

Final Evaluation of the of the UNDP
Project *Promotion of Social and
Economic Opportunities for Women
and Youth in Zerafshan Valley of
Tajikistan*
July 2017 – December 2019

Final Evaluation Report

Project ID: 00092983. Supported by the Russian Federation – UNDP Trust Fund for Development.

Evaluation Team

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Project and Evaluation Information Details

Project/outcome Information		
Project/outcome title	Promotion of Social and Economic Opportunities for Women and Youth in Zerafshan Valley of Tajikistan	
Atlas ID	00092983	
Corporate outcome and objectives	<p>The project expected outcome was '<i>Rural women and young people in Zerafshan Valley more actively participate in and contribute to the local economic life and have improved access to decent employment, education and health</i>'.</p> <p>Project Objective/Component 1: Increased income and job opportunities</p> <p>Project Objective 2: Increased access to education healthcare and social services</p> <p>Project Objective 3: Improved capacities to effectively address migration issues</p>	
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	July 2017	December 2019
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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AEC	Adult Education Centre
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CP	Communities Programme
CPD	Country Programme Document
DDP	District Development Programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GCM	Global Compact on Migration
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
LED	Local Economic Development
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
MCF	Micro-Credit Fund
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PLHIV	People Living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus
PO	Public Organization
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RBM	Result Based Management
RoL	Rule of Law
SDG	Strategic Development Goals
SME	Small and Medium Sized Enterprise
TJS	Tajikistan Somoni
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VfM	Value for Money
VTL	Vocational Training Lyceum
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

The Project

The “*Promotion of social and economic opportunities for women and youth in Zerafshan Valley of Tajikistan*” project is financed through the UNDP-Russian Trust Fund for Development and implemented by UNDP in the Republic of Tajikistan within the period of July 2017 – December 2019.

The overall objective of the project is to address socio-economic issues, through increased income and job opportunities, enhanced access to education, healthcare, social services and reinforced capacities to effectively address migration issues, which in turn contributes to improvement of livelihood of population, according to priorities at national and local levels.

The main long-term outcome (impact) of the project is livelihood improvement of rural population in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts. To achieve this result, in the medium term (Project outcome), project will directly contribute to increasing employment and business development in view of their existing needs and economic capacity.

The project assists local communities, women and youth especially, with economic empowerment. It strengthened business skills, vocational education and support for creation of jobs at local level for women and youth, improving social services: education and health, and effective addressing of labour migration issues including mitigation of its social consequences.

The above goal is achieved through following expected results:

Output/Component 1: Increased income and job opportunities

Through this component, the Project enabled business development skills for women and youth through: **Education and Job Search Activities** like conducted assessments, tailor-made business training courses based on actual needs; provision of technical assistance to knowledge institutions such as Vocational Training Lyceum, Adult Education Centre; and **Income Generating Activities** through provision of grants for opening workshops; provision of equipment to establish workshops together with local governments in the communities; provision of agricultural equipment; supported selected women and youth-headed business plans leading to self-employment, awarded micro-credit loans to existing and start-up businesses.

Output/Component 2: Increased access to education healthcare and social services

Under this component the Project **improved access to social services for local communities through construction and or rehabilitation of secondary schools and access to healthcare facilities** through construction and or rehabilitation of medical houses in remote and rural areas, and procurement of ambulance vehicles.

Output/Component 3: Improved capacities to effectively address migration issues

The most **related activities to the migration issues are: training of public servants, health caravan and donor coordination.**

The Project was governed by the **Project Steering Committee.**

The Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons learnt that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project; and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

Evaluation followed OECD/DAC criteria: (1) relevance of the intervention (2) effectiveness at the level of outputs and outcomes, (3) efficiency of the intervention – programmatic and

financial management, efficiency at the level of outputs and an assessment of relationships. The final part of the report focuses on (4) prospects for sustainability and impact of the project results, followed by (5) network/linkages (6) the conclusion and lessons learned and (7) recommendations.

The evaluation reviewed and summarised available evidence on the quality of the project and raised and addressed all relevant issues that emerged during the evaluation. Specific focus was on economic opportunities and employment for women and youth in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts.

Findings

Relevance – The Project is relevant and it can be stated that the Project priorities are highly consistent with global, national and local development agendas. The Project contributes to reaching SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 11, SDG13, and SDG 17 addressing issues of the elimination of poverty and food security, improving accessibility of quality education and health, promoting gender equality, creating decent work and economic growth, infrastructure for development, contributing to sustainable communities, etc. The evaluation shows that the Project directly contribute to the goal of the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan 2030 (NDS-2030), which focuses on improving the living standards of population, based on sustainable economic development. The NDS 2030 promotes social and economic inclusion, gender equality through addressing structural gaps and providing greater opportunities for (rural) women. It was deduced that the Project hard component is based on the needs highlighted in the District Development Programmes (DDPs) of Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts.

Effectiveness

The overall goal of the project is *‘Enhanced welfare and economic resilience of population of Zerafshan Valley of Tajikistan.’* The project has been successful in initiating implementation of economic support in Zerafshan Valley.

The project purpose / expected outcome was *‘Rural women and young people in Zerafshan Valley more actively participate in and contribute to the local economic life and have improved access to decent employment, education and health’.* It can be deduced that the project purpose was fulfilled. This is due to the fact that rural women and young people (especially in Ayni) participating in project are acquiring income that is contributing to the family budget. The project directly benefitted 10,062 people including 4,771 women, while indirectly the project benefitted the population of two districts that are 103,400 people including 52,734 women.

Project Objective/Component 1: Increased income and job opportunities

Project activities types in this component are:

A. Education and job search activities:

Local businesses and opportunities for doing business in the target districts, as well as vocational education and vocational institutions were assessed. Analytical review about opportunities and threats in participation of women and youth in social and economic activities was used for development of the concept how to increase the capacity of women and youth and their activities.

Various trainings were conducted with different target groups, from 2017 to 2019. The model developed and followed in 2018 is of good quality and should be replicated and up-scaled in other regions of Tajikistan in need of similar programs. It started with needs

assessment and FGDs of targeted beneficiaries, as well as developing existing businesses in the relevant districts. Trainings, conferences and various events for young people were organized based on these assessments. Training in business planning (30 participants, of which 12 women; 16 participants developed business plans) was followed by financial literacy training (20 participants including 16 people that developed business plans) and individual mentoring of ten people for further development of their business plans.

Nine grants i.e. technical support for opening a start-up business were awarded to nine people who participated in the business training and whose business plans were selected as best. Five were awarded to women and two supported men with disabilities.

Adult Education Centre (AEC) in Ayni was supported with equipment, visual materials, IT equipment, and inventories in 2019.

The rehabilitation of dormitory building of Lyceum # 53 in Zarafshan Settlement of the Ayni district has been completed. It should be noted that the number of girls in these institutions increased for almost three times, from 33 girls in 2014 to 87 girls in 2019.

B. Income Generating Activities:

UNDP had two calls for grant proposals in this project. Grant Appraisal Committee was established. They met twice and chose four proposals and awarded them grants that supported: establishment of a bakery that employs 4 women in Ayni; 17 women who started with honey production in Shamtuch village; homestay for tourists (3 women) and development of new handicraft products adapted for tourists' demands (6 women) in Madm village; Micro-Credit Fund (MCF) "Rushdi Vodii Zarafshon" – awarded 31 micro-loans to local entrepreneurs (13 to women and 18 to men) in Ayni district.

Public Organization "Zarafshon" is the best example so far, honey bees and drying fruit facility, through which women are empowered, generate income, having ideas how they will develop the business in the for future and are networked in these two production sections.

The working groups in each district were involved in helping to agree on community needs. Local governments and the community provided materials, labour and built the facility where the workshops are. UNDP provides and purchase the equipment. This is another employment modality in addition to call for grants. Through this modality, UNDP supported 4 workshops with purchasing equipment, in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts: Handicraft workshop in Dar-Dar village that employs 8 women; Dry fruit processing in Veshab village that during the season employs 7 women; Dairy processing workshop in Langar village employing 4 women; and Construction of cold storage in Shamtuch village.

The third modality of supporting communities was through purchasing agricultural machines, three tractors and one excavator.

Project Objective/Component 2: Increased access to education healthcare and social services

All reconstructed and built education and health facilities are sustainable because local governments took over the cost of financing salaries and utility costs. Activities are generally relevant to objective 2, small delays with construction work did not change the general picture.

Project Objective 3: Improved capacities to effectively address migration issues

The most related activities to the migration issues are: training of public servants, health caravan and donor coordination.

Capacity building of public servants on employment and referrals of migrants

National Consultant conducted three one-day trainings on effective management of employment and organization of adequate referral services for departing and returning migrants for 72 representatives of local state departments of Kuhistoni Mastchoh and Ayni districts.

Health Caravan

In 2019, the UNDP consultant organized a health caravan for wives of migrants and family members on legal assistance, advice on negative social consequences of migration as divorce, discrimination and violence in the family, waiver of rights, refusal to register marriages and divorces, alimony issues. The consultations were attended by experts and consultants: a lawyer, a psychologist, representative of the employment and migrations services, etc. These professionals visited 10 villages in both districts.

Legal Aid

An average of 12 women-wives of labour migrants in ten villages were provided with legal advice and two women wanted to divorce. Two women wanted to divorce their husbands, but did not want to claim property rights. UNDP should follow up on this issue by connecting with two other UNDP projects: 1) the Rule of Law and Access to Justice Program (RoL and A2J) and 2) the Spotlight Initiative, which supports the Gender based Violence (GBV) Programme.

HIV/AIDS

According to UNDP Health Programme that works towards reducing the burden of HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria in Tajikistan: "Over the last 5 years, the number of officially registered HIV cases has skyrocketed by eight times, increasing from 506 in 2005 to 4,674 in 2012." In Ayni district (as of July 2019) 61 PLHIV have been registered, of which 13 deceased. Out of 48 PLHIV, 2 left for Russia; 39 patients from Ayni are under treatment either in Ayni, Panjakent or Khujand.

Donor Coordination

Donor meetings take place about twice per year in Ayni. These meetings should be organized more frequently and a much higher level of synergy and matching funds/activities could be developed as all international organizations support rural development in these two districts.

Efficiency

According to the Project data, funding is largely utilized as per the plan in a timely manner. The total estimated budget of the Project was USD 1,699,680 with 88% contribution from the Russian Trust Fund; the remaining 12% was covered by UNDP.

Quantitative Aspects

Data suggest that the Project provides good Value for Money. Looking at cost considerations, besides direct programme cost, the overall management and overhead costs are an important parameter to be taken into account. Management and overhead costs (including general management services) comes to around 19% per cent of the total spend, which is good in aid management, the standard is 20 per cent and less.

Qualitative Aspects

The evaluation looked at such quality elements like level of cooperation and coordination at local and national level, utilization of knowledge generated from M&E system for decision-making as well as the opinion of beneficiaries about the quality of technical inputs by the Project.

Sustainability and Impact

The evaluation mission found that there is strong ownership of most of the activities by the local governments and other counterparts. The most sustainable outcome of the Project are the investments in social infrastructure, and the health and educational facilities that have been transferred to local authorities and financed from the public budget.

The Project created permanent jobs for at least **105 people** among them **65 women** and temporary jobs for at least **100 people**.

Network/Linkage

Participation of all Project stakeholders in each stage of the Project is an essential part of the Human Rights Based Programming. The meeting of the PSC was also attended by other counterparts, including CSOs and private sector. The evaluation report has also revealed the linkages with other UNDP Projects, in particular the Rule of Law Project supporting Legal Advice Centres across the county.

The Project also promoted loose cooperation with the responsible government agencies and the local community to raise awareness about the reforms in the sphere of labour and employment opportunities as a prerequisite for effective implementation employment increasing projects.

Lessons Learnt/Conclusions

The Result Framework includes baseline values, however only for output indicators. For the future programming, it is recommended to develop outcome level indicators that would help to measure the extent of the change associated with Project interventions.

Trainings and business consultations are an important part of the project in order to ensure development of SMEs and build-up local pool of human capital at local level, with a particular focus on women and young people. However, these types of interventions should be followed up through offering substantial amount of financial products to fund the business ideas developed during the trainings and consultation events. Such projects, after completion of soft interventions, shall follow up with the trainees by offering financial and consultative support and help them develop viable businesses.

Further support and coaching for local authorities is needed in order to enable them to develop effective programs, able to apply gender- responsive budgeting and develop realistic financial plans, mobilize resources and maximize the impact.

Key Recommendations

Multi-sectoral and systemic approach

- Interlink job creation and educational projects with programmes that address the legal framework, the institutional setup, the performance of institutions, accountability chains, etc., with social innovation programs, and with environmental programs, in order to achieve a sustainable, systemic impact. Allow long-term implementation periods in programmes and provide for the systematic nature of the actions taken.

Up-scale and further develop soft project components

- Social inclusion of women and youth is very important for development of soft programme components that support employment, and economic empowerment. Many cooperatives or dhekan farms have traditional, elderly men dominant leadership. In order to create more possibilities and support social inclusion of younger people and women, UNDP can train younger people and women, than talk with the management and suggest different cooperative structure that would involve young people and women.

Up-scale good employment possibilities from this project and create green jobs

- Capacity building and up-scaling toward creation of green jobs, such as organic agriculture, water supply, recycling, etc.

Enlarge TVET possibilities for young people coming from remote regions

- UNDP could support vocational schools¹ with dormitories in Dushanbe. New and additional dormitory buildings for high school students could be built, both for girls and boys, so that young people from remote and poor regions could come and study needed crafts. It will be great if UNDP and Government could match funding and provide scholarships to high school students.

Collaboration between different UNDP Programmes: Communities Programme and Health Programme

- The UNDP Communities Programme (CP) should match its resources with UNDP's Health Programme and support public awareness campaigns about condoms use targeting men in general and particularly men who are migrant workers from Tajikistan. UNDP has both resources and the mandate (UNDP Health Programme that works toward reducing HIV/AIDS) to create and carry out visible media and social media campaigns supporting men to use condoms. It is in line with SDGs 3 and SDG 5 and it is related to social and health rights.

Increase donor coordination among international organizations working on rural development in Tajikistan

- Donor coordination meetings should be organized in each region at least once every 2-3 months with the aim to reach synergy, matching funds and joint activities.

¹ These vocational schools should offer education in following: how to repair electric appliances (washing machines, stoves, etc.) or how to repair sewing machines.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

The “*Promotion of social and economic opportunities for women and youth in Zerafshan Valley of Tajikistan*” project is financed through the UNDP-Russian Trust Fund for Development and implemented by UNDP in the Republic of Tajikistan within the period of July 2017 – December 2019.

The overall objective of the project is to address socio-economic issues, through increased income and job opportunities, enhanced access to education, healthcare, social services and reinforced capacities to effectively address migration issues, which in turn contributes to improvement of livelihood of population, according to priorities at national and local levels.

The “Promotion of social and economic opportunities for women and youth in Zerafshan Valley of Tajikistan” envisages to address economic and social disparities of the most vulnerable population in two districts of Zerafshan Valley (Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh) through demonstration and promotion of efficient integrated local development solutions to improve livelihoods and social opportunities for women and youth through strengthened business skills and vocational education, better access to education and health services, and effective addressing of labour migration issues including mitigation of its social consequences. It assists local communities, women and youth especially, with economic empowerment, improving quality of social services and support for creation of jobs at local level.

The project helps to improve the efficiency of producers and processor of agricultural goods and will help to increase employment and development of business practice in target districts, taking into consideration their social and economic needs. The focus is given also to the issues related to enabling business environment for women and youth by conducting tailored business trainings, financial literacy courses, institutional capacity-building of knowledge organizations (VTLs, Adult Education Centres), and businesses on local economic development. Development of entrepreneurship and investment promotion are relevant to rural areas of Tajikistan.

The main long-term outcome (impact) of the project is livelihood improvement of rural population in target districts of the Republic of Tajikistan. To achieve this result, in the medium term (Project outcome), project will directly contribute to increasing employment and business development in view of their existing needs and economic capacity. Indirectly, the project will help to reduce social and economic vulnerabilities of target communities, especially of women and youth, and the flow of unskilled labour migrants from Tajikistan to other CIS countries, including the Russian Federation.

The above goal is achieved through following Outputs:

1. Increased income and job opportunities for rural women and youth through business skills development, vocational trainings and access to finance.

Under this component the Project created an enabling environment for business development skills for women and youth through conducting tailored training courses based on actual needs, provision of technical assistance to knowledge institutions such as Vocational Training Lyceum, Adult Education Centre, provision of micro-capital grants for women and

youth-headed small and medium-size businesses and to enable supportive environment and local income generating initiatives resulting in creation of decent jobs for local women and youth.

2. Improved access to social services for rural women and youth through enhanced capacities of local health and education facilities and increased community engagement for promotion of healthy lifestyles and education for all.

Under this component the Project supported improved access to social services for local communities through construction and or rehabilitation of secondary schools including strengthening energy efficiency and safety conditions of rural schools, through supply of energy efficient technologies (e.g. windows), improvement of heating, water supply and sanitation systems and installation of solar panels. Improvement of access to healthcare facilities through construction and or rehabilitation of medical houses in remote and rural areas, provision of technical assistance, and procurement of ambulance vehicles.

