potential for beneficial impact on environment and at the same time important saving measures for the institutions that carried them out. This led to immediate replication and extension of interventions by the local administration, using government budget. In order words in the case the lesson was learned very quickly and directly influenced decisions. It seems important to single out this kind of action, that because of their effectiveness find opportunity for promoting further interventions and ensuring sustainability.

authorities has become a good practice and also a very important opportunity for learning, both for

UN Agencies Programme officers and partners proved a **strong commitment**, and a very deep involvement with the activities and the beneficiaries. This attitude was often mirrored by the dedication of civil servants responsible for the activity; and this proved to be very effective in contributing to the success of the activities, also promoting similar involvement in the beneficiaries. On the one hand, this showed the importance of selecting as programme managers, and local representatives of the Agencies, personalities that can effectively play this role; on the other hand, as the literature on development indicates, it shows the relevance

³² Annex 7.4 – Visit 7 to Kyzylorda School n. 11

of the role that can be played by representatives of public administration as agents of change³³.

³³ During the field visit, the Evaluation team several times met with local UNDP staff as well as with representatives of the UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA programs and had opportunity to examine their activities and collect feedback from beneficiaries.

5.2 Conclusions

For what the Evaluation team was able to assess, the vast **majority of the activities were successful and reached the expected results**, although there were shortcomings and limitations on certain projects and areas. The activities undertaken during 2014-2016 provided Kyzylorda region with opportunities that led or developed basis for reduction of inequities and disparities in social well-being of specific population strata, changes in local government and NGOs' attitudes and cooperation practices, efficient implementation of the projects in energy saving, SME support, etc.

The best results were achieved in areas where initiatives were **"system building" actions**, that contribute to institutional or structural changes and to adoption of new approaches, required by targeted population and institutions. Activities showing some shortcomings and limitations were mainly the results of "project-based" or "project-oriented" nature of some of the JP activities, where individuals or organizations were given resources and support to carry out their own projects.

In many cases government and regional authorities understood the significance of demonstrative projects and considered allocating further resources for the continuation of the services, or for widening the scope of the activities.

The **level of cooperation between the UN Agencies could be improved**, also to increase the awareness of the public about these actions, including stakeholders and potential beneficiaries.

In terms of relevance and sustainability, all activities contributed to the objectives at regional, and local (city / rural) levels. Results and lessons learned in the implementation of the JP could be implemented in other regions, and some projects played a catalyst role for further actions and institutional developments, also in terms of new or improved legislation and/or regulations.

The impact of the activities of the JP and of their outcomes on the **high-level dialogue** of the UN Agencies with the Government is significant, according to the analysis made through interviews with UN Agencies and Akimat.

The local staff of the Agencies appears to be very dedicated and motivated. The partners showed often a **remarkable level of commitment**, not only in terms of willingness to carry out the activities in the most effective terms possible, but also in terms of drive and motivation

to the solution of the issues on which they were working and to the wellbeing or success of the beneficiaries.

As mentioned above, less successful activities were mainly the results of “project-based” or “project-oriented” nature of some of the JP activities, where the JP activities were mainly aimed at supporting “project” activities proposed by beneficiaries. Better results were achieved in areas that contribute to institutional or structural changes and to adoption of new approaches, required by targeted population and institutions: cases where processes were focalized, rather than projects of direct support to final beneficiaries. Activities of direct support, although correctly finalized to vulnerable sectors of the population, were somewhat not integrated with current initiatives run by State institutions. In other words, activities closer to Technical Assistance seem in general more effective of initiatives that provide resources to the final beneficiaries. Other less satisfactory areas, such as communication and awareness of the public of the overall relevance of the Programme, should also be addressed.

The JP in most cases demonstrated that **cooperation with NGOs and proactive target groups** can effectively contribute to the achievement of socio-economic objectives even at the macroeconomic level.

6. Recommendations

Recommendations refer to the relationships with stakeholders and beneficiaries of the initiatives, to the level of implementation at regional and local level and to the management and coordination of the JP at national and regional level. These levels are strictly related, and in most cases actions taken at national and regional level would affect significantly the implementation at the local level, but it may be useful to treat them separately.

At local level

- the JP is not fully perceived by single local actors, including local staff of the UN Agencies, as a complex and comprehensive effort for the socio-economic development of the region. Many local actors have a narrower vision, and this prevents stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries to understand clearly the relevance of their involvement, and the overall potential benefits that they can get from the Programme. A significant action of **awareness-raising and communication** should accompany and support the single actions. This should not simply promote participation and ownership, but should inform on the results obtained and on the contribution that the UN Agencies are making to the achievement to the overall development objectives of the region and the country;
- the above would also benefit the implementation from another point of view, that is the **openness of the implementation to new and possibly unexpected actors**. The local staff of the Agencies appears to be very dedicated and motivated. As mentioned, the partners showed often a remarkable level of commitment, and a strong drive to the solution of the issues on which they were working and to the wellbeing or success of the beneficiaries. However it looked sometimes that the results could improve if broader groups of actors could be involved;
- in the implementation of specific activities, especially when managed by local NGOs, as loan and grant schemes, a more **attentive understanding of current provisions of law**, and of similar initiatives run by State institutions, would allow to synchronize state and regional level programs and initiatives with UN Agencies priorities and strategies, avoiding possible overlaps and reducing risks.

In the **relationship with regional and local institutions**, where the exchange of experience and knowledge sharing looked particularly remarkable, further positive outcomes could be reached, by further strengthening the sustainability of the actions undertaken, considering some additional elements:

- where the “**system building**” element, the introduction of new systems and new approaches is the fundamental objective of the actions, **awareness** that this is the aim of the activity should be raised more strongly, not only among professional operators but also among the general public and the civil society, since the outset of the actions;
- in a similar way, where the **sustainability** of the initiatives is bound to depend on the willingness of local institutions to take care of them, this should perhaps be explicitly addressed since the beginning,
- in those cases where the **demonstrative and experimental nature of the activity** is particularly relevant, specific self-evaluation approaches could be adopted, in order to assess the result of the experimental approach; this may reinforce the demonstration effect obtained by the activities, and help to assess the opportunity of bringing them in the mainstream interventions of the local authorities;
- where – as it often happens – the success of the initiatives is strongly related to the motivation and stamina of the public administration employees / civil servants in charge of the action, specific **support to building skills, capabilities and attitudes** of these crucial people should accompany the activities more systematically, with the explicit aim to allow a group of “agents of local development” to emerge within the staff of the public administration bodies. Stronger networking between these operators could also be encouraged, and should be based on a deeper awareness of the entire Programme;
- where, as in the case of the promotion of the Law on Local Self Government, **effects on the legislative and regulatory frameworks** are to be expected, a governmental institution at central level should be chosen as in charge of stimulating and coordinating these contributions, and bringing them at the appropriate decision level. This body should be identified since the beginning, involved in the Programme and should aim at coordinating and sharing contributions coming from different and numerous local experiences.

As for the recommendations that could be referred more directly to the **management of the JP by UN Agencies**, first of all it should be useful to clarify, agree and share more explicitly the model of coordination that the Agencies do intend to adopt and implement throughout the Programme. The personnel responsible for the implementation of the Programme at local level should be made aware of this approach since the beginning of the implementation of the Programme.

As already pointed out, the evaluation concludes that a higher degree of coordination among the UN Agencies would be beneficial to the Programme. Considering that the stronger elements of coordination identified in the field were mainly related to the common management of specific activities (and thus coordination could be defined more activity-based than programme-based), building stronger coordination around common – or similar – higher level objectives and outputs might be the preferable choice.

As mentioned, the JP gives also to Agencies that have no high budget the advantages of being significantly funded, and even more listened to by regional and local decision makers, the integration of the JP should however be maintained, in order to preserve this important advantage for all the Agencies.