3. Improved awareness of rural women and youth on employment issues.

Under this component the Project strengthen partnership with local public organizations and community groups to discuss, plan and implement activities aimed at addressing challenges and social consequences of unorganized and low-qualified migration in target districts; conducting awareness raising campaigns among rural women, migrants' wives and young people, schoolchildren attending 09-11 grades on various social issues, including an unorganized migration and its social consequences. Provision of legal aid through mobile consultations for women and youth in rural and remote areas on negative consequences of labour migration resulting in divorce, discrimination, domestic violence, abandonment, non-registration of marriages and divorces, settlement of alimony disputes, etc.

These three components altogether contribute to promote social and economic opportunities for people living in rural and remote areas.

1.2 Evaluation Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons learnt that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project; and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

1.3 Users of the Evaluation

Primary users of the evaluation are UNDP Communities Programme (CP) staff and Steering Committee. Steering Committee members are: Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan; Deputy Chairwoman of the State; Committee on Investment and the State Property Management of the Republic of Tajikistan Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Tajikistan and UNDP Tajikistan Resident Representative.

1.4 Structure of the Evaluation Report

Following a brief overview of the project, introduction, evaluation scope and objectives, approach and methodology, the findings are structured around key evaluation criteria: (1)

relevance of the intervention (2) effectiveness at the level of outputs and outcomes, (3) efficiency of the intervention – programmatic and financial management, efficiency at the level of outputs and an assessment of relationships. The final part of the report focuses on (4) prospects for sustainability and impact of the project results, followed by (5) network/linkages (6) the conclusion and lessons learned and (7) recommendations.

2 Evaluation Scope and Objectives

2.1 Evaluation scope

The evaluation was carried out by a team of two consultants – one international consultant from Serbia and one national consultant from Tajikistan, both with experience in evaluating social development projects and programs, and knowledge and understanding of gender equality and youth issues.

The time-frame for the evaluation was November 2019 – January 2020, while the evaluation methods included a review of project documentation and project produced materials, a field visit to Tajikistan to conduct interviews with the project key stakeholders and the UNDP management team, as well as focus groups with beneficiaries and the presentation of key findings and recommendations to the UNDP to validate findings and recommendations.

The field mission took place in Dushanbe and Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts. Evaluators interviewed implementing agency staff (UNDP Country Office and field project office in Ayni district), key stakeholders, (local and provincial authorities, public organizations, etc.), and direct beneficiaries (grant receivers, women and youth who attended trainings and developed business plans, staff of built or renovated facilities i.e. health clinics and lyceum).

2.2 Main objectives of the Evaluation include:

- To assess whether the project achieved or did not achieve outcomes and outputs stipulated in the Project Document and Results Framework;
- Identify factors that have contributed to achieving or not achieving project results;
- Analyse the effectiveness of the existing partnerships established/maintained with the Government, civil society, UN Agencies, donors and other key stakeholders. Identify lessons learnt, effectiveness of project partnerships, and provide recommendations as necessary;
- Assesses to what extent the project has addressed gender considerations and promoted gender equality throughout its implementation.
- The evaluation outcomes will be grouped in terms of the project Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Partnership and Lessons Learned.

2.3 Evaluation Criteria

OECD-DAC criteria are used in this evaluation: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact, network/linkages and lessons learnt/conclusions.

2.4 Evaluation Questions

The following key evaluation questions should be answered according to the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and the evaluation Terms of Reference (Annex 1):

Relevance

- I. Assess to what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDAF and SDGs?
- II. Assess to what extent the project's overall interventions address the needs and demands of the beneficiaries in gender disaggregated manner (i.e. for men and women, girls and boys).
- III. Assess the relevance and effect of technical assistance of project given to all the beneficiaries.

Effectiveness

- I. Review and analyse the achievement of Projects' results against set targets. Were the projects objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible?
- II. Assess the performance of the Project with particular reference to qualitative and quantitative achievements of outputs and targets as defined in the Project documents and work-plans and with reference to the Project baseline.
- III. Assess the areas in which the project has the fewest and the greatest achievements?
- IV. Analyse the underlying factors within and beyond implementing agency's (UNDP) control that affect the Project (including analysis of the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats affecting the achievement of the Project).
- V. Assess the extent to which the project partners been involved in project implementation? What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the outcome, and how effective have UNDP partnerships been in contributing to achieving the outcome?
- VI. Assess to what extent capacities of local and regional authorities and service providers have been enhanced.
- VII. Assess to what extent the Project contributed to economic empowerment of the target group, especially vulnerable women, young people, migrant families, etc.

Efficiency

- I. Assess whether the Project has utilized Project funding as per the agreed work plan to achieve the projected targets.
- II. Analyse the role of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and whether this forum has been optimally used for decision making.
- III. Assess the timeline and quality of the reporting followed by the Project.
- IV. Analyse the performance of the M&E mechanism of the Project and the use of various M&E tools (any socio-economic data available to the project etc.).
- V. Assess the qualitative and quantitative aspects of management and other inputs (such as equipment, monitoring and review and other technical assistance and budgetary inputs) provided by the project vis-à-vis achievement of outputs and targets.
- VI. Identify factors and constraints, which have affected Project implementation including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic policy issues in addition to other external factors unforeseen during the Project design.

Sustainability and Impact

- I. Assess preliminary indications of the degree to which the Project results are likely to be sustainable beyond the Project's lifetime (both at the community and government level) and provide recommendations for strengthening sustainability.
- II. Assess the sustainability of the Project interventions in terms of their effect on environment.
- III. Analyse the emerging impact on the communities for both men and women in terms of food security, income and asset enhancement.

Network/Linkages

- I. Evaluate the level, degree and representation by the beneficiaries and stakeholders, (government and donor partners etc.) in the implementation of the Project (with particular attention to the development, testing of community-based approaches towards assets creation and income diversification, especially for poor, youth and women and accessing technical assistance inputs outside the project).
- II. Assess the Project's knowledge management strategy and outreach and communications to all stakeholders.

Lessons Learnt/Conclusions

- I. Analyse areas for improved programme planning, especially with respect to setting targets, relevance and capacity of institutions for project decision making and delivery.
- II. Identify significant lessons or conclusions which can be drawn from the Project in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and networking. Special attention may be given to the security situation and the coping strategies developed by the project to maintain work momentum.

3 Approach and Methodology

The evaluation approach had three components – a desk review of all available project documentation, field mission which encompassed qualitative approaches with UNDP project stakeholders and direct beneficiaries and analysis/reporting.

3.1 Desk Review

A full review of project documents, progress reports, consultant reports, policy and legal documents were undertaken. The analysis of secondary sources assisted the evaluators in refining their approach to the field enquiry.

3.2 Field Mission

The field mission was conducted in cooperation with UNDP Tajikistan and consisted of Key Informant Individual (KII) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with stakeholders and beneficiaries in the project.

Stakeholders and beneficiaries that are involved in the evaluation process were mainly from Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts, and a few of them were Dushanbe based. Some of the former UNDP staff and consultants were interviewed via Skype. The field mission started and ended with meetings UNDP staff in order to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the mission.

The detailed list of interviewees is presented in Annex 2.

3.2.1. Key Informant Interviews (KII)

Semi-structured interviews are particularly useful for collecting information on people's ideas, opinions, or experiences. They are often used during needs assessment, program design or evaluations. Please see for more information Annex 3: KII Guide.

Key informant interviews were conducted with representatives of the following groups:

- UNDP representatives at the country office, UNDP representatives at the field project office in Ayni, LED Specialist at the UNDP field project office in Ayni during the project implementation, and project consultants;
- Representatives of partner organizations (Adults Education Centre, Vocational Technical Lyceum employee who participated at the vocational course provided by Adult Education Centre);
- Donor representative (Embassy of the Russian Federation in Dushanbe);
- Local and provincial authorities in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh;
- Grant receivers (Zarafshan Tourism Association – Madm village, Public Organization Zarafshon – Shamtuch village, Production cooperative “Tojikiston” - Shamtuch village, Dairy processing and production workshop – Langar village, Dar- Dar adras and atlas workshop – Ayni district, bakery - Ayni district);
- Staff of built or renovated social facilities (health clinics in Tomin village/Ayni and Rogh village/ Kuhistoni Mastchoh and Lyceum in Ayni).

3.2.2. Focus Groups Discussion (FGD)

The focus groups discussion methodology is a participatory method that remains appropriate for use with various groups. It is a purposeful, facilitated discussion among a group of respondents with similar characteristics, within a fixed timeframe focusing on a limited number of topics.

The FGD Guide consists of several sections corresponding with focus areas. Each section starts with a broader theme and flows to more specific questions and ends with a question to get any recommendation from participants.

7 to 10 participants were invited to participate in the discussions. The FGDs were conducted with the following groups:

Ayni District:

- In Madm village, women who are working in the small-scale workshop for production of carpets and provide homestay for tourists;
- In Shamtuch village women- recipients of honey-bee families and women that work in small fruit processing and packaging workshop;
- In Shamtuch village members of production cooperative “Tojikiston” that would use refrigerated storage facility for fruits and vegetables.
- In Ayni women that work in bakery.

Kuhistoni Mastchoh District:

- In Mehron village, women that participated in business trainings and developed business plans;
- In Langar village women that work in dairy processing and production workshop;
- In Langar village, men that took micro credit loans under favourable conditions due to UNDP grant.

Please see for more information Annex 4: Guide for FGD.

Observation of accomplished results was used throughout field mission. Evaluation team visited:

- Handicraft workshops in Madm and Dar-Dar villages (Ayni District);
- Fruit processing and packaging workshop and refrigerated storage facility for fruits and vegetables in Shamtuch village (Ayni District);
- Bakery in Ayni;
- Dairy processing and production workshop in Langar village (Kuhistoni Mastchoh);
- Rebuilt health clinics in Tomin village (Ayni District) and Rogh village (Kuhistoni Mastchoh District) and
- Renovated Dormitory for girls that are students in Lyceum in Ayni (Ayni District).

3.3 Analysis and Reporting

Data from the project documents, annual progress reports, grant selection are used to explore correlations with qualitative data that are gathered during the field visit.

The above listed evaluation activities have been designed and executed in consultation with the UNDP Tajikistan team, having in mind the need to employ methodological triangulation. Hence, the evaluation team deployed different methods of inquiry (document analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus groups) of different sources of information (diverse project stakeholders, project documentation, project-independent public policy documents about Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh Districts). Furthermore, since the project was evaluated by an evaluation team whose consolidated conclusions and assessments, deriving from a mixed-method approach, have been further validated in the feedback process from UNDP project management team, investigator triangulation also took place.

The Final Inception Report was submitted to UNDP on December 15, 2019. The Inception report was based on preliminary desk-work and review of project materials and it specified evaluation objectives and scope and described the proposed evaluation methodology, including key evaluation questions, data collection tools and methods of data analysis. UNDP team created draft agenda for the field mission and evaluation team was asked to amend it, as appropriate. The evaluation team suggested few more stakeholders to be included in the evaluation and it was taken into account.

Throughout the evaluation process, and especially during the field mission, the local and international evaluator reviewed their notes and exchanged views on the project's achievements at the level of outputs and expected outcomes against key evaluation questions. Evaluators exchanged notes that were taken during field mission. Notes were helpful when assessing gathered information about the relevant evaluation criterion – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, network/linkages, and lessons learnt/conclusions. Such a process enabled us to draft key findings towards the end of the field mission and prepare for the presentation of initial findings and recommendations to the UNDP staff on December 20, 2019.

The draft evaluation report was submitted to UNDP on January 12, 2020. UNDP staff provided feedback and final evaluation report was submitted on January 24, 2020. The final evaluation report is used as the basis for the power-point presentation given by National Evaluator in person and International Evaluator via Skype to Steering Committee and UNDP staff on January 29, 2019. The purpose of the presentation was to provide an opportunity to the project SC to validate findings and recommendations. We would like to point out that all conclusions and assessments presented have been derived to through triangulation of data, sources of information and evaluation methods.

4. Findings

4.1 Relevance

Based on the findings from the literature review and primary data collection during the field mission, it can be stated that the Project priorities are *highly consistent* with global, national and local development agenda.

Contributing to the SDG Agenda

The Project has contributed to realization of SDGs in Tajikistan. Directly or indirectly, the Project contributes to reaching SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 11, SDG13, and SDG 17, covering and addressing issues associated with elimination of poverty and food security, improving accessibility of quality education and health, promoting gender equality, creating decent work and economic growth, supporting industrialization, innovations and infrastructure for development, contributing to sustainable communities and considering the implications of climate changes in programming. More specifically, the interventions under the Output 1 focused on increasing income and employability of rural women and youth in two targeted disadvantaged districts, bringing positive changes in the lives of target groups through business skills development, vocational education and access to finance. This, along with outcomes at individual or family level, creates economic opportunities for other community members and enhances inclusive economic growth of communities as well. At the same time, the Project made emphasis on gender equality and women empowerment paying specific attention to women and girls in programming, mostly through business trainings and vocational education.

It should be noted that the Project largely invested in social infrastructure in remote areas of targeted districts and created or improved health and education facilities in remote areas of targeted districts that along with improvements in access to education and health services, reduces inequalities in society as well.

The Project interventions also correspond with the United National Development Assistance Framework for Tajikistan (UNDAF) Outcome 2: People in Tajikistan benefit from equitable and sustainable economic growth through decent and productive employment; stable energy supply; improved access to specialised knowledge and innovation and more favourable business environment, especially for entrepreneurs and farmers. The Project interventions contributes to Outcomes of the Social Development, Inclusion and Empowerment area of UNDAF and specifically to Outcome 5: Women, youth, children, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are protected from violence, and discrimination, have a voice that is heard and are respected as equal members of society. The interventions contributes to 5.1. Gender Inequality Index that comprises three dimensions: Reproductive Health, Empowerment and Labour Market Participation. Organized health caravan, created employment opportunities for women and the start-ups helped to develop practices that empower women. Specific examples are given in Effectiveness Section of this report.

Project Contribution to National Development Strategy (NDS-30)

As stated above, the project contributes to local development agenda as well. The National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period to 2030 (NDS-30) remains as a roadmap for all development initiatives by all actors in the country, linking to and aligning local priorities with global development agenda. The evaluation shows that the Project interventions directly contribute to the goal of NDS-2030, which focuses on improving the living standards of population, based on sustainable economic development.

As stated in NDS 2030 “Inequality in opportunities is especially high for rural women not only because of higher gender stereotypes and limited choices in the area of employment, but also a relatively low quality of infrastructure, which affects access to resources and opportunities” (p. 59). The NDS 2030 promotes social and economic inclusion and stipulates the factor of gender equality through addressing structural gaps and providing greater opportunities for women and girls, in particular in rural areas.

The Project demonstrated a good example of how to effectively tackle social and economic inequalities. It has been found that the interventions dedicated to development of business skills, financial literacy, subsidized micro loans and grants were particularly important for empowerment of women and girls in target locations.

Productive employment is one of the key national priorities highlighted in section 5.2. of the NDS 2030. The NDS 2030 states that shift from predominant employment in agriculture should become an important part of the employment reform and labour productivity growth, and should be related to the restructuring of the real sector of economy. Based on the observations made and available data, it can be stated that the Project interventions, in particular the initiative supporting start-ups contributed to productive employment and created various employment opportunities, including self-employment for the beneficiaries. The NDS 2030 also highlights youth employment.

The NDS 2030 identifies financial literacy of the population as one of the important priorities. It also mentions the regional and gender inequalities in terms of access to financial services in Tajikistan. Consequently, the Project’s grants, donated equipment, opened workshops- where certain number of women found employment as well as subsidized micro loans and grants for business initiatives for women, are in high demand and are significant elements of the Project.

NDS 2030 also focuses on awareness raising of labour migrants and their family members on legal and health issues associated with migration, and risks. It proposes development of gender-sensitive system of pre-departure training for migrant workers and their families, including legal information and support, short-term vocational and language training based in resource centres. The NDS 2030 focuses the attention to the families left by labour migrants behind, considering this phenomenon as social costs of labour migration. The Project attempted to create a referral mechanism to ensure accessibility of legal services to vulnerable groups and ensure safe migration of potential migrants in targeted areas as well.

The Project interventions are aligned with the Mid-Term Development Programme for the period from 2016 to 2020 priorities as well. The Project inputs to priority 3.5.3. Improving accessibility of financial services and section 4.2. On Productive employment, in particular for youth and women.

How the Project Contributed to the District Development Programmes (DDPs)

The evaluation report has also assessed the consistency of Project priorities with District Development Programmes (DDPs) of Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts. Both districts have DDPs for the period of 2016-2020.

It was deducted that the Project priorities, in particular, its hard components are based on the needs highlighted in the DDPs. In relation to the issues and priorities highlighted in the social and economic areas, it can be noted that there is a link between employability of women and gaps in the competences and skills of young people. The DDPs highlights the following gaps that prevents development of SMEs: Terrain; Poor road infrastructure; High cost of financial services (interest rates of loans); Lack of consulting services for start-ups and established SME; Low level of entrepreneurship skills, management skills and lack of course for entrepreneurs; Lack of tailored services for women to start and expand business; Lack of favourable investment climate to attract funds.

Looking at M&E plans, one sees that the plans cover mostly all the indicators by areas identified in the DDPs, however the indicators are not sufficiently disaggregated, missing gender related indicators in most of the cases.

In fact, strong ownership of project priorities by local authorities were observed during the field mission. The evaluation participants have demonstrated good understanding of development dimensions at global and local level and particularly the role of local authorities in the localization of SDGs. According to the DDP of Ayni district and interviews conducted, there is a shortage of budget for the implementation of the DDP; it is estimated that around 84% of the projects have insufficient funding sources. The same concerns were raised by interview participants during the field mission.

Project's Overall Interventions that Address the Needs and Demands of the Beneficiaries

According to secondary data and collected information during the field mission, it can be claimed that the Project selected areas are among the disadvantaged districts due to geographic characteristics of localities with poorly developed social and economic infrastructure and opportunities for young people, in particular girls and women. The population in these districts is mainly engaged in agricultural activities with lower labour productivity compared to other sectors. Both districts are experiencing higher level of labour migration and unemployment rates.

Please see a comparison table of the key socio-economic indicators for Ayni, Kuhistoni Mastchoh and Isfara districts in Annex 5.

The consistency of project priorities with the needs of target groups was confirmed by various interview participants as well. All evaluation participants were positive about the project activities targeting young people, in particular girls and women in targeted locations. The Project, along with business trainings, promoted various events in other cities of Tajikistan, helping young women and men to acquire experiences beyond the household boundaries and villages where they live. As stated by one of the interview participants:

“Thanks to the support provided, I could realize my dream and start my small business and support my family...”
KII participant, Ayni

Rehabilitation of the dorm for girls at TVET school in Ayni, Zarafshon village, allowed 40 girls to continue their professional education, which is almost twice more comparing with the data from 2013 and 2015 indicated in the DDP of Ayni district.

The project provided support in developing social infrastructure as well. According to local authorities, the Project in coordination with local authorities has targeted the most disadvantaged communities for the infrastructure Projects. According to the staff of health facilities constructed with the support of the Project, it significantly improved accessibility to health services. On the other hand, it reduced the burden of transportation costs of the local population for simple medical check-ups and non-emergency situations.

The Project supported a number of initiatives to support local economy and community members. During the evaluation visits, it has been found that drying fruit workshops, cold storages are among the good practices successfully implemented by the Project, with active involvement and interest of local communities.

The project provided the beneficiaries with machinery as well. During one of the meetings in Ayni districts with representatives of the production cooperative “Tojikiston” bringing together members from five villages, the provided excavator helped remove mudflow covering the only road connecting the five villages with the main road.²

Another important component of the project was the legal advice and referral provided to the family members of labour migrants. Other studies conducted in Tajikistan show that children and women left behind are most likely to face psychosocial and economic difficulties, and need legal advice.

Technical Assistance to the Beneficiaries

Technical assistance by the Project was provided through trainings, provision of educational materials, coaching and mentoring support. The evaluation found that in most of the cases, the technical assistance provided to the beneficiaries was relevant, based on needs assessment and well-connected with activities and the follow-up programme. The project beneficiaries highly appreciated the trainings on business skills that were followed by technical support and mentoring. It should be noted that, during the first round of the trainings, the coaching components were weak. However, the Project addressed this gap in the course of the following training cycles.

The Project, in collaboration with Adult Education Centre in Dushanbe City, conducted trainings for 10 instructors from VTL in Ayni and AECs in two districts using ILO’s - “Start your Business” tool. During the field mission, it has been found that despite the need for such trainings for the instructors, it is difficult to incorporate a module, if it is not part of the curriculum. It was observed that some of the instructors (for instance, for electric works) cannot formally apply new knowledge and skills into the programme and conduct extra-curricular sessions after the main classes, when time allows.

The quality and quantity of reading materials produced by the project were highly appreciated by the recipients as well.

² “...It was forty meter long and two meter high, without excavator we would be disconnected from the world for two three weeks, but with heavy machinery, we just put some fuel and managed to open the road in one day!” FGD participant, Ayni

4.2 Effectiveness

According to OECD/ DAC evaluation criteria, effectiveness is defined as the extent to which an initiative achieves its objectives. In the context of the above-mentioned, the effectiveness analysis will be structured within the framework of the Project Document.

4.2.1 Project Overall Goal

The overall goal of the project is *'Enhanced welfare and economic resilience of population of Zerafshan Valley of Tajikistan.'*

The project has been successful in initiating implementation of economic support in Zerafshan Valley.

Most of the stakeholders participating in the project, prior to this UNDP project, did not have an opportunity to participate in business trainings, get support for self-employment in agriculture or attend health/education facilities in their villages, as they were not functional for certain period of time.

4.2.2 Project Purpose / Expected Outcome

The project purpose / expected outcome was *'Rural women and young people in Zerafshan Valley more actively participate in and contribute to the local economic life and have improved access to decent employment, education and health'*.

It can be deducted that the project purpose was fulfilled. This is due to the fact that rural women and young people (especially in Ayni) participating in project are acquiring income that is contributing to the family budget. Many of them just received equipment and have not started their businesses yet. Reconstructed education and health facilities are important to hundreds of people in the rural areas located in the both districts.

The project directly benefitted 10,062 people including 4,771 women, while indirectly the project benefitted the population of two districts that are 103,400 people including 52,734 women.

4.2.3 Project Objectives/ Components

- Increased income and job opportunities
- Increased access to education healthcare and social services
- Improved capacities to effectively address migration issues

Each project objective/component is followed by an output. Project reports followed Outputs and the reporting was done through progress and annual reports. What is not clear though is the difference of definition of project objective 3 and output 3. Namely, output 3 should follow objective 3, so it might be defined as: *improved awareness of rural women and youth on migration issues*. The evaluation report will follow project objectives and outputs.

Project activities that follow each component are presented in the comprehensive table, Annex 6 to this report.

4.2.4 Expected Results

Project Objective/Component 1: Increased income and job opportunities

Output 1: Increased income and job opportunities for rural women and youth through business skills development, vocational trainings and access to finance

Through this component, the Project created an enabling environment for business development skills for women and youth through: conducting tailor-made training courses based on actual needs; provision of technical assistance to knowledge institutions such as Vocational Training Lyceum, Adult Education Centre; provision of grants for opening workshops; provision of equipment to establish workshops together with jamoats in the communities; supporting selected women and youth-headed business plans leading to self-employment, and enabling supportive environment and local income-generating initiatives resulting in creation of employment for local women and youth.

Project activities types in this component are:

- Education and job search activities (AEC courses and rehabilitation of Lyceum, Assessments, Trainings/Business planning and related Events, Awarded business plans, Job fair)
- Income-generating Activities (Grants, Microcredit loans, Building workshops/agricultural machinery procurement).

Education and Job Search Activities

Assessments were conducted in the course of the two years of project implementation. Local businesses and opportunities for doing business in the target districts, as well as vocational education and vocational institutions were assessed. Analytical review about opportunities and threats in participation of women and youth in social and economic activities was used for development of the concept how to increase the capacity of women and youth and their activities. Different business trainings and various events in 2018/2019 were part of this concept.

According to respondents, the main problems in continuing to further education after school are related to the lack of financial opportunities in the family, and gender stereotypes. These factors primarily affect girls who cannot receive further education.

Looking at data generated by the National Testing Centre under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, it can be seen that Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts in Sughd region have the lowest ratio of young women who enrol at the University. It was unified test with only 17% (N=50) young women enrolling from Kuhistoni Mastchoh and 46% young women enrolling from Ayni in 2019. It should be noted that at the Sughd regional level, this indicator is around 51%.³

³ www.ntc.tj/images/Downloads/Hisobotho/form-1_11-30042019.pdf

Also, during the survey, many female respondents said that they did not know about the work of educational institutions for training / retraining in the region, or about the courses that were conducted. This also confirms that informative activities on existing opportunities for vocational education aimed at young women is carried out rather poorly. In schools, the work on discussing topics about vocational guidance for schoolchildren is poorly delivered.

The development of female and youth entrepreneurship is proceeding at a slow pace due to the low level of education and the lack of business planning skills, the lack of soft loans, and the limited effective mechanisms to support the establishment of business (training and support).

The external consultant who conducted analytical review and organized all activities for women and youth is a very valuable resource and it is recommended that she should be engaged by UNDP furthering in the capacity development phase that is to follow in other similar regions in the country. This analytical review and changing the approach made significant difference between the programme in 2017 and in 2018/2019 in the area of employment of women and youth.

Various trainings were conducted with different target groups, from 2017 to 2019. The model developed and followed in 2018 is of good quality and should be replicated and up-scaled in other regions of Tajikistan in need of similar programs. It started with needs assessment and FGDs of targeted beneficiaries, as well as developing existing businesses in the relevant districts. Trainings, conferences and various events for young people were organized based on these assessments. Training in business planning (30 participants, of which 12 women; 16 participants developed business plans) was followed by financial literacy training (20 participants including 16 people that developed business plans) and individual mentoring of ten people for further development of their business plans.

Nine grants i.e. technical support for opening a start-up business were awarded to nine people who participated in the business training and whose business plans were selected as best. Five were awarded to women and two supported men with disabilities.

Young people and women from distant jamoats through participation in project activities were able to increase their skills and opportunities. This project is especially important in Kuhistoni Mastchoh district and two young women that developed business plans were awarded grants for opening their own business.

Multiple events were organized after business planning trainings supporting women and young people in employment.

Women who were self-employed and who wanted to start their businesses were additionally supported by women's conference "Woman and Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Opportunities" in 2019. The conference participants, under the mentorship of the business

trainers, were introduced with the following topics 1) Tax legislation, Registration of entrepreneurial business; 2) Loans: Interest rates and much more; 3) Opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Tajikistan (grants and soft loans); 4) Financial planning: accounting for income and expenses.

Young people had several opportunities for peer exchange experiences and to learn more at Startup Choikhona IX in Penjikent and at the Forum "Creativity and Innovation in Business Promotion" in Khujand. At the first day of the Forum, young people visited successful businesses in Khujand, which seems to be a very good practice worth up-scaling.

The training "Start and Improve Your Business" for the teachers in Adult Education Centre (AEC) is important. This approach should be modified in terms of upgrading skills and knowledge of teachers that already teach Business skills in AEC, so instead of random teachers, train teachers who already teach business skills.

Job fairs are organized by Ayni District Government monthly. During 2019, job fairs were also organized in Ayni. It was attended by 23 government agencies and production workshops, which presented lists of 70 jobs in Ayni and the region. The fairs resulted in 25 qualified people receiving job referrals and 5 women finding permanent employment.

Adult Education Centre (AEC) in Ayni was supported with equipment, visual materials, IT equipment, and inventories in 2019. The AEC focuses to strengthen its work in three directions: i) enhancing teaching and practical trainings in carpentry (woodworking, carving etc.), ii) culinary vocation (mainly gastronomic food), and iii) production of furniture (for businesses and small industries/offices).

Young people involved in this project during the focus groups led by the UNDP consultant suggested besides the 12 courses that AEC is offering currently in the both districts, courses in: masters in repairing sewing machines and other sewing equipment, courses for repairing mobile phones and computers, courses in video and photo shooting. This shows that young people already have other requests in accordance with the changes and needs of the labour market. It seems that there is both willingness of young people to learn these skills and market where to sell them.

UNDP should carry out promotional activities regarding donated IT equipment to AEC, through traditional (TV) and social media (FB, Twitter, Instagram), and thus reach young people in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh so they can benefit from it.

Having in mind that AEC received IT equipment from UNDP, different computer courses, up-scaled from basic one, could be offered to young people. The lack of IT technology and IT courses has great influence on the life of young people. They need to see visual examples, receive appropriate IT skills, and connect not just with the modern technologies, but start to use them in their daily life, activities, job search, start-up businesses, etc.

The rehabilitation of dormitory building of Lyceum # 53 in Zarafshan Settlement of the Ayni district has been completed. All necessary equipment and furniture for rehabilitated dormitory have been procured and delivered. In 2017, 239 students (including 76 girls) attended VTL.

Currently, there are 250 students studying in the VTL (including 87 girls). It's worth to mention that the dormitory of the VTL has 40 beds of which 20 are occupied. It should be noted that the number of girls in this institutions increased for almost three times, from 33 girls (N =230) in 2014 to 87 girls (N=250) in 2019.

Income Generating Activities

UNDP had two calls for grant proposals in this project. Grant Appraisal Committee was established. They met twice and chose four proposals and awarded them grants:

- Mahala Committee Varz – established bakery and employed 5 people including 4 women (Ayni district);
- PO Zarafshon – 85 honey-bee hives distributed among 17 women-headed households (5 hives each) in Shamtuch village (Ayni district);
- Zarafshan Tourism Development Association – building capacities of private homestay offered to foreign and domestic tourists (3 women employed); development of new handicraft products adapted for tourists' demands, such as handbags, hand-made carpets and souvenirs (6 women employed) in Madm village (Ayni district);
- Micro-Credit Fund (MCF) “Rushdi Vodii Zarafshon” – awarded 31 micro-loans to local entrepreneurs (13 to women and 18 to men) with annual interest rate of 12% . The loans carry a grace period of up to 9 months. (Ayni district)

Public Organization “Zarafshon” is the best example so far, honey bees and drying fruit facility, through which women are empowered, generate income, having ideas how they will develop the business in the for future and are networked in these two production sections.

The procedures in the call for grant proposals are clear, elaborated and easy to follow. However, due to lack of public organizations and NGOs number and quality of the grant proposals did not meet UNDP requirements, the number of awarded grants is just four. Therefore, other types of employment opportunities were explored.

Calls for grant applications could be followed by public organizations/associations/MCF that are more developed and already supported by different international organizations. For UNDP follow-up programme and further programing in these two districts and other regions of Tajikistan, where non-profit organizations are not developed, other forms of support seem more applicable than call for grants. For e.g. they could be workshops chosen by district working groups and supported by agricultural machinery procurement.

The working groups in each district were involved in helping to agree on community needs in their district and then help them articulate, develop proposals and provide cost sharing of 30%. This usually means that Jamoat and the community provides materials, labour and building the facility where the workshop will be. UNDP provides and purchase the equipment. This is another employment modality in addition to call for grants. Through this modality, UNDP supported 4 workshops with purchasing equipment, in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts:

- Handicraft workshop in Dar-Dar village that employs 8 women (Ayni District);
- Dry fruit processing in Veshab village that during the season employs 20 women and 7 women are most active (Ayni District);
- Dairy processing workshop in Langar village employing 4 women (Kuhistoni Mastchoh District);
- Construction of cold storage in Shamtuch village, still not operational (Ayni District).

Dairy workshop that started two months ago in Langar village in Kuhistoni Mastchoh district needs support and capacity building in order to become fully operational. It needs heating and air-conditioning; implementation of the HACCP standard because it is producing dairy products that people buy in the stores; regular testing of milk that is used; and connection with other dairy workshops that UNDP supported in Tajikistan.

The third modality of supporting communities was through purchasing agricultural machines, tractors and excavator. Three tractors with supplemental equipment such as: plough, cultivator, potato planter and digging equipment and tractor-trailers and one excavator, were procured and delivered to target districts.

Most measures are in line with Output 1. UNDP demonstrated developed and nurtured relationships with local and provincial administration. The question of sustainability of women-led economic activities should be addressed more. Experiences from other countries indicate that this kind of initiatives succeed only when they are supported for the longer period and with multiple projects. Most of the individual businesses in this project are start-ups leading to self-employment. If these businesses grow, register and start to pay taxes than we can talk about small businesses. Moreover, the output calls for the creation of a “supportive environment”, and very few activities address that issue. Therefore, in the follow-up phase this should be addressed.

Women's diverse needs and common problems and issues should be addressed more in depth, so that it brings better structural changes and solutions. Empowerment through awareness raising and training, development through economic activities address women only at individual level, thus minimizing the chance of structural change. There is need for a systemic approach covering e.g. the following topics:

- Organisation of self-reliant women’s support groups on socio-economic and health issues (supported by POs in Ayni and Women’s Commission and Youth Commission, and organized in clusters of the same professional interest like handicrafts, honeybee production, drying fruits, thus having regional/district/province impact)
- Improve local infrastructure and assets and adapt them to women’s needs beyond the scope of Output 2 (e.g. support opening kindergartens in both districts, use purchased medical cars with modern equipment to reach women in far out villages to provide at least annual medical checkups, creating meeting facilities where women feel safe to come and meet⁴, etc.)
- Income-generating activities facilitated through access to credit, skills training, technology transfer, technical support and promotion of market linkages, catering not to individual women, but to organised groups, which would manage the selection and distribution of tasks themselves. There are two production groups, organized by two consortiums, one led by the Aga Khan Foundation and the second by Welthungerhilfe. It should be noted that the consortiums supported start-up and development of more than 40 production groups (growing potatoes and dried fruits), among which 2 women's

⁴ During the consultant assessment focus group participants from Kuhistoni Mastchoh noted that in the villages of Obburdon and Khudgif it is often difficult for women to even go out, not to mention work or training. These same stereotypes become the reason that few women leave for labour migration.

groups successfully operate, one in Kuhistoni Mastchoh (20 women) and one in Ayni district (18 women). These women production groups in both districts can be used as a resource in coaching, mentoring and supporting other rural women in start-up (rural) businesses.