More coherent **monitoring procedures and systems** would increase the overall effectiveness of the JP, in particular where significant results can be achieved through the combined actions of more than one actor. Better monitoring would also make the JP more easily understood and managed, and possibly could facilitate communication of objectives and results. Considering that diverse monitoring approaches are motivated by organizational differences between the different Agencies, it may be preferable to adopt a simple, but shared, system and approach, specific for the Programme. Its reliability would depend very much by the involvement of the actors in the field – local representatives of UN Agencies, implementers and beneficiaries, as well as possibly local Authorities, and by their understanding that they can take advantages from it. Using the information and data coming from the monitoring system for effective communication, both inside the UN Agencies, and outside, towards public bodies, stakeholders, and civil society, would be appreciated also by those that need to feed the system in the field. More reliable and detailed monitoring information would also facilitate the replication of the most successful initiatives in other regions and Programmes would also improve on this basis.

7. Annexes.

7.1. List of documents reviewed

7.2 Interview grids

7.3 Contents of interviews with Agencies

7.4 List of individuals or groups interviewed or consulted and sites visited Field Works

7.5 Effectiveness table

7.1 List of documents reviewed

- Kyzylorda Development Programme,
- “Kazakhstan 2050” Strategy
- Employment Roadmap – 2020
- Business Roadmap – 2020
- Education Development Programme for 2011-2020;
- National Health Programme “Salamatty Kazakhstan for 2011-2015
- Health National Strategy “Densaulyk” for 2016-2019
- Concept for family and gender policy till 2030 adopted in December 2016,
- Roadmap by the General Prosecutor’s Office “Kazakhstan without domestic violence”
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- UNDAF 2010-2015
- Joint Programme Document
- UN Agencies work plans
- Annual Consolidated Reports
- UNEG Norms

7.2 Grid for interviews for project implementers and beneficiaries

- Planning of the activities, and expectations
 - who was mainly responsible for the identification of the activities: UN agencies? Government / at which level? Stakeholders and potential beneficiaries' requests / participation?
 - Was the action already planned "outside" the JP
 - have significant changes been recorded between the planning stage (JPD) and the implementation? Have these changes been recorded in the monitoring / progress reports?
 - Have some relevant actions planned in the completely cancelled?
- Effectiveness / Implementation
 - were expectations (of UN agencies; of Government at different levels; of stakeholders and beneficiaries) met?
 - main successes / achievements of the JP / the specific activities selected for in depth analysis
 - main obstacles / barriers encountered while implementing the JP / the specific activities
 - main lessons learned during the implementation of the JP / the specific activities (by UN agencies; by Government at different levels; by stakeholders and beneficiaries)
 - what would they do differently if they could re-plan the activity(s)?
 - what was changed from planning to implementation, due to changes in the context / needs? due to the need of overcoming obstacles and difficulties?
 - would they suggest other administration in other regions / parts of the country, to promote a similar programme? What they would suggest other authorities to change, in order to improve the programme?
 - were the activities / the results publicized in the press / social media / other communication channels?
 - was the access and the participation to the specific action easy for all beneficiaries? were complaints from beneficiaries recorded?
- Effectiveness / Management system
 - did the JP management structure work as expected?
 - how often participating UN agencies made monitoring trips to the regions / received specific information about the results of specific actions implemented
 - did participating UN agencies receive information from / relate directly with final beneficiaries?

- did the role of implementing authorities change during the implementation period?
- were the results of the activities considered satisfactory by stakeholders and beneficiaries? how was the satisfaction recorded?
- Sustainability
 - what was defined for ensuring the sustainability of the actions? In terms of resources? In terms of programming? In terms of skills and organization? In terms of demand from the beneficiaries?

7.3 Interviews to UN Agencies and national Institutions

| Interviewee | Stakeholders | Location | Date / time |
|--|--|---|---|
| Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader, Perizat Burbaeva National Expert, Shynar Turebayeva Research Assistant | Persons interviewed / Irina Goryunova Assistant Resident Representative, Zhanetta Babasheva, M&E Specialist Konstantin Sokulskiy, Head of Governance and Local Development Unit | UNDP Office in Astana | December 8 th , 11:00 – 12:00 |
| Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader, | Pedro Pablo Villanueva / UNFPA Resident Representative | by Skype UNDP office Astana ↔ UNFPA office, Almaty | December 8 th , 16:00 – 17:00 |
| Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader, Perizat Burbaeva National Expert, Shynar Turebayeva Research Assistant | Fiachra McAsey, Deputy Representative, Umit Kazhgaliyeva, Planning and Regional Area Programs Coordinaton Officer Zhanar Sagimbayeva, CR monitoring specialist and Programme Officer | UNICEF Office in Astana | December 8 th , 14:00 – 16:00 |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader, Dastan Bayakenov | Ministry of National Economy Umirbaev Dastan Asanovich Director of the Department for Macroeconomic Analysis and Forecasting | UNDP office in Astana | December 8 th , 17:00 – 17:45 |
| Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert | Malika Koyanbayeva, UNDP Programme Analyst, Governance and Development Unit, UNDP/Astana | Astana | December 9 th , 11:00 – 12:00 |
| Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert | Sergey Karpov, Programme Officer for Communication and Information; Kristine Tovmasyan, Programme Officer for Natural Sciences; Aigul Khalafova, Education Officer, Aigerim Zhanseitova, Culture Assistant; Gaukhar Balgarina, Communication Assistant (UNESCO activities) | UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan | Dec 14 th , 12:00 -13:30 |
| Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader; Perizat Burbaeva, National Expert; Ainur Kenzhayeva, Research Assistant | Melita VUJNOVIC - WHO Representative for Kazakhstan and Head of WHO Country Office for Kazakhstan | WHO office in Astana | Dec 15, from 13.00 to 13.45 |

| | | | | |
|---|--|------|--|----------------|
| Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader; Perizat Burbaeva, National Expert; Ainur Kenzhayeva, Research Assistant | Gulnara SMAILOVA - Resident Representative of UN WOMEN Roza Bekishova, Senior Inspector, Ministry of Interior | UNDP | December 15 th 16:00 – 17:30 Report to be drafted | JPD / activity |
|---|--|------|--|----------------|

Summary of the main results of the meetings:

- **UNDP 8th December**

- The opening meeting with Assistant Resident Representative, Programme Analyst, Resources Motoring Associate responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation that followed the evaluation team very closely and with whom the team interacted during the evaluation. Main results were a very wide overview of the Programme, and a clear indication of some more relevant activities, that proved valuable during the field work. The development process of the JP and of its implementation was illustrated.

- **UNICEF 8th December**

The meeting involved the Deputy Resident Representative, and all the staff involved in the JP. The meeting made clear the relevance of the Agency Country Programme Document, the novelty of the regional level of implementation, and the difficulties for some of the activities related to national legislation and the organization of the services

UNICEF responsible anticipated most interesting activities – adolescent suicide prevention, rehabilitation of deviance, perinatal care, child feeding -that were confirmed by the field work; they underlined the relevance of the introduction of international good practices and interaction with international experts.

The specific approach of UNICEF to the JP, in terms of organization and coordination was explained and resulted very clear, with a stress on coordination with Agencies with closer mandates and involved in similar activities, often with the same local counterparts.

Another specific aspect underlined concerned lesson learned regarding the importance of working at local level that allowed testing and improving approaches and initiatives to be transferred to other situations

- **UNFPA 8th December**

The meeting – held through Skype from Almaty - gave important indications concerning the contents of the activities of UNFPA and on the attention to be made to cultural aspects related to the activities.

Also for UNFPA the JP is an important opportunity to relate directly with regional authorities, possibly more open and pragmatic, than the central government counterparts, also because closer to the people and therefore more sensitive to needs of vulnerable persons.

- **UN WOMEN 15th December**

Meeting with the Meeting with the UN Women Representative in Kazakhstan, head for UN WOMEN MCO, with the participation of the representative of the national partner of UN Women – that is the Ministry of Interior.

The meeting was very useful for understanding the activities but also the relevance of the JP activities for supporting the Kazakh administration in implementing the new legislation.

- **WHO 15th December**

WHO Representative for Kazakhstan and Head of WHO Country Office for Kazakhstan: the meeting was very relevant for better understanding the planning and definition of the JP with the Government, and the relevance of all activities that were planned in order to have a really strategic impact, being health a main and leading element of social development.

The Resident Representative underlined also the importance of the postponement of the Programme to 2017 in order not only to complete the activities, but also to ensure the transfer of the experience to the relevant counterparts in the public administration.