- Improve institutional responsiveness to women's needs through targeted training and gender-sensitive staffing. Very few public organizations in Ayni, no PO in Kuhistoni Mastchoh, insufficient staff and capacity of employees of government agencies responsible for carrying out employment activities among women and youth affects the quality of work carried out by government structures and demand more complex approach in order to reach set goals and objectives.

Project Objective 2: Increased access to education healthcare and social services

Output 2: Improved access to social services for rural women and youth through enhanced capacities of local health and education facilities and increased community engagement for promotion of healthy lifestyles and education for all

Under this component the Project improved access to social services for local communities through construction and or rehabilitation of secondary schools including strengthening energy efficiency and safety conditions of rural schools, through supply of energy efficient technologies (e.g. windows), improvement of heating, water supply and sanitation systems and installation of solar panels, improvement of access to healthcare facilities through construction and or rehabilitation of medical houses in remote and rural areas, provision of technical assistance, and procurement of ambulance vehicles.

All reconstructed and built education and health facilities are sustainable because Jamoats took over the cost of financing salaries and utility costs.

Activities are generally relevant to output, small delays with construction work did not change the general picture. However, one component of the output claims to address "increased community engagement for promotion of healthy lifestyles and education for all". There is no project activity that is promoting healthy lifestyles. Increased community engagement in project construction work is recognizable and generous. Some of the rural schools became district priorities or are voted as Working group priorities; these facilities are rebuilt and thus will ensure education for all.

Project Objective 3: Improved capacities to effectively address migration issues

Output 3: Improved awareness of rural women and youth on employment issues

As mentioned above, output 3 does not match objective 3. In consequence, this chapter will focus on the objective of "improved capacity to address migration issues."

Under this component the Project strengthen partnership with local public organizations and community groups to discuss, plan and implement activities in order to address challenges and social consequences of unorganized and low-qualified migration in target districts. The activities carried out to reach this objective are: consultations with a lawyer, a psychologist, representative of the employment and migrations services for women and youth in rural and remote areas on negative consequences of labour migration resulting in divorce, discrimination, domestic violence, abandonment, non-registration of marriages and divorces, settlement of alimony disputes; conducting awareness raising campaigns among rural women, migrants' wives and young people, schoolchildren attending 09-11 grades on various social issues, including on unorganized migration and its social consequences.

The most related activities to the migration issues are: training of public servants, health caravan and donor coordination.

Capacity building of public servants on employment and referrals of migrants

The project hired a national Consultant on effective management of employment and migration processes at the local level. He conducted three one-day trainings on effective management of employment and organization of adequate referral services for departing and returning migrants for 72 representatives of local state departments of Kuhistoni Mastchoh and Ayni districts.

A guide for civil servants on effective management of employment has been developed and presented to relevant state sector departments and employees during a dedicated round-table. It is important to mention that the final version of the developed Guide was agreed upon with the administration of Ayni district.

It seems that training of public servants both on jamoat and district levels remains very important, on all issues that this project seeks to address: employment of women and youth and employment and referrals of labour migrants.

Health Caravan

In 2019, the UNDP consultant organized a health caravan for wives of migrants and family members on legal assistance, advice on negative social consequences of migration as divorce, discrimination and violence in the family, waiver of rights, refusal to register marriages and divorces, alimony issues. The consultations were attended by experts and consultants: a lawyer, a psychologist, representative of the employment and migrations services, etc. These professionals visited 10 villages in both districts.

Legal Aid

An average of 12 women-wives of labour migrants in ten villages were provided with legal advice.

Two women wanted to divorce their husbands, but did not want to claim property rights. This was due to the perception that if they did so, their standing, respect and reputation would suffer within their community and in the eyes of their husbands' relatives.⁵

Women who want to divorce, can pay private lawyers in Ayni, which is not affordable to the vast majority of women in these districts even if they were to overcome all other social and family obstacles. No local or international organization is providing free legal aid either in Ayni or Kuhistoni Mastchoh. The Committee on Women and Family Affairs of Ayni district, through its leading specialists, provides conciliation and mediation services for women on any disputes and family issues.

UNDP should follow up on this issue by connecting with two other UNDP projects: 1) the Rule of Law and Access to Justice Program (RoL and A2J) and 2) the Spotlight Initiative, which supports the Gender based Violence (GBV) Programme, and for which the UN Resident Coordinator and the Heads of UN Recipient Organizations, in Tajikistan (UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF) are jointly accountable. RoL can continue to provide a woman lawyer to visit villages and to whom women can speak in person. UNDP field project office in Ayni can provide transportation and drivers and the Spotlight Initiative can support with other professionals working on GBV, who would join the lawyer in the field visits. The range of topics can include basic women's human rights, potential legal issues that women face because their husbands are in labour migration, divorce issues resulting from migration, marriage, abandonment and rights, registration of marriages, alimony disputes, property rights, etc.

HIV/AIDS

According to UNDP data, the Health Programme works towards reducing the burden of HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria in Tajikistan:

“Over the last 5 years, the number of officially registered HIV cases has skyrocketed by eight times, increasing from 506 in 2005 to 4,674 in 2012. According to the UNAIDS Report on Global AIDS Epidemic 2012, Tajikistan is among of the countries where HIV prevalence has increased by more than 25% over the last 10 years.”

In Ayni district (as of July 2019) 61 PLHIV have been registered, of which 13 deceased. Out of 48 PLHIV, 2 left for Russia; 39 patients from Ayni are under treatment either in Ayni or other places (probably Panjakent or Khujand).

Ayni has an AIDS Centre, which provides free of charge treatment to all HIV positive patients regardless of health insurance. However, the provision of psychological counselling, and education/public awareness is a weak point of the AIDS centres. By mandate they are bound to provide such services, but they are frequently not provided at all. According to the psychologist that participated in the Health Caravan local women in the villages did not have information on the availability of such services in the AIDS Centre in Ayni. Therefore, in the

⁵ Quote of the Lawyer who was providing legal counselling during Health Caravan

follow up, UNDP should create and disseminate information about the AIDS Centre in Ayni with all relevant contacts. Professionals could distribute them widely during future Health Caravans.

Neither UNDP nor other international organizations or local institutions like Reproductive Health Centres conducted recently any public awareness campaigns about condoms use targeting men in general and even more particularly men who are migrant workers from Tajikistan. UNDP has both resources and the mandate (UNDP Health Programme that works toward reducing HIV/AIDS) to create and carry out visible media and social media campaigns supporting men to use condoms. It is part of both social and health rights and in line with SDGs 3 and 5. The UNDP Communities Programme (CP) should connect its resources with UNDP's Health Programme and support future campaigns. This is very important because having in mind current gender power imbalances it is probably a lot easier to reach men who will start to worry about their health and eventually agree to use condoms than to empower women enough to negotiate condom use with their husbands.

Donor Coordination

Donor meetings take place about twice per year in Ayni. These meetings should be organized more frequently and a much higher level of synergy and matching funds/activities could be developed as all international organizations support rural development in these two districts.

Round table discussion with public servants organized by national consultant:

In particular, they expressed that there should be coordination of the activities of public and international organizations with state institutions about issues related to the analysis of the labour market, employment, training and retraining of the population, including women and youth.

Both consultants that were engaged in this project, on women and youth employment and public servants trainings on migration issues recommend more frequent and coordinated activities of international organizations and local institutions around the above-mentioned issues.

Generally, activities were in line with the output description, but because of lack of alignment between objective and output 3, it is not easy to follow activities related to migration issues e.g. legal aid to families of migrants, number of women who wanted to divorce, health issues HIV/AIDS, training of public servants about migrant employment opportunities, etc.

4.3 Efficiency

Project Funding as per the Agreed Work Plan

According to their own data, the Project largely utilized funding as per the plan in a timely manner. The total estimated budget of the Project was USD 1,699,680, with USD 1,499,680 (88%) contribution from the Russian Trust Fund; the remaining 12% was covered by UNDP. There were some adjustments made into the planned budget proposed and approved by the Steering Committee on February 15, 2019. The changes proposed for items 1.1.4. Technical and Advisory Assistance to Ayni Business Support Centre (reduced from \$32 000 to \$17 000), 2.1.2. Capital repairs/repair of two schools (increased from \$110 000 to \$160 000), and item 3.2.3. Legal assistance to rural population (reduced from \$46 667 to \$11 667).

According to UNDP staff, these changes were proposed due to poor capacity of BSC in Ayni and a greater need for the hard component of the Project.

Please see the implementation status of the Project budget by December 31, 2019 in Annex 7. As can be seen from the Table in Annex 7, the budget implementation is very high, with small deviation between the budget and actual expenses.

Role of the Project Steering Committee (PSC)

The project was implemented by the Communities Programme (CP) of the UNDP Country Office in Tajikistan utilizing the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM), as stated in the Project document. The same documents states that the Project Steering Committee (PSC) shall be established to provide strategic project management of the project, and included a representative of the donor (the Russian Embassy in the Republic of Tajikistan), UNDP in Tajikistan and the Government of Tajikistan represented by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan, the State Committee on Investment and the State Property Management of the Republic of Tajikistan. The PCS role was to review the progress of the project, including project reports and work plans. It was also planned that the PSC shall serve as a platform that key stakeholders will use it to discuss the overall direction of the project implementation, as well as to make strategic decisions to ensure the best use of resources to achieve goals and objectives. It was planned that the Project Steering Committee would meet at least once a year to discuss the work plan and project implementation.

Two PCS meetings (one online) were held over the course of the Project. The minutes of the meeting are available and proposed to the Evaluation team by UNDP CP staff as part of the literature review. The last meeting of the PSC is scheduled for January 2020, when the findings of the current evaluation will be presented as well.

Based on the literature review and conducted consultations, it can be argued that the PSC performed its functions as planned. According to the Project staff, the members of the PSC or their representatives were responsive to individual requests over the course of the Project as well. The constructive dialogue and the active role of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade was highlighted by Project team

In addition to the four PSC members described above, there were 17 other participants engaged in the PSC meeting in February, 2019, including UNPD Project staff, representatives of NGOs and other organisations taking parts in the Project activities.

It can be stated that the PSC also served as a mechanism for coordination and harmonization of interventions horizontally across the participating agencies and vertically within various programmes of the agencies. According to interviewed participants, the experience gained through this Project helped formulate a new joint initiative and through the South-South and Triangular Cooperation approach aligned the needs and demands at local, national and regional levels.

Timeline and Quality of the Reporting

According to the Project Document, the Project Team would produce quarterly and annual reports. During the PSC meetings, the Project team has also prepared a presentation about the progress of the Project.

The Evaluation team was provided with all Annual Reports produced by the Project Team. The reports are prepared in English and follow the same structure (Executive Summary, Results, Project Risks, lessons Learned, Future Plans, Partnership, Communication and visibility, Financial status of the Project and Annexes). Along with other information and reports, the annexes include the Project performance data providing the status of delivery of indicators for the given period in the matrix.

The Reports provide a comprehensive picture of the *processes* and a description of completed interventions, detailed financial information and all the necessary supporting documents and evidence about the statements found in the annexes. At the same time, the view of the Evaluation team is that the Reports could be more analytical. As mentioned above, Objective 3 is missing a relevant output, making it difficult to follow activities related to migration. In particular, the Executive Summary should provide an overall picture of the delivery status of the key results or outcome and output indicators. The report should also provide a general feedback using the key dimensions (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability). It would be also good to produce such documents in Russian and/or Tajik language as well, so that not only UNDP and the Donor Agency make use of this report, but also other members and participants of PSC. This could take the form of a summary report in Russian and/or Tajik.

The Performance of the M&E in the Project

The monitoring and Evaluation system of the Project is based on the Project Result Framework and the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan that are part of the Project Document. The result Framework contains the hierarchy of results, demonstrates links between the Project components, the broader UNDAF agenda and the UNDP Country Programme.

According to the UNDP staff, the M&E functions are distributed among staff of field project office in Ayni and project staff in Dushanbe, including full time M&E Officer. There is no M&E officer in the field project office and the M&E functions at local level have been performed by the Local Development Specialist, a Civil Engineer (for the hard component) and the Field Project Office Manager. Long term local consultants required for the different parts of the Project have also taken responsibility for the monitoring of activities they were responsible for.

Monitoring was conducted on a quarterly basis by the Dushanbe team. There is a reporting format that collects information for all indicators of the Project, but also for general monitoring purposes. The monitoring system provides disaggregated information by gender, ability and age groups (young people and adults). When it comes to activities related to children, the system collects data about the number of schoolchildren by gender and not age. Project team in Dushanbe maintains a database that contains all project data in Excel sheets.

M&E officer produces monitoring reports after each field mission, leads and guides the local team for data collection for the quarterly reports and feeds into the annual and final Project report.

Along with quantitative data, the Project team collects qualitative evidence as well.

It is recommended to quantify the outcome indicators for the Project in the future. The set of indicators developed in the formulation stage are output level and are only partially suited to measure the changes in the lives of the target population (changes in behaviour/utilizations of resources, etc.).

Quantitative Aspects

Data suggest that the Project provides good Value for Money. The modern concept of VfM used nowadays in appraisal of projects covers multiple attributes which include: results and effectiveness, cost considerations, and equity. Looking at cost considerations, besides direct programme cost, the overall management and overhead costs are an important parameter to be taken into account. Management and overhead costs (including general management services) comes to around 19% per cent of the total spend, which would be generally considered to be good in aid management, the standard benchmark being around 20 per cent. Comparing with other similar projects implemented by UNDP Tajikistan, for instance the LITACA Project, the management cost of the Project is 13% lower (19% vs. 22%)⁶.

Project data suggest that with a total budget of around USD 1,700,000, the project reached, directly and indirectly almost 275,000 people over the course of the Project. Looking at basic calculations provided below, it can be seen that the Overall Cost Efficiency (Total budget / Total number of beneficiaries) of the Project is round \$6.20, while targeted value (considering only direct beneficiaries) for this indicator comes to around \$150.00.

Again, comparing with LITACA Phase I, the Project demonstrated much better Overall Cost Efficiency (b\$6.20 vs. \$51.60). Please refer to Annex 7 for the details of calculations of Overall Cost efficiency and cost efficacy by Outputs.

It should be noted that the Project demonstrated good performance from an equity perspective by targeting and empowering women and vulnerable, remote communities in mountainous areas of Tajikistan.

Qualitative Aspects

The evaluation looked at such quality elements like level of cooperation and coordination at local and national level, utilization of knowledge generated from M&E system for decision-

⁶ Final Evaluation of LITACA Phase I. Project. UNDP Tajikistan, 2018

making as well as the opinion of beneficiaries about the quality of technical inputs by the Project.

The Evaluation team noticed that the Project team in the UNDP maintain very productive relationships with all stakeholders; at national level with Government and Donors and at local level with authority bodies, NGOs, private sectors and communities. In particular, the Evaluation team found the level of interaction, awareness and engagement of Local Authorities with UNDP in Ayni District high, long-term and sustainable. Further, the analysis of Project reports and conversations with Project staff and experts show that there is a feedback mechanism in place to reflect the lessons learnt and the findings of the monitoring system on operations. For example, during the first cycle of business trainings there was no mentoring or follow up activities for the trainees to finalize their business plan, which resulted in relatively poorer performance of trainees. The Project reflected on such failure with the incorporation of comprehensive analysis, plan, trainings and mentoring that is highly valued by training participants. It was also very important for young women that participated in the training that the consultant and other trainers hired the UNDP were women. Another example was the reallocation of funds from soft component to hard at the Steering Committee Meeting that justified with the Business Support Centre⁷ close down its' operation which was found during the implementation of the Project.

In fact, all the beneficiaries who met with the Evaluation team were positive about the quality of support provided by the Project. In some cases, the beneficiaries raised questions about the procurement procedures claiming that it would be more reasonable, if the beneficiary organization or entities would identify the supplier and lead the procurement process to ensure they get exactly what they need and want.

Project Constraints

It should be noted that in general, the Project provided high performance and delivered all promised results and outputs. During the observations made and based upon the analysis of available reports the following constraints have been identified:

- Small number of representatives of private sector and NGOs who can participate in the Project in targeted areas, in particular those who can work in Kuhistoni Mastchoh
- Relatively lower level of engagement of girls and women from Kuhistoni Mastchoh into the Project activities;
- Training for teachers of technical lyceum and Adult Education Centres, does not necessarily lead to the utilization of new business ideas in the classrooms;
- Business Support Centre in Ayni closed down when the Project started its' implementation so different plan was developed
- Despite the creation of job opportunities, the women's level of income is close to the minimum wage. This may help them elevate from poverty, but leaves them at risk of economic vulnerability.

Despite the fact that UNDP maintains productive relationships with local authorities, budgetary constraints may affect the longevity of some outcomes related to soft components, such as job creation, subsidized loans and other professional services provided over the course of the Project.

⁷ Business Support Centre was fully operational during the baseline assessment and Project planning phase.

4.4 Sustainability and Impact

Project Results beyond Project Lifetime

As stated in the Project document, the sustainability of the project and its success depend on the commitment of local authorities and rural population to improve opportunities to increase income and employment opportunities. The evaluation mission found that there is strong ownership of most of the activities by the local governments and other counterparts. The most sustainable outcome of the Project are the investments in social infrastructure, and the health and educational facilities that have been transferred to local authorities and financed from the public budget. The project documentation also claims that most of the economic activities and investments in assets most likely will be financially sustainable. Direct observation led us to believe that the bee keeping, fruit drying facility, the cold storage in Ayni district, homestays are among the activities that will be self-sufficient, and that there is a potential for up-scaling there. This is particularly true for honeybee keeping practices. In order to develop this business to its full potential there is however need for capacity building in order to develop and further investment either through grants, equipment or loans.

Subsidized loans for SMEs provided by micro finance organizations to the Project beneficiaries were in high demand, but very limited number. According to the MCF representatives the portfolio demonstrated great performance with 100% return rate and no delays. During the conversation with the beneficiaries, their feedback about the conditions of the loan was very positive as well. In addition, there is a commitment from the MCF to continue provision of such products for their clients beyond the Project's duration.

The provision of business skills trainings and coaching were in high demand and represented effective components of the Project. It can be argued that the outcomes of these trainings remain with trainees in the long run. It will however be difficult to secure the same modality of technical support and scale to other community members after the end of the Project. Therefore, donor coordination and UNDP follow-up with capacity building as well as contributions by other international organizations would be ways for further support. Women who are already trained should upgrade their skills to become coaches and mentors to other people in the village, who would e.g. want to start with honeybee keeping or drying fruits. Already involved women and young people should be supported and a women's and respectively youth mentor network should be created. UNDP should invite other donors to support the remaining 7 people who wrote business plans during this project and whose ideas are so far not supported by grants.

Another way of support would be to link the technical support component with the loan mechanism. In the case of an MCF, it will be in their interest to develop skills of their current and potential clients, through various form of trainings requested by clients or identified as a result of a needs assessment and an analysis of administrative data of the MCF. The cost can be partly compensated by MCFs, clients and other interested parties (it can be donors and ideally the local authorities or line ministries in the future).

The AECs and employment agency's cooperation approach to provide trainings for the unemployed population followed by the opportunity to receive no interest loans is an example of

good practice. This practice can be assessed deeper and further improved. One of the concerns is the amount of the loans (up to 3000 TJS equivalent to approximately \$300.00), which is hardly sufficient to start any type of business.

There is some concern about the sustainability of the trainings conducted for the instructors of the VTL and the AECs. Despite their uncontested relevance and their benefits for the instructors at individual level (one of the participants stated that the training helped him to improve his own business), it can be hardly institutionalized without additional efforts to reflect upon the modules in the curriculum.

The health caravan is a good method to be explored and shared among international organizations. We suggest connecting it with other relevant UNDP projects such as RoL, Spotlight Initiative, UNDP Health Program, etc. Mobile teams traveling to Dushanbe or Kujand could provide free legal advice, psychological counselling, health check-ups, etc.

Project effect on the Environment

The Project assessed to have no or very limited negative impact on environment. In some cases, such as bee keeping, the Project did indeed have a positive impact on flora and fauna of the surrounding localities.

The infrastructure projects were conducted according to the local construction standards. The generated waste has not contaminated soil or water and was properly disposed to the waste collection points.

Emerging Impact on the Communities

According to the observations made, the Project created permanent jobs for at least **105 people** and **65 women** and temporary jobs for at least **100 people**. During the conversations with the people who found employment as a result of Project interventions, we found that most of them receive a salary of 500 TJS monthly for permanent or seasonal works. It should be noted that in some cases it is a full time job (for bakery, dairy workshop, Dar-Dar handicrafts workshops), in some cases it is part time and seasonal activity (bee keeping, agricultural production, drying fruits). The implication of activities on the food security obviously depends on the type of activity. Agricultural production, drying fruits and bee keeping have had a positive impact on nutrition practices of entire families. According to the Head of the NGO Zarafshon, the health status of children in the families of those women who engaged in bee keeping is better, their children fell ill to various infectious diseases less frequently than their peers in the same community. Other evaluation participants have also confirmed that their new employment or businesses contribute substantially to their family budget and definitely contributes to food security of the family. Further, during the meeting with loan recipients in Langar village (Kuhistoni Mastchoh), we found that with a loan amounting to 20,000 TJS that they managed to buy better potatoes for seed and double productivity per hectare. They also invested in storage facilities to be able keep the products longer and sell them for a better price.

4.5 Network/Linkages

Representation by the Beneficiaries and Stakeholders in the Project Implementation

As stated in the Project Document, the Communities Programme (CP) is aimed at supporting local economic development, local governance and access to services and basic infrastructure at local level. The Programme's Strategy is to support the Government of Tajikistan to promote wider participation of communities in the process of local development planning, as well as in the management and implementation of local development priorities. The Project Document further states that the interventions should be carried out in coordination with the priorities included in District Development Programme (DDP) - a tool for local development planning; a mechanism of localization of global and national strategic priorities. It is also claimed that this tool provides coordination between national programs and the objectives of local development and remains an effective mechanism allowing the interests of all levels of the population in the planning and implementation of local development priorities to be taken into account.

The Project also promoted loose cooperation with the responsible government agencies and the local community to raise awareness about the reforms in the sphere of labour and employment opportunities as a prerequisite for effective implementation employment increasing projects.

In fact, participation of all Project stakeholders in each stage of the Project is an essential part of the Human Rights Based Programming. The evaluation team found that the Project was successful in engaging various stakeholders at national and local level. At national level, as described in the Efficiency chapter of the current report, there is a Project Steering Committee, represented by Donor Agency, UNDP and the Government. The meeting of the PSC was also attended by other counterparts, including CSOs and private sector. The study has also revealed the linkages with other UNDP Projects, in particular the Rule of Law Project supporting Legal Advice Centres across the county. According to Area Manager in Ayni, it is a common approach of UNDP to maximize the impact of a project to communities by creating synergies and linkages between them. UNDP meets twice per year with other international agencies at local level.

On the other hand, the evaluation mission found that the DDP activities are underfinanced and higher priorities are given to infrastructure development. It can be assumed that local authorities will need further technical support to be able to develop more realistic, effective plans that balance well between hard and soft components of the DDP.

Project Outreach and Communications to all Stakeholders

The Project maintains M&E database and management decisions are based on data and lessons learned. The evaluation team found a number of cases where decisions were based on data, such as complementing trainings with coaching component, and developing new programmes based on good practices from the existing one. As we were informed by the Donor agency representative, they approved another similar project in other regions of Tajikistan.

The Project produced various communication materials targeting different groups. The evaluation team got project summary sheets in English and Russian language, viewed other materials for migrants and their family members in Tajik language and found more online presentations about the project activities presented in the reports. It is commendable that UNDP

created an infographic presenting all major project achievements and outputs. The visual project presentation reached its goal.

At the same time, during the evaluation mission, it has been found out that not all participants were aware about loan programmes available through MCF in their region. Therefore, it is important to make the information accessible to all, for Project direct beneficiaries, their communities and further on.

4.6 Lessons Learnt/Conclusions

Areas for Improved Programme Planning

The Result Framework includes baseline values, however only for output indicators. For the future programming, it is recommended to develop outcome level indicators that would help to measure the extent of the change associated with Project interventions. Currently, the Project refers to Country Level Programme outcomes, indicators and ones of UNDAF. These may serve as an overarching objective for the Project or its impact, but not for the outcome of the Project for which the Project is responsible for. The following examples may help in formulating outcome and process indicators in the future:

Current indicator	Recommended indicator
Example of Project outcome indicator	% increase in the income of the families where women and/ or girls predicated in the Project activities on developing business skills
Output indicators	
1.1.1. Number of women provided with start-up business trainings	% of participants of start-up business trainings that applied for loans to start business
1.1.2. Number of organized comprehensive trainings courses on various topics of small and medium business development for existing women-headed businesses from target districts (management, marketing, finance, business planning)	% of women headed businesses participated in the comprehensive training courses that expressed their satisfaction with trainings as measured by post test
1.1.3. Number of women-entrepreneurs completed comprehensive trainings courses for getting advanced business skills.	Completion rate of courses among women-entrepreneurs enrolled in comprehensive trainings courses for getting advanced business skills.

The following lessons learned indicated in the annual project report were found relevant and still actual:

Realizing the importance of reforms in the sphere of labour and employment, UNDP needs to further enhance its cooperation with responsible state agencies and the local community to raise awareness about the opportunities for effective management of employment and migration issues. It is also important to advocate with the State Employment Agency to expand and increase the subsidized loan scheme for unemployed people.

In order to ensure proper exit strategy, the project is engaging members from the local communities in the early stages of the project life cycle. This will ensure that the communities are aware of the ownership, management and operational aspects of each project (mostly social and economic infrastructure). Moreover, early engagement of community leaders into the soft components of the project, such as awareness raising events, will lead to the continuation and replication of such events by the community leaders, thus lessening the need for similar interventions by other actors and stakeholders.

To ensure the success of the project interventions and have a proper and reliable sustainability mechanism in place, it is imperative that the local government agencies offer the ultimate replication and implementation mechanism of the project activities, beyond the project life cycle, having strong technical and financial capacity. Currently, due to a weak human capital (professionals), certain local government institutions are unable to fulfil their mandate and often under-deliver. Therefore, it is important to continue to work with these institutions to enhance their human and technical resources.

Trainings and business consultations are an important part of the project in order to ensure development of SMEs and build-up local pool of human capital at local level, with a particular focus on women and young people. However, these types of interventions should be followed up through offering substantial amount of financial products to fund the business ideas developed during the trainings and consultation events. Such projects, after completion of soft interventions, shall follow up with the trainees by offering financial and consultative support and help them develop viable businesses.

Project Significant Lessons and Conclusions

Along with above mentioned lessons learned, the following conclusions can be reached:

- It is important to include longitudinal study to determine the long-term impact of such programme on the lives of the target population. It will help determine the most effective strategies and interventions and create a robust evidence for policy advocacy at national level.
- The project was good to test various strategies, but it needs to up-scale.
- Taking into account that assets play important role in empowerment of an individual, in particular women, it is important that through the income generating activities introduce asset building programmes. This would have prolonged impact on women's role in society.
- Further support and coaching for local authorities to enable them develop effective programs, able to apply gender- responsive budgeting and develop realistic financial plans, mobilize resources from various sources and maximize the impact of available resources.

5 Recommendations to UNDP

5.1 Strategic Recommendations for the UNDP Future Programming of the Support to Youth and Women Employment

Multi-sectoral and systemic approach

- Interlink job creation and educational projects with programmes that address the legal framework, the institutional setup, the performance of institutions, accountability chains, etc., with social innovation programs, and with environmental programs, in order to achieve a sustainable, systemic impact. Allow long-term implementation periods in programmes and provide for the systematic nature of the actions taken.

Up-scale and further develop soft project components

- Social inclusion of women and youth is very important for development of soft programme components that support employment, and economic empowerment. It is very important to pay special attention to inclusion of women and youth in the communities' life, while it is necessary to think over and implement a set of measures to increase their social activity and strengthen their capacities with the civic education (leadership, mobilization, participation in decision-making, community involvement).
- Many cooperatives or dehqan farms have traditional, elderly men dominant leadership. In order to create more possibilities and support social inclusion of younger people and women, UNDP can train younger people and women, than talk with the management and suggest different cooperative structure that would involve young people and women.

Exchange of experiences and learning from good practices of other UN agencies

- Study and connect other with UN agencies that develop innovative, smart climate approaches in agriculture, such as UN Women's Global Flagship Programme on Climate Smart Agriculture, its' platform "Buy from Women"⁸ and FAO's Agrisource.⁹

Trendsetting: Create a "Bank of most productive business ideas in Tajikistan"

- UNDP can bring expertise and determine the most productive business ideas for SMEs in Tajikistan with consideration of the size of investment, locations, gender, age, loan characteristics, etc. "The bank of ideas" should be continuously updated and publicly available online.

⁸ UN Women's Buy from Women Enterprise Platform

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/3/buy-from-women-platform-brochure>

⁹ https://www.agrisource.org/en/7_24/5c332ea507c805cd14cf4363/projet-agrisource.html

5.2 Operational Recommendations to UNDP on Capacity Development Methods and Approaches

Up-scale good employment possibilities from this project and create green jobs

- Invest more in the equipment of workshops that employ women and support by agricultural machinery procurement.
- Capacity building and up-scaling toward creation of green jobs, such as organic agriculture, water supply, recycling, etc.

Mentorship and market analysis

- Mentorship of producers can be technical assistance or finding partners that can provide technical assistance, work on a clear and transparent communication and engage with partners and stakeholders (beneficiaries/users, buyers, supporting institutions, retail, promoters, etc.).¹⁰ In order to acquire enough mentors, UNDP could coordinate and network with organizations that offer volunteer placements, like UNV, EU volunteers, US Peace Corps, and also many smaller faith-based organizations.
- Basic market analysis is needed at the beginning also. It helps producers to understand how you match buyer needs, and get information on what customers value, what are strengths and competitive advantages, how to use product differentiation strategies to set a product aside, assure quality, improve packing, labelling, communication to the market.

Enlarge TVET possibilities for young people coming from remote regions

- UNDP could support vocational schools¹¹ with dormitories in Dushanbe. New and additional dormitory buildings for high school students could be built, both for girls and boys, so that young people from remote and poor regions could come and study needed crafts. It will be great if UNDP and Government could match funding and provide scholarships to high school students.

Collaboration between different UNDP Programmes: Communities Programme and Health Programme

- The UNDP Communities Programme (CP) should match its resources with UNDP's Health Programme and support public awareness campaigns about condoms use

¹⁰ PO Zarafshon that work closely with Ursula, an expat living in the village and engaged by another international organization, provides mentoring to women who work in the drying fruit facility and honeybee keepers. This mentoring helped women to develop many more products, have ideas and basic knowledge about marketing and trading standards in order to offer their product to wider range of customers.

¹¹ These vocational schools should offer education in following: how to repair washing machines, stoves and many different appliances or how to repair sewing machines.

targeting men in general and particularly men who are migrant workers from Tajikistan. UNDP has both resources and the mandate (UNDP Health Programme that works toward reducing HIV/AIDS) to create and carry out visible media and social media campaigns supporting men to use condoms. It is in line with SDGs 3 and SDG 5 and it is related to social and health rights.

Increase donor coordination among international organizations working on rural development in Tajikistan

- Donor coordination meetings should be organized in each region at least once every 2-3 months with the aim to reach synergy, matching funds and joint activities.

Support Government of Tajikistan to develop Action Plans that would follow NDS 2030

- The National Development Strategy until 2030, and the Medium-Term Development Program of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016-2020 indicate the actions that need to be performed, but the mechanisms for implementation at the regional levels are not specified. It is necessary to develop Action Plans for one or two years that would follow ND Strategy 2030 and MTDP 2016-2020. In particular, it is needed to define quantitative and qualitative indicators, responsible departments and sources of funding, taking into account the needs of the regions.

5.3 Recommendations to the UNDP for the Capacity Development Phase in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh

Recommendations for Macro Level

- Tajikistan has signed the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) in 2018 that promotes safe, orderly and regular migration and represents a unique opportunity to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 10 by 2030. It is highly recommended to further align the interventions and priorities with GCM objectives and cooperate with IOM – the Coordinator of the UN Migration Network globally and locally in Tajikistan. There is a possibility to get funding through the Multi-Partners Trust Fund for joint initiatives locally.
- Further support the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment and subordinated entities (AEC, Employment Agency and others) to expand the practice of accessing the subsidized loans for small business provided by the Employment Agency through vocational education for unemployed or returned migrants (currently is being arranged through the AEC). It is also recommended to complement the training programme with financial literacy curriculum and increase the amount of the loan.

Recommendations for Mezzo Level

- Assess the possibility of creation a full time Monitoring and Evaluation Officer position in Ayni area office.
- It is recommended to develop outcome level indicators of the Project. Currently, the Project refers to Country Level Programme outcomes and its indicators and to UNDAF's one that may serve as an overarching objective for the Project or its impact, but not the outcome of the Project for which the Project is responsible for.
- The external consultant who conducted analytical review and organized all activities for women and youth is a very valuable resource and it is recommended that she should be engaged by UNDP- to further the capacity development phase that is to follow in other similar regions in the country.
- If the UNDP is implementing project that includes districts that are at the different level of development (like Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh were in the evaluated project), than it should have different objectives and action plans for each of them. The same project should support different action plans due to different level of development, infrastructure, education levels, etc. Namely, people from more developed district (Ayni district in the evaluated project) should be mentors and coaches in business skills to people in the less developed district (Kuhistoni Mastchoh in the evaluated project). Action plan and objectives/outputs for less developed district (e.g. Kuhistoni Mastchoh) should be less ambitious.
- UNDP could support relevant district or government structures to create gender sensitive statistics for Kuhistoni Mastchoh¹².