Timing of the activities were also affected by the necessity of provide proper diagnosis and analysis before the delivery of the activities

The meeting gave a clear example of a specific approach to the JP, and a model of integration and cooperation between Agencies

- **UNESCO 14th December**

Meeting at UNESCO Almaty Office with Programme Officers of the Agency.

JP activities in Kyzylorda were discussed.

A further meeting in Astana on the 8th December was held with the **representative of the Ministry of National Economy**, as national counterpart of UNDP in the planning of the JP. The representative of the Ministry confirmed that the choice of Kyzylorda Region and Kyzylorda region was of the Ministry, taking into consideration social and environmental problems of the region. More specific indications concerning the localization of the activities were subsequently discussed by UNDP and UN Agencies with region Akimat. The Ministry was particularly interested that the Evaluation team consider with attention the activities of support to MSMEs, and to sustainability of the loan scheme. The representative of the Ministry was particularly interested to the international know-how that the JP had brought to the Region, and that it would have certainly benefited the regional and local administration, although no specific mechanism for monitoring this capacity building effects had been set up.

7.4 Field visits and meeting in Kyzylorda region

| N | Interviewer(s) and location | Output(s) / Activity(s) | Interviewee(s) | Date / time Report |
|-----|---|---|---|--------------------|
| (1) | Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader and Ivan Apanashevich, National Expert Kyzylorda | Output 1.1:Activities: (a) Grants to rural entrepreneurs for inclusive and innovative business ideas in selected districts for rural entrepreneurs; (b) Tangible and intangible heritage safeguarded as a source of sustainable livelihoods and sustainable local framework for protection of Silk Roads sites, revival of creative industries and strengthening national capacities for safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. | Artisans craft shop supported by JP at the city Airport UNDP / UNESCO | 9 Dec 2016 |
| (2) | Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader and Ivan Apanashevich, National Expert Kyzylorda Oblast Health Care Department | Output 2.1:Activity: Improving suicide prevention programme through increasing the capacity of health, education and other sectors to effectively prevent suicides among children and youth; | Focus group meeting with 9 Master Trainers in suicide prevention programme / psychologists and psychiatrists/ UNICEF activity ; and an interview with Anara Izden, UNICEF Coordinator in Kyzylorda | 9 Dec 2016 |
| (3) | Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader and Ivan Apanashevich, National Expert Education Department of Kyzylorda Oblast | Output 2.1.Activity: Improving suicide prevention programme through increasing the capacity of health, education and other sectors to effectively prevent suicides among children and youth; | Focus group meeting with 7 Master Trainers in suicide prevention programme /School teachers; Head of the Education Department of Kyzylorda Oblast / UNICEF activities | 10 Dec 2016 |
| (4) | Ivan Apanashevich, National Expert, Kanatbek Zertuimeev, UNDP manager Kyzylorda Oblast Department of Social Protection | Output 2.4:Activities: (a) Promoting employment of PWDs etc. and other efforts supporting the latter and social enterprises development;. (b) Small grants programme for inclusive projects and social business ideas with the focus on core settlements; (c) Strengthening capacities of local government on Population and Development interlinkages integration of | A. Eskaraeva, Deputy Head of the Social Services Unit, Department of Social Protection of the Kyzylorda Oblast UNDP UNFPA | 10 Dec 2016 |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|-------------|
| | | demographic data in the socio-economic planning and monitoring of regional development programs, taking into account needs of vulnerable groups of the population | | |
| (5) | Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert, Kanatbek Zertuimeev, UNDP manager Kyzylorda Oblast Rehabilitation Center for Disabled People in the village Talsuat | Output 2.4: Activities: (a) Promoting employment of PWDs etc. and other efforts supporting the latter and social enterprises development with the focus on core settlements; (b) Small grants programme for inclusive projects and social business ideas with the focus on core settlements | Gulmira Kenzhebaeva, Deputy Director of the Kyzylorda Oblast Rehabilitation Center for Disabled People UNDP activities | 10 Dec 2016 |
| (6) | Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader Kyzylorda Oblast | Output 2.5 Activity Advanced regional health policies development, responsive to the needs of the population at the primary health care level Output 2.6. Activity Increased awareness of local decision makers on application of “Health in all policies” approach in regional development strategy | Dr. Nurzhamal, Deputy Head of Oblast Health Department for health care/ Seralieva Rakhima Ayaganovna, Head of Polyclinic No. 1 Kalmakova Zhanar Amangeldievna, Head of Oblast Youth Health Center - coordinating partner for Health Promoting Schools Laura Utemisovaa/WHO | 10 Dec 2016 |
| (7) | Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader, Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert, Kanatbek Zertuimeev, UNDP manager Kyzylorda city; a site visit to School N11 | Output 3.3: Activity: Introduction of energy efficiency measures in managing communal systems of the rural settlements; Output 2.4.: Activity: Small grants programme for inclusive projects and social business ideas with the focus on core settlements; | Batyrbek Abiev, Director of the secondary School #11 (site visit to observe energy saving projects at the School N11; better conditions for children with disabilities) UNDP | 10 Dec 2016 |

| | | | | |
|------|---|---|---|-------------|
| (8) | Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader and Ivan Apanashevich, National Expert; Kanatbek Zertuimeev, UNDP manager Kyzylorda Oblast Akimat | Output 1.1. Activity: Grants to rural entrepreneurs for inclusive and innovative business ideas in selected districts for rural entrepreneurs; Output 3.3 Activities: Review and evaluate existing regional program's planning processes, targets and indicators to ensure that economic, social and environmental targets are equally represented and interlinked as well as the level of their effectiveness in guiding sub-national planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation. Output 2.4.: Activity: Small grants programme for inclusive projects and social business ideas with the focus on core settlements | Head of the Department of Economy and Budget Planning/ Kyzylorda Oblast Akimat and a chief specialist Raushan Demesinova UNDP | 10 Dec 2016 |
| (9) | Ivan Apanashevich, National Expert and Kanatbek Zertuimeev, UNDP manager Akimat of the Zhanakorgan Rayon | Output 1.1 Activity: Improving capacity of local Maslikhats and Akimats in supporting small and medium-sized businesses, strategic planning, evaluation and execution of the state regional development programs with a focus on rural settlements; Capacity building for local NGOs as well as local authorities on monitoring public service delivery; Output 1.2 Activity: Citizen participation in local self-governance and local decision-making are strengthened Activity: Grants programme for rurally based NGOs aimed at developing local self-governance with the focus on core settlements; | Mr. Galym Amriev, Akim of Zhanakorgan Rayon of Kyzylorda Oblast UNDP activities | 12 Dec 2016 |
| (10) | Ivan Apanashevich, National Expert, Kanatbek Zertuimeev, UNDP manager | Output 1.1 Activity: Improving capacity of local Maslikhats and Akimats in supporting small and medium-sized businesses, strategic | Zhasulan, Head of the Economic Department of Zhanakorgan Rayon UNDP and UNESCO activities | 12 Dec |

| | | | | |
|------|---|---|--|-------------|
| | Akimat of the Zhanakorgan Rayon | planning, evaluation and execution of the state regional development programs with a focus on rural settlements; | | |
| (11) | Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert, Kanatbek Zertuimeev, UNDP manager Zhanakorgan Rayon | Output 2.4:Activity: Grant programme for inclusive social programs | Director of the Recreation Center Site visit to the The Recreation center for Disabled children / Zhanakorgan rayon UNDP activities | 12 Dec |
| (12) | Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert, Kanatbek Zertuimeev, UNDP manager Zhanakorgan Rayon | Output 1.1.: Activity: Business projects supported through the SME loan program | A Farmer Kuanbek Karakozhayev/ Head of «Karakozha-ata».- JP SME loan programme participant. Site visit to the remote farm to see the Wind Mill (water pump to irrigate pasture lands and surrounding agricultural land) Water pump was bought on a JP loan UNDP activities | 12 Dec |
| (13) | Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader Kyzylorda Juvenile Court | Output 2.2 Activity: "Justice for children: support of the children in conflict with the law" | Interview with the Juvenile Court Judge Aby Aibek UNICEF | 12 Dec 2016 |
| (14) | Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader and Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert UNDP office in Kyzylorda | Output 1.1.: Activity: Business projects supported through the SME loan program Output 2.4:Activity: Grant programme for inclusive social programs; Output 1.2.: Activity: Grant programme in support of local self-government | Bayan Egisbaeva, Head of the UNDP office in Kyzylorda; Madina Tulepova, Director, NGO "Support to Initiatives"(SI)- key UNDP partner in promoting loan programs for SME; Zhanat Saparzhanova, Deputy Director of the NGO "SI"; Kanatbek Zertuimeev, UNDP manager for SME activities UNDP | 12 Dec 2016 |
| (15) | Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader and Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert | Output 2.2: Activities: Planning family and reproductive health; education on sexual and reproductive health | Zhakyp, Leader of the NGO Urkynetty-Kazakhstan -- a key partner of the UNFPA | 12 Dec |