¹² "The experience of UNDP and other organizations confirm that women in the Zeravshan Valley (especially true for Kuhistoni Mastchoh) face a wide range of gender differences in various areas. In these areas, there is no clear

- UNDP should follow up on conclusions and data collected during Health Caravan. Legal assistance and GBV are related to two other UNDP projects: 1) the Rule of Law and Access to Justice Program (RoL and A2J) and 2) the Spotlight Initiative, which supports the Gender based Violence (GBV) Programme, and for which the UN Resident Coordinator and the Head of UN Recipient Organizations, in Tajikistan (UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF) are jointly accountable. RoL can/could continue to provide a woman lawyer to visit villages and to whom women can speak in person. UNDP field project office in Ayni can provide transportation and drivers and the Spotlight Initiative can support other professionals working on GBV, who would join the lawyer in the field visits. The range of topics can include basic women's human rights, potential legal issues that women face because their husbands are in labour migration, divorce issues resulting from migration, marriage, abandonment and rights, registration of marriages, alimony disputes, property rights, etc. Create leaflets that there is AIDS Centre in Ayni with all relevant contacts and professionals could carry on future Health Caravans and distribute them widely.
- Further support and coaching for local and district authorities to enable them develop effective programs (e.g. on employment of women and youth and employment and referrals of labour migrants), able to apply gender-responsive budgeting and develop realistic financial plans, and mobilize various resources that would enlarge impact.
- Improve local infrastructure and assets and adapt them to women's needs beyond the scope of Output 2 (e.g. support opening kindergartens in both districts, use purchased medical cars with modern equipment to reach women in far out villages to provide at least annual medical check-ups, creating meeting facilities where women feel safe to come and meet¹³, etc.)

Recommendations for Micro Level

- All women participating in focus groups noted the need for qualified advice from a gynecologist and psychologist. The remoteness and poor conditions of medical institutions, the lack of modern medical equipment was noted by almost all respondents.
- Given that changing the attitude and behavior of people requires a great amount of time, it is necessary to propose long-term implementation periods in projects and programs and provide for the systematic nature of the actions taken. In order to enlarge impact of the project outcomes, consider developing program in these two districts, thus create project that would last long enough to create impact and change. Some of the examples where investment and support lasted longer are the following:
 - Cooperative enterprise Agroris: Dried fruit technology has been improved, and the variety of product expanded from plums and apples to pears in order to add value and support fruit growers in Serbia.
<https://www.agroiris.org/en/>

gender regional statistics, which in turn complicates the possibility of presenting a real picture of the gender situation. In other parts of TJ for example, on the IOGI website of the city of Khujand, in the "Structures" section, in the subsections Education and Health in all sectors, the gender figures are also reflected in the statistics."
<https://www.khujand.tj/>

¹³ During the consultant assessment focus group participants from Kuhistoni Mastchoh noted that in the villages of Obburdon and Khudjif it is often difficult for women to even go out, not to mention work or training. These same stereotypes become the reason that few women leave for labour migration.

- State led ABAD program Azerbaijan
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ABAD_\(statutory_corporation\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ABAD_(statutory_corporation))
 Provides business planning, equipment, marketing, training courses, branding and design, financial accounting and legal assistance services "ABAD" manages certification of products arranges sales and logistics of products. In-store boutiques. It is an investment intensive and public driven strategy, with full elements of state led aggregation of small-scale businesses.
- Organize gender awareness training for AEC teaching staff in Ayni, so that when vocational courses are created, they move away from gender stereotypes. Seen in cases when women are offered "female" occupations (for example, only a sewing and a pastry chef), and men only "male occupations" (electrician or gas electric welder).
- Having in mind that AEC received IT equipment from UNDP, various computer training courses, up-scaled from basic one, could be offered to young people.
- Organize self-reliant women's support groups on socio-economic and health issues (supported by POs in Ayni and Women's Commission and Youth Commission, and organized in clusters of the same professional interest like handicrafts, honeybee production, drying fruits, thus having regional/district/province impact).
- Income-generating activities facilitated through access to credit, skills training, technology transfer, technical support and promotion of market linkages, catering not to individual women, but to organised groups, which would manage selection and distribution of tasks themselves. There are two production groups, organized by two consortiums, one led by the Aga Khan Foundation and the second by Welthungerhilfe. It should be noted that the consortiums supported start-up and development of more than 40 production groups (growing potatoes and dried fruits), among which 2 women's groups successfully operate, one in Kuhistoni Mastchohh (20 women) and one in Ayni district (18 women). These women production groups in both districts can be used as a resource in coaching, mentoring and supporting other rural women in start-up (rural) businesses.
- Enlarge outreach and share information what different groups of project beneficiaries are involved with. Namely everybody should learn about micro-loans and possibilities to apply for it; workshops that are equipped and employed women and supported business plans.
- The Programme for people living with disabilities should be systematic and not individual. It should be explored what kind of workshops will be adequate. These could be: recycling workshop, greenhouse, etc. It is recommended to make sure that such priorities are properly reflected in DDPs.

7. Bibliography

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8. Annexes

8.1 Terms of Reference



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Country:	Tajikistan
Description of Assignment:	International and National Consultants for conduction of Final evaluation of the UNDP Project “Promotion of social and economic opportunities for women and youth in Zerafshan Valley of Tajikistan”.
Period of assignment/services:	20 working days within October - December 2019 (13 working days for home/desk work and 7 working days of in-country mission (3 days in Dushanbe and 4 days in the target districts))
Duty station:	Dushanbe, Tajikistan
Type of Contract:	Individual Consultant (IC)

BACKGROUND:

In July 2017, UNDP has started implementation of 2,5-year project “Promotion of social and economic opportunities for women and youth in Zerafshan Valley of Tajikistan” funded through the UNDP-Russia Trust Fund for Development. The project aims to promote socio-economic opportunities for women and youth in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts of Sugd region of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The “Promotion of social and economic opportunities for women and youth in Zerafshan Valley of Tajikistan” project is implemented by UNDP in the Republic of Tajikistan within the period of July 2017 – December 2019. The overall objective of the project is to address socio-economic issues, through increased income and job opportunities, enhanced access to education, healthcare, social services and reinforced capacities to effectively address migration issues, which in turn contributes to improvement of livelihood of population, according to priorities at national and local levels. The “Promotion of social and economic opportunities for women and youth in Zerafshan Valley of Tajikistan” envisages to address economic and social disparities of the most vulnerable population in two districts of Zerafshan Valley (Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh) through demonstration and promotion of efficient integrated local development solutions to improve livelihoods and social opportunities for women and youth through strengthened business skills and vocational education, better access to education and health services, and effective addressing of labour migration issues including mitigation of its social consequences. It assists local communities, women and youth especially, with economic empowerment, improving quality of social services and support for creation of jobs at local level. The project helps to improve the efficiency of producers and processor of agricultural goods and will help to increase employment and development of business practice in target districts, taking into consideration their social and economic needs. The focus is given also to the issues related to enabling business environment for women and youth by conducting tailored business trainings, financial literacy courses, institutional capacity-building of knowledge organizations (VTLs, Adult Education Centres), and businesses on local economic development. Development of entrepreneurship and investment promotion are relevant to rural areas of Tajikistan.

The main long-term outcome (impact) of the project is livelihood improvement of rural population in target districts of the Republic of Tajikistan. To achieve this result, in the medium term (Project outcome), project will directly contribute to increasing employment and business development in view of their existing needs and economic capacity. Indirectly, the project will help to reduce social and economic vulnerabilities of target communities, especially of women and youth, and the flow of unskilled labour migrants from Tajikistan to other CIS countries, including the Russian Federation.

The above goal achieved through following Outputs:

1. *Increased income and job opportunities for rural women and youth through business skills development, vocational trainings and access to finance.*

Under this component the Project creates an enabling environment for business development skills for women and youth through conducting tailored training courses based on actual needs, provision of technical assistance to knowledge institutions such as Vocational Training Lyceum, Adult Education Centre, provision of micro-capital grants for women and youth-headed small and medium-size businesses and to enable supportive environment and local income generating initiatives resulting in creation of decent jobs for local women and youth.

2. *Improved access to social services for rural women and youth through enhanced capacities of local health and education facilities and increased community engagement for promotion of healthy lifestyles and education for all.*

Under this component the Project supports improved access to social services for local communities through construction and or rehabilitation of secondary schools including strengthening energy efficiency and safety conditions of rural schools, through supply of energy efficient technologies (e.g. windows), improvement of heating, water supply and sanitation systems and installation of solar panels. Improvement of access to healthcare

facilities through construction and or rehabilitation of medical houses in remote and rural areas, provision of technical assistance, and procurement of ambulance vehicles.

3. *Improved awareness of rural women and youth on employment issues.*

Under this component the Project aims to strengthen partnership with local public organizations and community groups to discuss, plan and implement activities aimed at addressing challenges and social consequences of unorganized and low-qualified migration in target districts. Conducting of awareness raising campaigns among rural women, migrants' wives and young people, schoolchildren attending 09-11 grades on various social issues, including an unorganized migration and its social consequences, advanced diagnosis of HIV/AIDS and other infectious, sexually transmitted diseases. Provision of legal aid through conducting of mobile consultations for women and youth in rural and remote areas on negative consequences of labour migration resulting in divorce, discrimination, domestic violence, abandonment, non-registration of marriages and divorces, settlement of alimony disputes, etc.

These three components altogether contribute to promote social and economic opportunities for people living in rural and remote areas.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The International Consultant is required to work in close consultation with and under the guidance of the UNDP Senior Economic Development Officer based at the UNDP Tajikistan and project staff of Field Project Office in Ayni district. The purpose of this assignment is to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

Main objectives of the Final Project Evaluation include:

- To assess whether the project achieved or did not achieve outcomes and outputs stipulated in the Project Document and Results Framework;
- Identify factors that have contributed to achieving or not achieving project results;
- Analyse the effectiveness of the existing partnerships established/maintained with the Government, civil society, UN Agencies, donors and other key stakeholders. Identify lessons learnt, effectiveness of project partnerships, and provide recommendations as necessary
- Assesses to what extent the project has addressed gender considerations and promoted gender equality throughout its implementation.

In particular, the following key evaluation questions should be answered according to the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria:

Relevance

- Assess to what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDAF and SDGs?
- Assess to what extent the project's overall interventions address the needs and demands of the beneficiaries in gender disaggregated manner (i.e. for men and women, girls and boys).

- Assess the relevance and effect of technical assistance of project given to all the beneficiaries.

Effectiveness

- Review and analyse the achievement of Projects' results against set targets. Were the projects objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible?
- Assess the performance of the Project with particular reference to qualitative and quantitative achievements of outputs and targets as defined in the Project documents and work-plans and with reference to the Project baseline.
- Assess the areas in which the project has the fewest and the greatest achievements?
- Analyse the underlying factors within and beyond implementing agency's (UNDP) control that affect the Project (including analysis of the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats affecting the achievement of the Project).
- Assess the extent to which the project partners been involved in project implementation? What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the outcome, and how effective have UNDP partnerships been in contributing to achieving the outcome?
- Assess to what extent capacities of local and regional authorities and service providers have been enhanced.
- Assess to what extent the Project contributed to economic empowerment of the target group, especially vulnerable women, young people, migrant families, etc.

Efficiency

- Assess whether the Project has utilized Project funding as per the agreed work plan to achieve the projected targets.
- Analyse the role of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and whether this forum has been optimally used for decision making.
- Assess the timeline and quality of the reporting followed by the Project.
- Analyse the performance of the M&E mechanism of the Project and the use of various M&E tools (any socio-economic data available to the project etc.).
- Assess the qualitative and quantitative aspects of management and other inputs (such as equipment, monitoring and review and other technical assistance and budgetary inputs) provided by the project vis-à-vis achievement of outputs and targets.
- Identify factors and constraints, which have affected Project implementation including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic policy issues in addition to other external factors unforeseen during the Project design.

Sustainability and Impact

- Assess preliminary indications of the degree to which the Project results are likely to be sustainable beyond the Project's lifetime (both at the community and government level) and provide recommendations for strengthening sustainability.
- Assess the sustainability of the Project interventions in terms of their effect on environment.
- Analyse the emerging impact on the communities for both men and women in terms of food security, income and asset enhancement.

Network /Linkages

- Evaluate the level, degree and representation by the beneficiaries and stakeholders, (government and donor partners etc.) in the implementation of the Project (with particular attention to the development, testing of community-based approaches towards

assets creation and income diversification, especially for poor, youth and women and accessing technical assistance inputs outside the project).

- Assess the Project's knowledge management strategy and outreach and communications to all stakeholders.

Lessons learnt/ Conclusions

- Analyse areas for improved programme planning, especially with respect to setting targets, relevance and capacity of institutions for project decision making and delivery.
- Identify significant lessons or conclusions which can be drawn from the Project in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and networking. Special attention may be given to the security situation and the coping strategies developed by the project to maintain work momentum.

METHODOLOGY AND THE SUGGESTED EVALUATION APPROACH

The evaluation will be based on the methodology described below, which will be further discussed with the key Project partners and validated by the UNDP. The proposed methodology employs results-oriented approach and integrates cross-cutting issues (human rights, gender equality, environment etc.) into the evaluation.

The key elements of the methodology to be used by the evaluation team will consist (but not limited to) of the following:

- Documentation review (desk study);
- Interviews with key partners and stakeholders;
- Focus groups;
- Field visits;
- Questionnaires;
- Participatory techniques, SWOT analysis and other approaches for gathering and analysis of data.

Documents to be reviewed

Some of the background documents to be reviewed as part of the outcome evaluation are as follows¹⁴:

- Country Programme Document (CPD) 2016-2020;
- United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2016-2021);
- Project Document "Promotion of social and economic opportunities for women and youth in Zerafshan Valley of Tajikistan;
- Annual Progress Reports for the 1st and 2nd years Project implementation (and semi-annual report for the 3rd year);
- Monitoring and Evaluation tools (Quarterly Progress reports, minutes of the Project Steering Committee meetings etc.).
- Other contextual materials on women economic empowerment;
- Publications and social networking resources

¹⁴ Final list of references and sources for desk review will be agreed and stipulated in inception report.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES

The consultant is expected to provide the following key deliverables within the period of his/her assignment:

- evaluation inception report including a workplan and evaluation schedule;
- draft evaluation report for comment;
- audit trail detailing how comments, questions and clarifications have been addressed (optional);
- final report (addressing comments, questions and clarifications); and
- presentations and other knowledge products.

It is expected that draft report will be submitted to the UNDP in two working weeks after the in-country mission, and the final report with all comments and recommendations incorporated submitted to UNDP for final endorsement not later that in two working weeks after receipt of consolidated formal feedback with comments to a draft from the UNDP (in the form of audit trail if required).

The draft Report and Final Reports: The Report should be logically structured, contain evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and reasonable number of recommendations, and should be free of information that is not relevant to the overall analysis. The Report should respond in detail to the key focus areas described above.

Presentation: For presenting and discussing the draft final report interactively, the consultants will facilitate a concluding workshop for the Project stakeholders.

This is the expected timeframe for the above deliverables:

ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME-FRAME (tentative)
The Project evaluation is expected to be implemented in the period from October-December 2019		
a. Desk review of the contextual and project-related documentation	International Consultant	by 10 November 2019
b. Submission of the Inception report including a workplan, evaluation schedule and tentative mission agenda		
c. 7-day in-country mission and presentation of findings at the end of the mission	International and National Consultants	by 30 November 2019
d. First draft of the Project Evaluation report submitted within 2 weeks after the mission.	International and National Consultants	by 15 December 2019
e. Final Project Evaluation report with the strategic and feasible recommendations in a form and substance satisfactory to UNDP, submitted within 2 weeks after the receipt of final comments from UNDP	International and National Consultant	By 30 December 2019

The exact delivery and sequence of the products will be determined in discussion with the Senior Economic Development Officer of UNDP, Communities Programme.

EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

The Evaluation team will be comprised of the International Consultant (team leader) and independent National Consultant to support the mission of the International Consultant.

REQUIREMENTS FOR EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Corporate Competencies

- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards;
- Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
- Treats all people fairly without favouritism;
- Fulfils all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment.

Functional Competencies

- Maintains and establishes network of contacts with national counterparts and development partners for information sharing and responding to capacity development request;
- Analyses and selects materials for strengthening strategic alliances with partners and stakeholders;
- Technical expertise in area-based development process;
- Demonstrates good knowledge of Integrated Rural Development strategies, and good understanding on Local Development issues;
- Relevant international experience and cross-cultural communication skills;
- Proven interpersonal skills;
- Attitude and ability to motivate people;
- Flexibility and resourcefulness;
- Computer skills (common software programmes).

Education

- Advanced university degree (at Master level or equivalent) in social sciences, economic development, management, sustainable development or related field is required.

Professional experience

- More than 10 years of professional experience in poverty reduction, economic development, good governance, public administration, local development issues, pro-poor economic development, private sector in development;
- Experience and expertise in project design, management, monitoring and evaluation, policy analysis;
- Knowledge of UN procedures and evaluation strategies will be additional asset;
- Good report writing skills, proven by evidence;
- Ability to make recommendations focused on results and impact;

- Familiarity with the political, economic, social and gender situation in Central Asia (preferably Tajikistan)

Knowledge of languages:

- Fluency in English, knowledge of Russian is an asset.