| | | | | |
|------|---|--|---|--------------|
| | Nomad Palace Hotel | | programs in Kyzylorda (this meeting was cut short and continued next day) UNFPA programs | |
| (15) | Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader and Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert Nomad Palace Hotel | Output 2.2: Activities: Planning family and reproductive health; education on sexual and reproductive health | Zhanar Kozharipova, Deputy Head of the Health Care Department of the Kyzylorda Oblast UNICEF and UNFPA activities | 13 Dec 2016, |
| (16) | Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert Nomad Palace Hotel | Output 2.2: Activities: Planning family and reproductive health; education on sexual and reproductive health | Moldar Sahieva, UNFPA Training participant / a School teacher/ UNFPA activities | 13 Dec |
| (17) | Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert Nomad Palace Hotel | Output 2.2: Activities: Planning family and reproductive health; education on sexual and reproductive health | Zhakyp, Leader of NGO -- key partner of UNFPA programs in Kyzylorda UNFPA | 13 Dec, |
| (18) | Basilio Buffoni, Team Leader; UNDP office in Kyzylorda | Output 1.1.: Activity: Business projects supported through the SME loan program Output 2.4: Activity: Grant programme for inclusive social programs; Output 1.2.: Activity: Grant programme in support of local self-government | Meeting with Bayan Egizbaeva, Head of the UNDP office in Kyzylorda UNDP | 13 Dec |
| (19) | Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert Policlinic #1 of the city of Kyzylorda | Output 2.3: Activity: Patronage service to reduce child mortality under five | Rahima Seralieva, Head of the Kyzylorda City Policlinic, and Lyazzat Abdreeva, Chief Specialist UNICEF and WHO activities | 13 Dec |
| (20) | Ivan Apanassevich, National Expert UN Women office Almaty | Output 2.1.: Activity: Prevention of Domestic Violence | Nadezhda Gladyr', Head of the NGO Crises Center "Podrugi"/key partner for the UN Women programs in Kyzylorda | Dec 14 |

7.5 Effectiveness Table

Based on data from Annual Narrative Reports – 2014, 2015, 2016; JP Monitoring Framework and Results framework.

| KYZYLORDA | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|--|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| | | 2014 | | | | | | 2015 | | | | |
| | | achieve d | on track partially achieve d | no data data not availabl e | not achieve d | Total | | achieve d | on track partially achieve d | no data data not availabl e | not achieve d | Total |
| OBJ 1 | UNDP | 2 | 2 | | 4 | 8 | | 6 | 1 | 1 | | 8 |
| | UNESCO | | 1 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| | UN Women | | | | | 0 | | | | | | 0 |
| | UNFPA | | | | | 0 | | | | | | 0 |
| | WHO | | | | | 0 | | | | | | 0 |
| total 1 | | 2 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 9 | | 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| OBJ 2 | UNDP | 3 | 1 | | 1 | 5 | | 4 | 1 | | | 5 |
| | UNESCO | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| | UNICEF | 1 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 11 | | 1 | 10 | 0 | | 11 |
| | UNWomen | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| | UNFPA | | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| | WHO | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7 | | | 4 | 3 | | 7 |
| total 2 | | 5 | 11 | 5 | 9 | 30 | | 7 | 18 | 4 | 1 | 30 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|----|--|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| OBJ 3 | UNDP | 1 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 12 | | 2 | 4 | 5 | | 11 |
| | UNESCO | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| | UNICEF | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | | 2 |
| | UNWomen | | | | | 0 | | | | | | 0 |
| | UNFPA | | | | | 0 | | | | | | 0 |
| | WHO | | | | 3 | 3 | | | 1 | 2 | | 3 |
| total 3 | | 1 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 18 | | 3 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 17 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOT OBJ | UNDP | 6 | 11 | 1 | 7 | 25 | | 12 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 24 |
| | UNESCO | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | UNICEF | 1 | 7 | 0 | 5 | 13 | | 2 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| | UNWomen | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | UNFPA | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| | WHO | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 10 | | 0 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 10 |
| total | | 8 | 23 | 6 | 20 | 57 | | 17 | 26 | 12 | 1 | 56 |
| | | 14 % | 40% | 11% | 35% | | | 30% | 47% | 21% | 2% | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| KYZYLORDA | | | | | | | |
|------------|----------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| | | | 2016 | | | | |
| | | already achieve d | achieve d | on track partially achieve d | no data data not availabl e | not achieve d | Total |
| OBJ 1 | UNDP | 3 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 17 |
| | UNESCO | | | | | | 0 |
| | UNICEF | | | | | | 0 |
| | UN Women | | | | | | 0 |
| | UNFPA | | | | | | 0 |
| | WHO | | | | | | 0 |
| total 1 | | 3 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 17 |
| OBJ 2 | UNDP | 3 | | 2 | 1 | | 6 |
| | UNESCO | 3 | | | 2 | | 5 |
| | UNICEF | 1 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| | UN Women | | | | | | 0 |
| | UNFPA | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 3 |
| | WHO | | | | 8 | | 8 |
| total 2 | | 7 | 8 | 6 | 11 | 1 | 33 |
| OBJ 3 | UNDP | 3 | 2 | 1 | 10 | | 16 |
| | UNESCO | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| | UNICEF | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | | 2 |
| | UN Women | | | | | | 0 |
| | UNFPA | | | | | | 0 |
| | WHO | | | | 4 | | 4 |
| total 3 | | 4 | 4 | 1 | 14 | 0 | 23 |
| TOT OBJ | UNDP | 9 | 6 | 4 | 19 | 1 | 39 |
| | UNESCO | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| | UNICEF | 1 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| | UN Women | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | UNFPA | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| | WHO | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 12 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|------|
| total | | 14 | 15 | 8 | 40 | 3 | 80 |
| | | 17% | 19% | 10% | 50% | 4% | 100% |