PAYMENT

Payments will be done upon completion of the deliverables/outputs and as per below percentages:

- Deliverable 1 [Inception Report]: 20% of total contract amount.
- Deliverable 2 [Country mission and presentation of findings]: 40% of total contract amount.
- Deliverable 3 [Comprehensive Evaluation Report]: 40% of total contract amount.

In the event of unforeseeable travel not anticipated in this TOR, payment of travel costs including tickets, lodging and terminal expenses should be agreed upon, between the respective business unit and the Individual Consultant, prior to travel and will be reimbursed.

8.2 Annex 2: List of Interviewees

#	Name	Organization	Reposition
INTEERVIEWS			
1.	Firuz Saidkhadzhaev, Zarina Juraeva, Takhmina Rozikova	UNDP Country Office Community Programme	Senior Economic Development Officer, M&E Officer, Communications and Partnership Officer
2.	Rajabov Jahongir	Business School Fifty Five Group	Executive Director
3.	Kiril Khandogin	Donor Representative Embassy of the Russian Federation in Dushanbe	Second Secretary
4.	Alisher Faromuzov, Rushanov Rajabali, Safarzoda Jahongir	Vocational Training Institute Department	Head of the VTI Department, Head of Department of Primary Technical Education and Adult Education, Head of Adult Education Centre
5.	Daler Nazarov	UNDP Field Project Office in Ayni District	Area Manager
6.	Jumaev Jumaboi	VTL Ayni	Instructor
7.	Shodikul Bobojonov	Ayni District Government	Head of Economic and trade Department of Ayni District Government
8.	Munira Akilova	Zerafshan Tourism Association	Handicraft Manager
9.	Kahramon Gulov	Micro Credit Fund “Rushdi Vodii Zarafshon”	Manager of the branch in Ayni
10.	Husein Sultonov	Public Organization Zarafshon	Head of PO Zarafshon, Ayni
11.	Shokirov Kamol	Production Cooperative “Tojikiston”	Head of the Production Cooperative “Tojikiston” in Shamtuch village in Ayni
12.	Jahonsher Saidov	Kuhistoni Mastchoh District Government	Head of Economic and trade Department of Kuhistoni Mastchoh District
13.	Gufronjon Usmonov	Dairy processing and production workshop	Technologist that runs operation in Dairy workshop in Langar village in Kuhistoni Mastchoh
14.	Munira Hasanova	Dar- Dar adras and atlas workshop	Workshop leader and coach in Dar Dar in Ayni
15.	Nozirjon Solijonov	UNDP Field Project Office in Ayni District	Former LED Specialist
16.	Iroda Bobojonova	UNDP Field Project Office in Ayni District	Consultant for Women and youth employment
17.	Qurbon Nazarov	UNDP Field Project Office in Ayni District	Legal consultant that worked on migration issues
18.	Ravshan Kurbanov	55 Group Business	CEO
FOCUS GROUPS DISCUSSIONS			
1.	VTL Dormitory tenants		5 girls that live in VTL Dormitory in Ayni
2.	Handicrafts production and homestay for tourists		5 Women beneficiary in Madm village,

		Ayni
3.	Honey and other related products production	6 Women-recipients of honey-bee families in Shamtuch village in Ayni
4.	Drying fruits (apricots and apples) and production of different preserves	3 women that work in Drying Fruit processing and packaging workshop in Shamtuch village in Ayni
5.	Refrigerated storage facility for fruits and vegetables	13 people (3 women and 10 men) that built or will use Refrigerated storage facility for fruits and vegetables in Shamtuch village in Ayni
6.	Business trainings and start-ups	2 women that went through business trainings and received grants for start-ups from UNDP in Kuhistoni Mastchoh
7.	Dairy processing and production workshop	4 women that work in the Dairy workshop in Langar village in Kuhistoni Mastchoh
8.	Micro credit loans borrowers	4 men that took micro credits from MCF in Langar village, Kuhistoni Mastchoh
9.	Business trainings and start-ups	2 women that went through business trainings and received grants for start-ups from UNDP in Ayni
10.	Mahala Committee Varz that established bakery in Ayni	4 women that work in bakery in Ayni
VISITS/OBSERVATIONS		
1.	Dormitory in Ayni	
2.	Handicraft workshop and home stay in Madm village in Ayni District	
3.	Medical House in Tomin village of Ayni District	
4.	Drying Fruit processing and packaging workshop in Shamtuch in Ayni	
5.	Refrigerated storage facility for fruits and vegetables in Shamtuch in Ayni	
6.	Rogh village rural district hospital in Kuhistoni Mastchoh	
7.	Dairy processing and production workshop in Langar village in Kuhistoni Mastchoh	
8.	Dar- Dar adras and atlas workshop in Ayni	
9.	Bakery in Ayni	

8.3 Annex 3: Key Informant Interview Guide (staff/donor/public servants)

Location	
Date:	
Name and title:	

Introduction

Welcome and Facilitator Introduction

Good morning/afternoon and welcome to our discussion. Thanks for taking the time to join us to talk about your experience with the Project. My name is Natasha and I am from ..., my colleague Jovid and we are independent consultants.

Background

As you probably know about the UNDP project that aims to promote socio-economic opportunities for women and youth in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts, which is supported by Russian Federation.

Now, it is time to assess the results of the project and our mission is to support UNDP in conducting the final evaluation. The purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the performance and success of the project. It should look at signs of potential impact of project activities on beneficiaries and the sustainability of results, as well as providing solid, evidence-based conclusions on whether the project's overall objectives were achieved.

Your opinion is very important, so please provide your honest view. Our conversation will be kept confidential and in the report we will not use individual names to make references.

If you have any question, feel free to ask and we can start...

Introductory questions

1. For how long do you cooperate with UNDP? What were those project/activities?
2. What is your agency role in this project?

Key Questions

1. Can you please describe the key interventions supported by the Project?
 - How they related to the sectoral/national plans/strategies?
2. What do you think about the consistency of the project interventions with the needs of women and youth in your sector/district/Jamoat?
3. (for Head of Districts only) How this project contributes to District Development Plan of your district? Can you give some examples?

4. If you received any technical support? What do you think about it? To what extent it was consistent with your needs?
5. In your opinion, what are the main achievements of the project? Why do you think so?
6. In your opinion, what were the main challenges during the implementation of the project? Is there something that was planned and not implemented in the project?
7. What are the factors that affected the project performance, if any?
8. (For Steering Committee members) How would you describe your participation in the project planning, implementation, monitoring, advising?
9. What do you think about the management of the project overall?
10. How the project outcomes for target populations (women, young people) can be maximized?
11. How the outcomes can be sustained? Which outcomes would remain after one – two years, which may not? Why?
12. Any other comment? Please add anything that you think is important and we have not asked you.

Thank you very much for your time and input.

End of Interview

8.4 Annex 4: Focus Group Discussion Guide (for direct beneficiaries)

Location	
Date of the FGD:	
Total number of participants	

Introduction

Welcome and Facilitator Introduction

Good morning/afternoon and welcome to our discussion. Thanks for taking the time to join us to talk about your experience with the Project. My name is Natasha and I am from ..., my colleague Jovid and we are independent consultants.

Background

As you probably know about the UNDP project that aims to promote socio-economic opportunities for women and youth in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts, which is supported by Russian Federation.

Now, it is time to assess the results of the project and our mission is to support UNDP in conducting the final evaluation. The purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the performance and success of the project. It should look at signs of potential impact of project activities on beneficiaries and the sustainability of results, as well as providing solid, evidence-based conclusions on whether the project's overall objectives were achieved.

Your opinion is very important, so please provide your honest view. Our conversation will be kept confidential and in the report we will not make any references to individual names.

How Today's Focus Group will Work

No "Right" or "Wrong" Answers and Participation

We will be asking you several questions and we want you to know that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers, and it's okay to have a different opinion from other people in the group. It's really important for us to hear all the different points of view in the room. We want you to share your point of view, even if it is different from what others are saying, and we want you all to respect each others' opinions.

We are also going to ask all of you to keep what is said here confidential, so that everybody feels comfortable talking and knows what they say here will not be repeated. Participation is voluntary and you do not have to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

If you have any question, feel free to ask and we can start...

Introductory questions

0.1. We want to learn more about the life experiences of women in your communities, who can describe a regular day from the lives of women in your community?

- What about lives of young girls? What you tell them, what are the messages that young girls get from the community and family?

0.2. Tell me about your life, what did you do before you joined UNDP Project?

Key Questions

1. What specific changes happened in your life after you joined/started this work?
2. What do you think about trainings/support provided to you and other women in the frame of the UNDP (or name of the organization directly worked with this group) project? Were provided support trainings sufficient?
 - 2.1. What you could not do or didn't know before the trainings or support provided? Do women only or men experience these issues too in your village?
3. What do you usually do with the income you have from this activity? / After the trainings, which skills and knowledge do you find most useful in your life? Can you give examples?
4. Comparing the salaries or income of women that you know in your village/district, how your income or salaries are different or similar to them?
5. What are your plans for the future? Do you think you will be busy with the same work/business? How it will look like after one year? After five years?
6. What were the main difficulties when you started this work/business/ during the training?
 - What are the key challenges today? How are you going to address them?
7. What can be done to make such programmes more beneficial for other women?
8. What kind of support you may need in the future to expand your business/increase your income/ apply skills?

Please add anything that you think is important and we have not asked you.

Thank you very much for your participation.

End of FGDs

8.5 Annex 5 Comparison Table of the Key Socio-economic Indicators for Ayni, Kuhistoni Mastchoh and Panjakent

#	Area	Aini		Kuhistoni Mastchoh		Panjakent	
		Estimation	%	Estimation	%	Estimation	%
1	Agriculture	23 367 400	11%	26 083 100	15%	21 718 700	12%
2	SME and Industry	11 845 000	6%	5 395 000	3%	74 808 700	41%
	Sub-total Economic sector	35 212 400	17%	31 478 100	18%	96 527 400	53%
3	Education	89 770 000	43%	5 699 800	3%	30 595 800	17%
4	Health and Social Protection	8 320 000	4%	39 982 000	23%	11 853 000	6%
6	Culture, sport and Toursim	15 415 000	7%	7 900 000	4%	3 349 000	2%
	Sub-total Social sector	113 505 000	54%	53 581 800	30%	45 797 800	25%
7	Water supply	3 000 000	1%	2 698 400	2%	5 313 000	3%
8	Communal services	8 615 000	4%	0	0%	4 210 000	2%
9	Electricity supply	9 374 000	4%	59 542 500	34%	11 680 000	6%
10	Transport, roads and comm.	33 540 000	16%	11 620 000	7%	4 982 000	3%
	Sub-total Infrastructure	54 529 000	26%	73 860 900	42%	26 185 000	14%
11	Ecology and Emergencies	5 945 000	3%	1 800 000	1%	14 095 000	8%
12	Reserved funds	1 790 000	1%	16 775 000	9%	93 000	0%
13	Total budget for DDP	210 981 400	100%	177 495 800	100%	182 698 200	100%
14	Funding gap (%)	52 078 000	25%	37 113 000	21%	31 473 300	17%

8.6 Annex 6 Table of Project Activities

Output 1

Increased income and job opportunities for rural women and youth through business skills development, vocational trainings and access to finance.

Under this component the Project creates an enabling environment for business development skills for women and youth through conducting tailored training courses based on actual needs, provision of technical assistance to knowledge institutions such as Vocational Training Lyceum, Adult Education Centre, provision of grants for opening workshops, provision of equipment to establish workshops together with Jamoats in the communities, supporting selected women and youth-headed business plans that are leading to self-employment, and enabling supportive environment and local income generating initiatives resulting in creation of employment for local women and youth.

Activities

Type of activity	Year of Report	Reporting year/Description/Results	Comments
Assessments	2017	Needs assessment among target groups of two districts on business development conducted to design educational modules for conducting start-up trainings and comprehensive trainings with considering specific needs of women and youth in target areas. Development of educational modules started and to be finished in January 2018.	Relevant to output
	2017	Assessment of the local businesses and opportunities for doing business in the target districts are accomplished and possible perspective areas to be covered by micro-capital 4 grants are identified. As a result ToR for micro-capital grants to be designed and announced in the first quarter of 2018	Relevant to output
	2017	A number of rapid assessments implemented on: 1) vocational education focused on demanded professional skills 2) availability and accessibility of vocational trainings, 3) existing resource base of vocational institutions and 4) service providers in Ayni district.	Relevant to output
	2018	A number of rapid assessments implemented on: (i) vocational education focused on professional skills on demand, (ii) availability and accessibility of vocational trainings, (iii) existing resource base of vocational institutions and (iv) service providers in Ayni district (Annex 10.6).	Relevant to output, the same as in 2017
	2018	An analytical review about opportunities and limitations of participation of women and youth in social and economic activities has been conducted detailing constraints and opportunities for engaging women and	Relevant to output. The analytical review was

		youth into social and economic activities (Annex 10.7). On 30 October 2018, the findings of the review were discussed with the representatives of various sectors of local governments, private sector, and academia during a dedicated round-table. The participants of the round table have acknowledged existence of artificial and non-artificial barriers, constrains and available opportunities for engagement of women and youth into social and economic activities. Recommendations were made to the representatives of local departments of Women and Family Affairs, and the Youth Committee to take into account the findings of the analytical review to embed the proposed solutions into their future annual work plans and programs.	conducted by the consultant who implemented activities related to women and youth employment in 2018/2019.
	2018	Assessment of the local businesses and opportunities for doing business in the target districts have been completed and potential areas to be covered by micro-capital grants identified. As a result, the terms of reference (ToR) for micro-capital grants were designed with a following announcement of two rounds of Calls for Proposals.	Relevant to output
Trainings	2017/18	Start up business trainings for 210 young people (<i>including 79 women</i>) of the Kuhistoni Mastchoh and Ayni districts by Association Synergy.	Relevant to output. Women to men ratio could be improved which happened in the next cycle 2018/2019.
	2018	From 16 to 20 October 2018, ten instructors/teachers from VTL of Ayni district and Centres for Adults Education of the Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts respectively have undergone through "Start and Improve Your Business" training of trainers (ToT) using ILO methodology. Trained instructors/teachers will further train students as per educational curriculums in the VTL of Ayni district as well as Centres for Adults Education of the Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts respectively. Trainings were conducted by certified teachers of the Centre for Adults Education of Tajikistan.	Relevant to output. Gender ratio and data about participant evaluation are missing.
	2018	The agreement among Russian Venture Company and Technological University of Tajikistan to introduce educational course on "Technological and Innovation Entrepreneurship" was signed. Educational course is developed by Russian Venture Company in cooperation with ITMO University and Moscow State University. New educational course on "Technological and Innovation Entrepreneurship" has been introduced to educational process of several specializations in Technological University of Tajikistan starting from September 2018. During this process UNDP was a facilitator for introducing educational course in Tajik institution. During 28-31 May 2018, UNDP facilitated participation of one professor of the Technological University of Tajikistan in the ToT organized in Moscow for 40 trainers from Russian institutions and Russian Venture Company agreed to host participation of Tajik university in this event (Annex 10.8).	Relevant to output.
	2019	4-day comprehensive training business planning for 30 women and youth from Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts. 12 participants were women. The purpose of the training was to familiarize the participants with the definition and expansion of the business idea, how to run the business, setting goals, a business strategy, and drawing up a business plan for its further preparation according to the chosen business idea. The participants learned how to attract investments to their business plan. As a result of the training, participants proposed 16 business plans that were evaluated by the invited evaluation committee and trainers.	Relevant to output, no data about participant evaluation.
	2019	3-day training on financial literacy for 20 young people and women. Participants were 16 people who	Relevant to output.