| KYZYLORDA | | | | | Trend from 2014 to 2015 | | | | | | Trend from 2014 to 2015 | | | Total 2016 | | | |
|-----------|---------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|--|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|
| | | no of indicators 2015-2014 | no of indicators 2016-2015 | | achieved | on track partially achieved | no data data not available | not achieved | | | good results | not so good / unknown | | good results | data non available | not achieved | good 2016-2015 |
| OBJ 1 | UNDP | 0 | 9 | | 4 | -1 | 1 | -4 | | | 3 | -3 | | 8 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| | UNESCO | 0 | -1 | | 1 | -1 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1 |
| | UNICEF | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | UNWomen | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | UNFPA | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | WHO | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| total 1 | | 0 | 8 | | 5 | -2 | 1 | -4 | | | 3 | -3 | | 8 | 8 | 1 | 0 |
| OBJ 2 | UNDP | 0 | 1 | | 1 | 0 | 0 | -1 | | | 1 | -1 | | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | UNESCO | 0 | 4 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| | UNICEF | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 4 | 0 | -4 | | | 4 | -4 | | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | UNWomen | 0 | -1 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1 |
| | UNFPA | 0 | -2 | | 2 | 0 | -2 | 0 | | | 2 | -2 | | 2 | 0 | 1 | -1 |
| | WHO | 0 | 1 | | -1 | 3 | 1 | -3 | | | 2 | -2 | | 0 | 8 | 0 | -4 |
| total 2 | | 0 | 3 | | 2 | 7 | -1 | -8 | | | 9 | -9 | | 21 | 11 | 1 | -4 |
| OBJ 3 | UNDP | -1 | 5 | | 1 | -4 | 4 | -2 | | | -3 | 2 | | 6 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| | UNESCO | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 0 | -1 | | | 1 | -1 | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | UNICEF | 1 | 0 | | 1 | 0 | 1 | -1 | | | 1 | 0 | | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|----------|----|----|--|----|----|----|-----|--|----|-----|--|----|----|---|-----|
| | UN Women | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | UNFPA | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | WHO | 0 | 1 | | 0 | 1 | 2 | -3 | | 1 | -1 | | 0 | 4 | 0 | -1 |
| total 3 | | 0 | 6 | | 2 | -2 | 7 | -7 | | 0 | 0 | | 9 | 14 | 0 | -1 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOT OBJ | UNDP | -1 | 15 | | 6 | -5 | 5 | -7 | | 1 | -2 | | 19 | 19 | 1 | 1 |
| | UNESCO | 0 | 3 | | 1 | 0 | 0 | -1 | | 1 | -1 | | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| | UNICEF | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 4 | 1 | -5 | | 5 | -4 | | 6 | 7 | 1 | -7 |
| | UN Women | 0 | -1 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1 |
| | UNFPA | 0 | -2 | | 2 | 0 | -2 | 0 | | 2 | -2 | | 2 | 0 | 1 | -1 |
| | WHO | 0 | 2 | | -1 | 4 | 3 | -6 | | 3 | -3 | | 0 | 12 | 0 | -5 |
| total | | 0 | 18 | | 12 | 3 | 4 | -20 | | 15 | -16 | | 31 | 40 | 3 | -12 |

8. Appendix – In-depth analysis of some specific cases

8.1 Intervention concerning local self-government

Output 1.2. Development of local self-government and improving local capacity for decision-making

Targets against three indicators under the **Output 1.2** are either achieved or partially achieved:

Indicator: 1.2.1 Awareness of rural population on the possibilities provided by local self-government -- was achieved for 2015; for 2016 no data available since a public research is scheduled for 2017 (target is 80% positive answers by rural residents);

Indicator: 1.2.2 Number of successful projects implemented within self-governance scheme: achieved; 22 projects implemented by the end of 2016 (number is exceeding a planned target of 16);

Indicator: 1.2.3 Number of districts covered by information campaign on the local self-government projects: achieved as all 7 districts (rayons) of Kyzylorda Oblast are covered.

To examine this activity, the Evaluation team interviewed UNDP project staff in Kyzylorda, representatives of the NGO *Support for Initiatives* implementing JP grant programme, local authorities in the Zhanakorgan rayon, and the senior staff of the Economic and Budget Department of the regional Akimat. We also site visited one of the projects, the Recreation Center for Disabled Children on the lake Ozgent, Zhanakorgan rayon.

Major interventions in this area include:

- assistance to local authorities in organizing residents' assemblies to discuss local priorities and initiate projects (143 assemblies organized with 16400 participants);
- grants to support 17 projects initiated by local residents as a result of discussions / prioritizing community needs in all 7 rayons of the Kyzylorda Oblast. Budget: total of 110,971,914 KZT (this includes 89 392 914 KZT of UNDP funds and 21 579 000 KZT of local co-funding). Projects were competitively selected: 17 projects awarded out of 134 applications (7.8% supported). The projects aim at improvement of social facilities;
- capacity building trainings and workshops for local government officials on issues of local government legislation, financial aspects of local self-government (managing cash control accounts by local governments), citizen participation and communication with local communities. Training programme covered the Kyzylorda Oblast and involved all 137 rural Akims and 97 deputies of local Maslikhats. In 2014, capacity building trainings were implemented by the UNDP staff; later they were taken over by the Institute of Public Service Capacity Building under the Regional Akimat;
- information campaigns on issues of local governance to inform local population about opportunities of local self-governance;
- two study tours to learn systems and progressive practices of local self-governance; one study tour for a mixed group of community leaders and local government officials was organized to East Kazakhstan Oblast, and the other one to Poland and Czech Republic (the latter was a joint trip by a group of local government heads from three regions of Kazakhstan involved in JP).

The Evaluation team considers results of this activity as positive. Local self-government meetings discussed selected and supported activities that included grants and technical assistance to support cooperative efforts by residents and local administrations to develop joint projects. The JP reports describe the process as including trainings in self-governance issues for local governments, and assistance in organizing assemblies of residents to select / later develop projects for JP funding. The selection process, as were told, is closely coordinated with the Akimat budget committee to avoid double funding and later projects are approved by the respective rayon Maslikhat. Competitive selection of NGOs for project implementation is done by UNDP. The scale and magnitude of interventions are impressive: all 7 rayons covered, all rural Akims, and deputies of rayon level Maslikhats of Kyzylorda Oblast trained/capacitated; 17 projects successfully implemented; 143 assemblies of village residents organized with 16400 participants. We found a cost effectiveness of this activity commendable: 17 social oriented projects implemented, well-being of approximately 150000 residents improved, all village Akimats covered on overall price of 326387 USD (\$2.7 per resident spent not including operational costs of UNDP). We positively assess local ownership and potential for sustainability of this activity. Sustainability is ensured through (a) capacity building of participating local governments; (b) transfer of ownership over objects and facilities improved within grant programme to local governments. This activity has received good coverage on social networks and in local media.

The Evaluation team noted some issues to be taken for consideration:

- there is a need for continued efforts to promote citizen participation in Kyzylorda Oblast; local authorities, although supporting the idea of citizen participation, tend to control citizen initiatives;
- in this project, capacity building assistance was mostly focused on representatives of local government; in case of future activities in this area, the Evaluation team would recommend making a special emphasis on capacity building of local communities and promotion of community leaders;
- additional focus on assistance in improving communication between local governments and communities would be a plus;
- since capacity building trainings have been taken over by the government affiliated Institute of Public Service Capacity Building under the Regional Akimat, there is a need in quality control over the training programme;
- Reporting: the JP progress reports do not provide information over results and impacts of the study tours; not enough information concerning topics of self-governance trainings.

1bis Grant programme in support of local self-governance under Output 1.2.

Highlights: Under this Output grants were given to support 17 local self-government projects initiated in rural communities. Budget is 110,971,914 KZT, including 89 392 914 KZT of UNDP funds and 21 579 000 KZT of local governments co-funding. Projects were competitively selected: 17 projects awarded out of 134 applications (7.8% supported). Most of the projects addressing self-government issues aim at improvement / construction of social facilities such as installation of heating boilers, water purification filters in the kindergartens, building of greenhouses with energy-

efficient and water-saving technologies and others. Grant Committee is composed of representatives of local governments and NGOs. The grant model does not envisage transfer of funds to the grant recipient; procurement is made by the UNDP grant programme team.

Grant selection process looks reasonable: both representatives of communities and local governments the grant competition; (2) UNDP representatives meeting with residents to explain grant programme requirements and procedures; (3) initiative group of residents is provided with a simple grant application form; (4) project ideas sharpened and put in writing by members of the selection group consisting of representatives of the community, selected deputies of Maslikhat and Akimat officials; (5) projects are vetted with the Economic/Budget Committee of local administration to avoid duplication of funding; involvement of local authorities ensure co-funding and local ownership; (6) UNDP Grant Selection Committee awards grants. UNDP grant manager provides monitoring and technical assistance. The Evaluation team was ensured local residents are involved in monitoring process.

Among the project approved and implemented through the scheme, the evaluation team visited a **Recreation Centre for Disabled Children (RCDC) on the lake of Ozgent in the Zhanakorgan rayon**. RCDC was built in summer of 2016. It consists of 3 cottages; one cottage house equipped with the solar panels on a roof to produce hot water; the area of the Center is fenced and equipped with facilities for sport activities and recreation; a pier is constructed on the lake shore. All facilities are in good shape; the area is fully accessible for wheel chair disabled children. Each cottage house is to host 4-5 kids. The Evaluation team has positive impressions of this project. Local residents looked supportive and expressed hope the RCDC would increase job opportunities and promote tourism in the area. Sustainability of this object is ensured as the Center has been transferred to the local Akimat.

Results of this activity are positive: projects collaboratively identified by residents and local authorities; interviewed beneficiaries and stakeholders provided positive feedback on UNDP management and procedures (procedures are quick and easy); sustainability and local ownership are ensured; many of the supported projects promote new technology.

Issues for consideration: we think a role of local communities was a bit overshadowed by the local government involvement at all the stages (particularly at the stage of project selection). We also noted extremely low percentage (7.8%) of supported projects compared to the number of applications and think this may be a discouraging factor for communities to participate in grant competitions.

8.2 Intervention on suicide prevention

This activity is under the **Output 2.3. Innovative approaches to providing special social services to families, children and youth are introduced in rural areas.** The activity is measured by the Indicator: 2.3.3. Suicide prevention programme introduced to decrease suicidal behavior among adolescents (no data on this indicator is available to assess implementation).

The purpose of this activity is to improve suicide prevention programme in the Kyzylorda region through increasing the capacity of health, education and other sectors to effectively prevent suicides among children and youth in the age bracket of 13-17/18.

Interviews: the Evaluation team interviewed two focus groups: (a) a group of 9 master trainers in adolescent suicide prevention at the Kyzylorda Regional Department of Health; and (b) a group of 7 master trainers (all school psychologists) at the Kyzylorda Regional Department of Education. We also interviewed Anara Izden, a UNICEF representative in Kyzylorda region, and A. Eskaraeva, Deputy Head of the Social Protection Unit, Department of Social Protection of the Kyzylorda region.

Highlights: Suicide prevention was identified as one of JP priorities within **Output 2.3.** since Kazakhstan has one of the highest adolescent suicide rates in the world (as per WHO 2014 Global Report Kazakhstan ranked as the 9th and 4th for suicide rates in youth between 15-29 and children aged 5-14 respectively) and adolescent suicide rates in Kyzylorda Oblast are same as average for Kazakhstan. The evaluation team was told that the local government, worried of the high level and increase of suicide cases among adolescent, approached UNICEF to discuss possibility of a suicide prevention activity in their region under JP. UNICEF-led piloted model is thoroughly evidence based and unique in its innovative combination and field-testing of recognised approaches (WHO, 2014; Lancet, 2015). It consists of three components: (1) raising awareness interactively with adolescents with lessons and programme communication material promoting mental health and health seeking behaviour, and referral services; (2) equipping school psychologists with tools (psychometric instruments) and skills to identify and follow up on high-risk cases, and building capacity of school staff to act suicide gatekeepers; and (3) referral and follow-up by medical and mental health specialists.

Baseline screening of children aged 13-to-17/-18 years was conducted in all 312 school and colleges of the Kyzylorda region.

Focus groups interviews. The evaluation team noted dedication and professionalism of the two groups of the master trainers interviewed. Master trainers gave very positive feedback on JP assistance: they noted the JP equipped them with very effective methodology concerning suicide prevention including a questionnaire, a guidance book (translated into Russian and Kazakh languages); they also positively assessed quality of JP trainings; and noted, as a result of networking they have created a professional community. As for networking, the Evaluation team was told, master trainers started actively using web-chats to include their colleagues from remote rayons into the exchange of information and knowledge. As a positive effect of the programme, focus group participants noted improved governmental inter-agencies cooperation over this issue that includes

education, health, social protection, and law enforcement agencies. Among obstacles, they referred to socio-cultural factors making suicide cases among adolescent a kind of a taboo topic.

The Evaluation team considers results of this intervention as positive. We specifically would like to highlight as achievements the following:

- this activity was initiated by the Kyzylorda regional government and was supported by local authorities during its implementation;
- a system of early recording of suicide attempts was established through training of school and college psychologists;
- commendable level of collaboration between governmental agencies including departments of education, health and social protection was achieved; as we were told, local police was also involved;
- the evaluation notes dedication and professionalism of both groups of master trainers prepared by the JP;
- a successful Kyzylorda model of adolescent suicide prevention is recommended for replication in other regions of the country;
- this regional activity was supported by UNICEF activities at the central level as they successfully advocated for incorporation of the issue of adolescent suicide prevention into the key government document titled the "National Plan for Activities aimed at Strengthening Family relationships, Spiritual and Moral Values in Kazakhstan for the period of 2015 - 2020" and National Order signed in early 2015 that united three ministries (Health, Education and Internal Affairs) and UNICEF's efforts to develop an intersectoral project on prevention of suicides among adolescents which started the same year as a two-year pilot in Kyzylorda region (one of 16 provinces of Kazakhstan).
- Interviewed local officials at the Department of Social Protection gave high assessment of this activity and the level of its management by UNICEF.

Reporting issues: this activity is not adequately covered in the JP consolidated reports: for instance, in the JP annual progress report for 2015, suicide prevention activities are described in one sentence; no report / information in written form was provided to the evaluation group on this activity for the year 2016.

8.3 Intervention on social services and health

To assess JP's intervention on social services under Output 2.4, the Evaluation team analyzed programme reports and related documents, information posted on the Kyzylorda JP facebook page, site-visited Rehabilitation Center for Disabled People in the village of Talsuat, and interviewed Deputy Head of the Social Services Unit, Department of Social Protection of the Kyzylorda Oblast, and the senior staff of the Economic and Budget department of the regional Akimat.

Output 2.4 Support in formulation of policies for promoting productive employment and poverty reduction (UNDP)

- **Indicator:** 2.4.1 Number of jobs created including those for people with disabilities (PWD). Planned Target for 2016: 2 and 10 for PWD;
- **Indicator:** 2.4.2 Number of social workers that increased their capacity. Planned Target for 2016: 30;
- **Indicator:** 2.4.3 Number of beneficiaries served by business corporate volunteers. Planned Target for 2016: 50;
- **Indicator:** 2.4.4 Number of implemented projects that solve social problems of those most vulnerable. Planned Target for 2016: 6;
- **Indicator:** 2.4.5 Number of objects that benefited from implementation of inclusive projects. Planned Target for 2016: 6.

Out of five indicators above, four are fully achieved. One Indicator, "Number of objects that benefited from implementation of inclusive projects" is partially achieved: 4 objects instead of planned 6 objects.

Highlights: The Evaluation team found JP's approach to the issue of improving livelihood of PWD and vulnerable groups well thought through. The strategy, as it looks to us, is based on following approaches:

- (a) Planning of activities in coordination with the Kyzylorda local government own strategies in the related areas; in this regard, we would like to refer to the Roadmap of improving living conditions of PWD adopted by the regional government in 2013 and, as it looks, taken into account by JP. The evaluation team concluded, JP interventions received strong support by local government partners. Kyzylorda government representatives specifically underlined JP's activities were in line with their own approaches, particularly with the above Roadmap developed to meet objectives of the Kazakhstan 2015 strategy. They also linked the activities under JP to the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) by KZ in 2015.
- (b) Conducting many of the activities on the basis of the government funded Rehabilitation Center for Disabled People. Specifically, we noted out of 10 major activities conducted under this Output, 5 are implemented in partnership with the Center.
- (c) Contracting local NGOs to provide trainings and other services through JP grant mechanism;

- (d)) Making social inclusion component crosscutting in its programming (example: support to schools within JP, resulted in increased inclusion of children with disabilities into school programs);
- (e) Ensuring geographical coverage to include all rayons of the Kyzylorda oblast.

JP's interventions within this Output had a special focus on rural PWD. They represent a variety well tied together activities including: measures to improve access to the physical environment for PWD; empowerment trainings and human rights courses; networking of PWD and other measures to increase their social inclusion; recreation and sport opportunities; access to justice, education and social services for the vulnerable families, and others. These activities were augmented by promotion of volunteerism and special trainings for social workers of government agencies, e.g., teaching them sign language. The evaluation team found few cases when JP funds were matched by Kyzylorda government resources: for instance, the redesign of the premises of the regional Social Protection Department (change of signs, etc.) initiated under JP, was met by government funds to install an elevator and make the building fully accessible for PWD. All interviewed government counterparts expressed satisfaction with communication with the UNDP office in Kyzylorda and the UNDP management staff in Astana; they also stressed their professionalism and readiness to assist and provide advice.

A site visit to the Kyzylorda regional Rehabilitation Center for Disabled People in the village of Talsuat. The evaluation team made a site visit to learn about JP projects implemented on the basis of this Center. We were very pleased by the level of competences of its leadership and its welcoming perception of activities within the JP. Overall impression of the Rehabilitation Center is positive: the JP activities are well integrated into the Rehabilitation Center own programs, understanding of JP objectives by interviewed personnel is good, all technical objects related to JP marked with the UNDP logo, and donated equipment is functional and in good shape. The local ownership over the JP's inputs is ensured.

The Evaluation team regards this activity undoubtedly successful. We specifically note a good level of cooperation with local government counterparts and the alignment of JP objectives with local strategies aimed at improvement of livelihood of PWD. Overall, prospects of sustainability of many of these interventions look good. There are good chances, related activities would be supported by government through the mechanism of social contracting with participation of local providers, including NGOs. One of the positive effects of this intervention, is a creation of a culture of collaboration between local authorities responsible for service provision in the social sectors and NGOs. The programme rightly focused on empowerment of PWD and transfer of skills to local partners including the Department of Social Protection, Rehabilitation Center thus ensuring localization and local ownership.

The Evaluation team recommends:

- focusing on promotion of social contracting mechanism in the closing year of programme implementation; this may include capacity building trainings for rural NGOs and other activities;

- the evaluation team noted significant success with job placement of PWD when training topics included more advanced subjects, such as vector graphics editing, mobile phones repair and others; this may suggest the Programme should include more advanced job trainings including web design, IT technology, etc.; it looks like there is a growing need in such specialties in Kyzylorda;
- when it comes about professional training for PWD, wherever possible funds should be reserved for purchasing / donation of initial package of professional equipment for those who are trained (e.g., sewing machines in case of sewing training, etc.).

8.4 Grant programme and loans for small businesses

Output 1.1. Capacities of local government to plan for diversified economic growth and partnerships with SMEs are enhanced.

To address this Output, JP designed and implemented the SME Loan Programme "Small Business -- Big Opportunities". This activity started with significant delay as UNPD could not find competent local NGO to be selected a loan programme operator. Instead of the second half of 2014 - as it was originally planned -- this activity started in the middle of 2015. This is ongoing loan programme continued in 2017. The NGO *Support for Initiative* was competitively selected a loan programme operator. To assess this activity, the Evaluation team interviewed UNDP project staff in Kyzylorda, representatives of the NGO '*Support for Initiative*' implementing grant and loan programmes, a Head and a key specialist of the Department of Economy and Budget Planning, Kyzylorda regional Akimat, responsible for overseeing JP activities in the Kyzylorda region, and site visited a SME loan recipient in the Zhanakorgan district.

Highlights: The JP Loan Programme "Small Business -- Big Opportunities" plays a central role in promoting small businesses, particularly in rural areas. Loans are interest-free, no collateral is required. Guarantees of loan repayment are provided by a guarantor in a form of a signed letter of guarantee. Loans are given for a period of one year, maximum loan amount is 1,500,000KZT; the loan repayment period is one year; repayment schedule is monthly based. Loan programme fund is valued at 84,5 million KZT (approx. 250,000USD). By the end of 2016, 42.3 million KZT was spent. The SME loan programme supports projects in production and service areas; loans are not provided for trade projects. Key considerations and criteria used in the loan programme include: feasibility, sustainability, timeliness, application of new technology; projects must be socially oriented. Final selection is made by a Loan Expert Committee (EC) consisting of representatives of civil society including the Civic Alliance (a leading government-affiliated NGO), head of the NGOs Association of the Kyzylorda Oblast, representative of the Kyzylorda region National Chamber of Commerce, and others. Loans are competitive as it is illustrated in the example below. Usually, EC convenes for a meeting two times a year.

Site visit to the loan recipient, a farmer Karakozha-Ata. The Evaluation team visited a remote farm in the Zhanakorgan rayon to see a windmill project. Windmill is used to pump water to feed cattle and for irrigation purposes. It is a very efficient and good project that allowed the farmer increase production of livestock feeding and start planning for expansion of production of vegetables in 2017. Sustainability of this project is good; loan repayment is according to the schedule.

The Evaluation team considers it a successful activity resulting in promotion of SME in rural areas: 25 projects funded; 45 persons employed including 4 persons with disabilities. Most of supported projects have good chances for sustainability. Given loans are not secured with collateral, ratio of loan repayment of 84% is acceptable. Output 1.1 indicator target of 25 projects is met.

We noted a few issues in the implementation of this activity:

- delay with a start of the JP SME Loan Programme "Small Business -- Big Opportunities" (one year delay);
- delay in 2,5 years of another SME loan programme with a 5-year loan repayment cycle; if this loan programme starts in late 2016 as expected, the repayment cycle will go far beyond of the life time of JP;
- low efficiency of the selection efforts among unemployed in 2014: only 14% of those exposed to the loan programme requirements decided to develop business proposals; out of those who applied/trained, only 8% received loans;
- a loan recipient in Zhankorgan complained about tight requirements for loan repayment and a small amount of loans.

8.5 Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and healthy life styles

The Evaluation team examined JP's interventions in the area of sexual and reproductive health (SRH), including sexual health education, and healthy life styles targeting adolescents and youth implemented by UNFPA. For that purpose, the team interviewed Zhanar Kozharipova, a deputy Head of the Kyzylorda Regional Health Department, Zhakyp, a leader of the NGO *Orkynetty-Kazakhstan* competitively selected as the Implementing Partner (IP) for this activity in Kyzylorda, and Moldar Sahieva, a UNFPA Master Trainer and a school teacher of *valeology* (a discipline addressing issues of a healthy lifestyle including sexual health and sexual rights of adolescents). Zhakyp was trained both locally by UNFPA and in Bulgaria at the UNFPA training center. His NGO is involved in Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER). Moldar was selected for the UNFPA training organized for school teachers teaching "*valeology*".

This activity is measured by four indicators under Output 2.2. below. Out of four indicators, two are met, while information on remaining two indicators is pending:

Output 2.2 New participatory mechanisms are designed for effective and efficient local level planning, budgeting and management for protection of the most vulnerable groups of society.

- Indicator 2.2.5: Unmet needs to contraceptives -- *No data available (JP Report for 2015: Baseline update will be made by end of 2016 when MICS 2015 MICS will be available).*
- Indicator 2.2.6: Number of young people empowered to advocate behaviours to prevent unwanted pregnancies and HIV transmission. - *Basing on data presented at interviews, this target is achieved: 500 young people empowered. Achieved for targets set for 2015 (JP Report for 2015: 45 young people empowered to advocate for behaviour preventing unwanted pregnancy and for behaviors preventing HIV transmission; Further 200 young people trained through peer-to-peer training.)*
- Indicator 2.2.7: Rate of compliance of students' education on sexual and reproductive health, including HIV and AIDS issues with UNESCO standards. --*No data. Report for 2016 is expected. JP Report for 2015: Not achieved.*
- Indicator 2.2.10: Number of Y-Peer resource centres established in the region. Target: 2. - *This target is successfully achieved in 2015: 2 Centers opened in Kyzylorda city and in Shiely. One more Center, we were told, was opened in 2016.*

Highlights: This is a well-designed and timely activity based on the UNFPA's internationally recognized methodology. This activity is implemented through a series of interventions including formal (school / college based) SRH education, informal (peer to peer) SRH education, public information campaigns, and other means. The evaluation team found such approach very appropriate and the activity timely for the Kyzylorda region.

As interviewed a Master Trainer noted, the Kyzylorda youth and children while expressing keen interested in getting information on the issues of SRH is lacking credible sources since the current educational system is addressing such issues. Interviewee believes, the subject of *valeology* is highly popular among students of high school. She also gave very high assessment of the UNFPA

training, methodology and materials presented. Both interviewed trainers made a good impression on a team from the point of view of their professionalism and dedication to promotion of SRH. The interviewees described JP's gradual approach to the training on SRH issues: as a rule, they start with trainings on healthy life styles and sport (a series of 2-3 trainings); at the next stage, they address issues of sexual health and safe behavior. Besides *valeology* course, *Orkynetty-Kazakhstan* is conducting trainings for youth on SRH and healthy life styles. By the end of 2016, they have trained around 500 youth participants including school and college students. In addition, JP supported three Y-Peer activists to participate in an international training on trainers on leadership and communication skills and organized series of public events to raise awareness of SRH issues and attract volunteers for engaging in Y-Peer activities. JP intervention also resulted in opening three Youth-Peer (Y-Peer) Resource Centers providing training and meeting spaces for the young people. As government support is crucial for educating on SRH, on the onset of the Programme, UNFPA established effective collaboration with the Department of Youth Policy under the Akimat of Kyzylorda oblast. Interviewed Deputy Head of the regional Health Care Department confirmed her department is also supportive. The Evaluation team had impression the regional Education Department was more of a challenge until the Ministry of Education approved 'experimental' teaching SRH issues as part of a course of *valeology*. To advance *valeology* in schools and colleges, UNFPA concluded a MEMO with the Department of Education. In addition, this activity is well coordinated with the Department of Youth of regional Akimat, Department of Internal Policy, Youth Health Center and HIV Center.

The evaluation team was particularly impressed by the peer-to-peer component of SRH education organized according to the standard UNFPA methodology. Education of positive, life-cycle approach to sexuality looks very well integrated with issues of youth human rights, encouragement of critical thinking skills, and gender equality and inclusion. The young activists from the national Y-Peer network were trained by certified so called 'active trainers' and are working within the national volunteer networks promoting leadership, volunteering, and peer-to-peer education on SRH.

Implementation obstacles and mitigation measures: at the initial stage, JP faced significant social-cultural obstacles to promote sexual education among youth particularly in schools and colleges. We heard about lack of understanding of the importance of this issue among regional authorities. The evaluation team notes JP successfully solicited local government support for SRH activities. This was achieved through series of meetings with government officials and spreading out information on appropriate issues related to SRH. Since September 2016 (start of the 2016-17 academic year), as *valeology* was approved for teaching in schools (although as an 'experimental course') the overall environment around issues of SRH in Kyzylorda has much improved. Information to parents played a significant part in obtaining social acceptance of this intervention. To us, this looks like a very positive result of JP interventions.

Sustainability of this activity is ensured through establishing peer-to-peer networks; capacity building of local skills; specifically we would like to highlight capacity building of the IP NGO "Orkennietty Kazakhstan" that was trained on modes of implementation and financial reporting by UNFPA staff. Despite the above successes, sustainability of this activity is not fully ensured until the government (at the national level or at least at the regional level) makes a decision on official inclusion of issues of SRH into the school curriculum. As we learned, currently teaching of *valeology* is financially

supported through JP. As the JP ends in 2017, there is a need for funding to continue teaching this subject.

Our recommendations include making additional efforts to persuade local authorities to support teaching course of *valeology* in schools and advocating for adopting of *valeology* into the school curriculum at the central level.

8.6 Activities aimed at prevention of domestic violence against women

Output 2.1. Capacities of local government and local service providers to plan, budget, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes aimed at improved social inclusion and reduced social disparities of the vulnerable groups are strengthened.

This activity is measured by the Indicator 2.1.4: Local public allocation for implementation of Law on prevention of domestic violence in relation to support to survivors of domestic violence increased by 15% by 2016.

UN Women activities in this area in Kyzylorda are implemented through a partnership with the Almaty-based NGO Crisis Centre *Podrugi*. This is an ongoing activity implemented through 2017.

To assess this intervention, the Evaluation team interviewed Altyn Eskaraeva, a Deputy Head of the Social Services Unit, Department of Social Protection of the Kyzylorda region and Zhanar Kozharipova, a deputy Head of the Kyzylorda Regional Health Department; in Almaty, we interviewed Nadezhda Gladyr', a Chairwoman of the NGO Crises Center *Podrugi*. The team must note, due to limited time spent in Kyzylorda, we did not have opportunity for interviewing more relevant stakeholders or site visiting facilities / activities under this rubric.

According to the NGO *Podrugi*, the major focus areas include: (a) capacity building and technical assistance to local government in implementation of the law On Prevention of Domestic Violence and other international laws recently adopted by Kazakh government; (b) building capacity of relevant NGOs and civil society groups; (c) organizing awareness campaigns over the issue of domestic violence; (d) and improving quality of public services in this area.

This activity started with a needs assessment conducted in 2015. The assessment identified several issues for interventions, including lack of adequate strategy and understanding of the importance of this problem among police and relevant local government units, their low awareness of the Kazakh legislation, addressing issues of gender violence, weak inter-agencies coordination, socio-cultural stereotypes surrounding gender issues, and absence of government sponsored shelters for victims of gender crimes (the only existing shelter by that time was run by the NGO *Kamkarlyk* lacking opportunities to accept women-victims at night).

Findings: The JP extensively addressed this issue with a programme of trainings and seminars for government officials and public information campaigns. The programme also paid special attention on improving government inter-agencies coordination in preventing gender violence Training participants included staff members of the local government unit for the protection of Women Against Violence, police for juvenile offenders, and the district police, groups of psychologists and social workers, as well as representatives of the regional Akimat, healthcare and education departments, and civil society. The Crises Center NGO *Kamkarlyk* was a principal target for their capacity building among local non-government partners. Overall, we received good references on the quality of UN Women trainings while in Kyzylorda.

Achieved results look quite impressive despite initial difficult start of the activity caused by the low level of capacities of local government partners and their slow progress in adopting UN Women approaches. Eventually, interventions resulted in changed local government policies and recognition of the importance of the issue by government counterparts. This may be illustrated by the increase

of local budget expenditures for gender issues, including domestic violence, reaching 19,9%, therefore making JP indicator of 15% measuring this activity exceeded (according to the preliminary data provided by the NGO *Podrugi*). The evaluation team noted several improvements made by the Kyzylorda government suggested by JP, of which we found most significant establishing of a mechanism of early prevention of domestic violence, creating of a referral system to register domestic crimes against women, adoption of a scheme of inter-government agencies cooperation on this issue, and a 'system of monitoring and evaluation of gender issues' as part of the local budgeting process, and others. Improved local capacities resulting of JP trainings successfully serve purposes of localization of skills. Equally important are improved capacities of the local partner NGO Crises Center *Kamkarlyk*.

Interventions in the region were supported by the UN Women activities at the central level (which are not all necessary funded though JP but represent part of the regular UN Women advocacy activities) contributing to improvement of several draft laws and legislative acts including adoption of the package of special standards of social services for victims of gender violence accepted by the Ministry of Health and Social Development, amendments for the law On Administrative Offenses, the concept "Kazakhstan without violence in families" initiated by the general prosecutor's office, and others.

UN Women did a lot concerning raising public awareness of gender violence by distribution of flyers, organizing flash mobs, and conducting public events such as a campaign '16 days without violence'. Although the above efforts are highly appropriate, given a need to combat deeply enrooted gender stereotypes and prejudices in local culture, the evaluation team deems they are too modest in scale and cannot provide significant and lasting impacts. Obviously, modest budget of this activity does not allow organizing more aggressive public campaigns. As a recommendation, we would suggest for the Programme making additional efforts to persuade Kyzylorda government to take initiative in supporting government funded mass-scale information campaign with posters, social ads and other public information means to address issue of gender-based violence.

Sustainability of this activity looks promising but not fully achieved due to the complex nature of the problem that includes socio-cultural aspects and requires lasting local government funding. There is a need to continue working with local government officials on changing attitudes, particularly among police offices, towards issues of gender-based violence, and creating a well functioning and financed system of women protection in Kyzylorda region. A positive sign is, Kyzylorda government promised to support opening of the shelter for women-victims of domestic crimes, co-financed by the semi-government holding company Samruk-Kazyna.

Overall, the evaluation team considers applied strategy appropriate, and interventions well elaborated addressing all major issues identified for improvements by the initial needs assessment. This is a well done activity yielding positive changes both at local and central levels.