		developed business plans and 4 other people. The purpose of the training was to increase the financial literacy of participants on operational management, financial management, marketing strategy, taxation of business activities, using loans and interest calculations, using new agro-technologies and increasing agricultural productivity.	
Grants/Loans	2018	Public Organization “Zarafshon” received a grant to purchase and distribute 85 honey-bee hives among 17 women-headed households (5 hives each) to implement a project “Involving women into beekeeping and establishment of Women Initiative Group in Shamtuch Jamoat of Ayni district”. Both theoretical and hands-on trainings were conducted by PO “Zarafshon” experts for beneficiaries. During harvesting season, each beneficiary family received between 70 and 100 kilograms of pure honey.	Relevant to output
	2018	“Varz” Mahalla Committee received grant to establish a bakery workshop and currently employs 5 people including 4 women, who are engaged in baking, cooking and production of culinary goods	Relevant to output, status of employment is unclear, meaning do they receive just regular salary or their social benefits are also covered
	2019	A public organization “Zarafshon Tourism Development Association” was selected by UNDP to implement a grant on development of tourism in remote and mountainous village Madm of Ayni district. The project activities are underway and include: building capacities of private homestay owners, diversification of products and services offered to foreign and domestic tourists, trainings in management of homestays, hotels and hostels, development of new handicraft products adapted for tourists’ demands, such as handbags, hand-made carpets and souvenirs. It is expected that the implementation of the sub-project will result in the establishment of one homestay which is equipped with basic amenities and comfortable to receive guests/tourists. In addition to accommodation the homestay guesthouse will offer visitors different services, including trekking, guide service, and hands-on master classes in making various souvenirs, carpets and handbags. The homestay guesthouse will provide fixed jobs for 3 women, and six more women will be permanently engaged in production of carpets and local souvenir products. Although the UNDP project duration is limited till the end of December 2019, the homestay guesthouse will continue to expand its functions beyond the mentioned period and, among others, will serve as a training base for other local tourism service providers.	Relevant to output
	2019	For economic empowerment of women and youth the project is providing technical and small financial support to local small and medium enterprises geared towards using local resources and raw materials in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts. Through the Call for Proposals UNDP selected and provided a grant to Micro-Credit Fund (MCF) “Rushdi Vodii Zarafshon”. As of late December 2018 through January 2019 the MCF “Rushdi Vodii Zarafshon” has issued 31 small loans for local entrepreneurs (13 for women and 18 for men) with 12% as annual interest rate. The loans are preferential and depending on the nature of recipient’s business, they carry a grace period of up to 9 months which helps farmers to use the total credit amount during a substantial period and gain maximum benefit. These type of loans have been welcomed by farmers and business-persons alike as they help the recipients to immediately jump-start and/or boost their businesses.	Relevant to output; interest rate is still high, nevertheless it is much more favourable than other micro-credit loans of MCF.
	2019	9 people (7 in Ayni and 2 people from Kuhistoni Mastchoh), 5 of them are young women, among the participants of the Business Planning training who submitted the best business plans and received a positive	Relevant to output.

		assessment were awarded grants i.e. technical support from UNDP for opening a startup businesses.	
Rehabilitations, agricultural machinery procurement, workshops building	2017	Rehabilitation of Dormitory Building of Lyceum # 53 in Zarafshan Settlement of the Ayni district was selected for implementation and tender announced. Rehabilitation works to be finished in 2018.	Relevant to output
	2018	Works on rehabilitation of dormitory building of Lyceum # 53 in Zarafshan Settlement of the Ayni district have been completed. Also, necessary equipment and furniture for rehabilitated dormitory has been procured and delivered. In 2017, 239 students (including 76 girls) attended VTL. Currently, there are 250 students studying in the VTL (including 87 girls). It's worth to mention that the dormitory of the VTL has 40 beds of which 20 are occupied. It is expected that the number of bed-occupants will increase in the dormitory with the offer of the next round of courses in 2019.	Relevant to output
	2018	Procurement and delivery of agricultural machinery and equipment for farmers of Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts was identified as priority. A contract agreement was signed with a contractor on 28 November 2018 and the procurement process has started. The expected economic outcomes from the project through provision of agriculture machinery and equipment is to improve food security by way of efficient and timely use of existing irrigation land, creation of new jobs and engaging farmers and youth into agricultural sector. The machinery will be effectively used by various collective dehkan farms of both Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh district for cultivation of about 150 ha of lands (Annex 10.9).	Relevant to output. Gender/youth data is not segregated.
	2018	Fruit-drying and packaging workshop in Veshab village of Ayni district has been identified as one of the priority for the improvement of economic opportunities of local women indicated in the District Development Programme of Ayni district (Annex 10.10). It is expected that construction of a workshop for fruit-drying and establishment of a mini workshop for processing and packaging will significantly improve the quality of products of the local farmer. This economic initiative will be implemented in partnership with a local Public Organization "Zarafshon" which will receive materials for construction of a workshop for fruit-drying, and equipment for the establishment of a mini workshop for packing of products. It is expected that the contractor will deliver construction materials and equipment before end of January 2019.	Relevant to output.
	2018	"Dar-Dar" community-based organization was supported with the establishment of a training workshop for weaving of adras and atlas – traditional, national fabric. At the time of the reporting 35 women received certificates following the completion of trainings on adras weaving. Currently, 20 of these women have set up their home-based enterprises. Eight have continued working in the workshop as apprentices to the trainer and receive wages and stipends based on their daily works.	Relevant to output. Their income is though contribution to the family budget.
	2019	Three Tractors MT3 82.1 with tractor-trailers, and one excavator based on chassis of MT3 82.1 were procured and delivered to target districts. The tractors are equipped with supplemental equipment such as plough, cultivator, potato planter and digging equipment. The new machineries have successfully undergone testing and were effectively used during land preparation and planting seasons by members of associations of dehkan farms in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts. The Project team will further monitor the results of this activity in terms of improved harvest output or livelihoods of ADF members.	Relevant to output, No gender/youth data. Did any younger men than 35 years receive tractor?
	2019	The project procured and delivered construction materials in late January 2019 for the local public	Relevant to output

		<p>organization “Zarafshon”, which constructed two separate drying rooms for drying of fruits, and a building of a mini-workshop for fruit packaging in Veshab village of Ayni district. Since June 2019 the members of the public organization have started using the drying facilities. By today, the list of products the women dry and package is limited to mulberry only. It will be expanded with apricots, peaches, berries and various herbs grown in their gardens later this summer.</p> <p>The women in Veshab village, and members of PO “Zarafshon” in particular, will begin fruit packaging later this summer and continue this activity until the onset of winter. During this season, at least 40 women using the mini workshop will significantly improve their livelihoods through the sale of better quality, properly dried and packaged fruits. Their products will have a substantially improved quality as a result of using proper drying and packaging equipment, giving them additional value and comparative advantage in the local and regional markets. It is estimated that during this season in 2019, at least 50,000 kg of various fruits will go through the drying facility resulting in 12,500 kg of dried and packaged fruits. UNDP will consider further advisory support to ensure proper quality of products and improved sales capacity of beneficiaries.</p>	
	2019	<p>In 2019 UNDP concluded three different contracts for delivery of equipment and materials for construction of a refrigerated storage facility for fruits and vegetables in Shamtuch village of Ayni district. The sub-project, upon completion, will enable local farmers to store their vegetables (mainly potato) and fruits (mainly apples) after harvesting, giving them an opportunity to sell their products for better gains at a later time (during winter months). This project is implemented jointly by local population who undertook construction works while receiving WFP assistance in the frame of WFP’s cash-for-asset assistance, and UNDP assistance in the form of construction materials and equipment. It is expected that the project works will finish by end of 2019.</p>	<p>Relevant to output, and during FGD it was not clear how many women and younger people are involved in this workshop.</p>
	2019	<p>Providing equipment for the dairy processing workshop in Langar village. This project was implemented with Kuhistoni Mastchoh jamoat. It employs 4 local women and one engineer technologist who leads the production.</p>	<p>Relevant to output</p>
	2019	<p>A list of equipment and inventories is being developed jointly with the representatives of Adult Education Centre (AEC) of Ayni district for building and strengthening of the technical and physical capacity of this state organization. It is expected that the UNDP support for the AEC will enable it to diversify its list of educational courses, and make them more market oriented. They will be provided in the form of equipment, visual materials, IT equipment, and inventories to be delivered by October 2019. The AEC focuses to strengthened its works in three directions: i) enhancing teaching and practical trainings on the carpentry (woodworking, carving etc.), ii) culinary (mainly gastronomic food), and iii) production of furniture (for businesses and small industries/offices).</p>	<p>Relevant to output, and it should be enlarged with suggestions of young people that are assessed during FGDs with the UNDP consultant.</p>
<p>Events (International Women’s Entrepreneurship Day and job fairs)</p>	2017	<p>Delegation from Tajikistan participated in the international expert workshop «Applying Innovative Approaches to Strengthening TVET Systems and Labour Markets Development» held at SKOLKOVO campus on 23-24 October, 2017. The workshop was organized under the Russia – ILO program «Applying the G20 Training Strategy» by Moscow School of Management SKOLKOVO. Introduction of the «Managing TVET Institution» computer simulator and the managerial competence assessment module was presented and project team will search opportunities to apply it to vocational training institutions in Tajikistan through Ministry of Labour,</p>	<p>Probably relevant to output, but it is hard to see connection with the evaluated project.</p>

		Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan.	
	2018	Job fairs were held jointly with the local governments of Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh where the alumni of vocational training institutions have been linked with potential employers. This has resulted in 27 young men from amongst the 60 participants, holding various professions, finding permanent employment with local private and state companies.	Relevant to output. No women employed.
	2019	On December 6 2019, together with the Office of Women and Family Affairs of the Sughd Region and the Women and Family Sectors of the Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh Regions, a regional conference “Woman and Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Opportunities” was organized and held with the participation of 50 women entrepreneurs and young girls, wanting to start a business. Conference participants got familiar with examples of successful business run by women, learned about existing opportunities and measures to support women's entrepreneurship in Tajikistan. During the training sessions, the conference participants under the mentorship of business trainers discussed topics 1) “Tax legislation. Registration of entrepreneurial business ”, 2) “Loans: Interest rates and much more”, 3) “Opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Tajikistan (grants and soft loans)”, 4)“ Financial planning: accounting for income and expenses ”.	Relevant to output
	2019	10 participants young women and men who submitted their business plans were trained to participate in STARTUP CHOIKHONA IX in the city of Penjikent. Two of them received laptops as rewards from the organizers of the competition.	Relevant to output
	2019	55 young people (29 young women) gained new knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship and business development through participation in the Forum “Creativity and Innovation in Business Promotion”. The purpose of the two days forum was: familiarizing young people and girls with the history of creating successful startup businesses, using innovations and IT solutions to improve the efficiency of entrepreneurial business, introducing new ways and a culture of creative thinking in business development. During the first day participants visited successful businesses in Khujand.	Relevant to output
	2019	In collaboration with local employment and migration services, job fair was organized in Ayni district where UNDP provided regular consultation and assistance. The job fair was attended by 23 government agencies and production workshops, which presented lists of 70 jobs in Ayni and the region. The fair resulted in 25 qualified people receiving job referrals 5 women found permanent employment.	Relevant to output. What are lessons learned? What else UNDP/job seekers can do differently so that more people find employment during job fairs?
General Comments		Most measures are in line with the Output 1. However, due to the length of the project results could be observed in the short i.e. start-up perspective. The question of sustainability of women-led economic activity should be addressed more because experiences in other countries shows that this kind of initiatives succeed only when they are supported for the longer period and with multiple projects. Moreover, the output calls for the creation of a “supportive environment”, and very few activities address that issue. Therefore, in the follow up phase this	

	should be addressed.
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Output 2: Improved access to social services for rural women and youth through enhanced capacities of local health and education facilities and increased community engagement for promotion of healthy lifestyles and education for all

Under this component the Project supports improved access to social services for local communities through construction and or rehabilitation of secondary schools including strengthening energy efficiency and safety conditions of rural schools, through supply of energy efficient technologies (e.g. windows), improvement of heating, water supply and sanitation systems and installation of solar panels. Improvement of access to healthcare facilities through construction and or rehabilitation of medical houses in remote and rural areas, provision of technical assistance, and procurement of ambulance vehicles.

Activities

Type of activity	Year of Report	Description/Results	Comments (if results are relevant to defined output)
Assessments	2017	Rapid assessment of local health facilities and identification of the needs for renovation, rehabilitation of access points and provision of new/repair of existing equipment was conducted by project team.	Relevant to output
	2018	Rapid assessment of local health facilities and schools, identification of the needs for renovation, rehabilitation of access points and provision of new/repair of existing equipment was conducted by project team (Annex 10.11).	Relevant to output
Construction, Rehabilitation, hardware procurement	2017	As a result of the conducted rapid assessment construction of a Medical House in Khudgifi Bolo Village, Langar Jamoat, Kuhistoni Mastchoh district was selected as priority project and tender announced. Population of Khudgifi Bolo, Langleaf, Sandjon, Turo villages consisting of 177 households or 958 people (of whom 473 are women) will benefit from the fully functioning medical house.	Relevant to output
	2018	As a result of the conducted rapid assessment, construction of a medical facility in Khudgifi Bolo village, Langar Jamoat of Kuhistoni Mastchoh district was identified as a priority project. Population of Khudgifi Bolo, Langleaf, Sandjon, Turo villages consists of 177 households or 958 people (including 473 women) will benefit from the fully functioning medical facility. Construction works finished in August 2018. As of the reporting period, constructed medical facility has carried out mandatory vaccination for 22 new born babies and at least 29 mothers and 35 children of various ages received medical treatment since August 2018.	Relevant to output

	2018	Construction of a rural hospital in Rogh village, Langar jamoat of Kuhistoni Mastchoh district was selected as priority project of the District Development Programme of Kuhistoni Mastchoh district and request of the district Administration. Project team jointly with local authorities developed the design and tender documents of the project and announced the tender bidding process during the summer of 2018. It is expected that as a result of the sub-project implementation more than 5,400 people (<i>including 2,754 women</i>) of 14 surrounding villages will have improved access to health care services. In accordance with the contract agreement the construction of the rural hospital will be completed by the end of May 2019.	Relevant to output
	2018	During the reporting period, contract was signed for procurement and delivery of medical equipment and furniture for the medical facility in Khudgifi Bolo village of Kuhistoni Mastchoh district. All necessary medical equipment and furniture were delivered to medical houses in December 2018.	Relevant to output
	2018	Tender documents for construction of building with 4 classrooms in Khairobod village of Langar Jamoat, Kuhistoni Mastchoh district were prepared and announced in July 2018. The construction company has been selected. Upon completion, it is expected that nearly 100 schoolchildren and 15 teachers will have access to quality educational services and jobs in the new educational facility. Construction company is expected to complete the project by the end of August 2019	Relevant to output
	2019	Based on the rapid assessment, conducted during the first year of the project, of local health facilities and schools for identification of needs for renovation, rehabilitation and provision of equipment, the Rogh village rural hospital was prioritised and construction works which started late in 2018 are underway. Completion of the project works was planned in May 2019. However, due to the fact that in Kuhistoni Mastchoh district a cold season was longer than expected, the schedule of works has been amended and accordingly, the implementing agency will complete the project works by the end of July 2019. The new building of the rural hospital will open its doors for the local population in the first week of August, 2019.	Relevant to output
	2019	All necessary medical equipment and inventories for this rural hospital have been purchased and delivered in late 2018. It is expected that as a result of the sub-project implementation more than 5,400 people (<i>including 2,754 women</i>) of 14 surrounding villages will have improved access to health care services.	Relevant to output
	2019	Construction works of a school building in Khairobod village of Langar Jamoat, Kuhistoni Mastchoh district is underway. According to the contract for works, it was scheduled to complete the project by April 2019. However, due to extended cold season in the mountainous district, the new schedule was developed and agreed between UNDP and the construction company where the completion of project works is scheduled for end of July 2019. It is expected that upon commissioning, the school, consisting of 4 classrooms, will create access for quality education for 100 schoolchildren, and permanent employment opportunities for 15 school staff.	Relevant to output
	2019	As part of a project objective of improving access to health facilities, a contract for works has been signed between UNDP and a local construction company during the 3rd quarter of June 2019 for the construction of a medical house in Tomin village of Ayni district. Currently, the construction works of the one-story medical facility is underway. Upon completion, the new medical facility will replace the existing old and dilapidated vaccination station, and offer a much broader and improved medical services for 169 households. Also, it is	Relevant to output

		planned to support the new facility with procurement of medical equipment and inventories.	
	2019	<p>The Working Group meeting dedicated to implementing the social and economic development strategies at the local level and held regularly by the administration of Ayni district, has identified the need for construction of several social infrastructure objects as local priorities. Based on a number of meetings and vetting processes UNDP selected to fund construction of a medical house in Vota village of Urmetan jamoat, and a building for a general education school in Dashti Varz village of Ayni jamoat of Ayni district. Currently, necessary documentations have been compiled and tender bidding for both subprojects is expected to be announced during the first quarter of July 2019. Upon completion, it is envisaged that the one-story medical facility will offer its services for members of 159 households (549 people). Moreover, the local government has appropriated residential plots for 140 more households, thus expanding the total number of households up to nearly 300. Thus, it is expected that the Vota medical house will serve more than 1200 people.</p> <p>The construction of a General Education School of Dashti Varz consisting of six classrooms, upon completion, will accommodate 144 schoolchildren, and function as the branch of General Secondary Education School #1 of Ayni district. Currently, due to absence of school facility in Dashti Varz village, the schoolchildren attend School #1 located in the centre of Ayni district, at the walking distance of more than 3 km. The project works, once started, are expected to complete by end of December 2019.</p>	Relevant to output
General Comments		<p>Activities are generally relevant to output, small delays with construction work did not change the general picture. However, one component of the output claims to address “increased community engagement for <u>promotion of healthy lifestyles</u> and education for all”. There is no project activity that is promoting healthy lifestyles. Increased community engagement in project construction work is recognizable and generous. Some of the rural schools became district priorities or are voted as Working group priority so these facilities are rebuilt and that is fulfilling education for all.</p>	

Output 3: Improved awareness of rural women and youth on employment issues

Under this component the Project aims to strengthen partnership with local public organizations and community groups to discuss, plan and implement activities aimed at addressing challenges and social consequences of unorganized and low-qualified migration in target districts; conducting awareness raising campaigns among rural women, migrants’ wives and young people, schoolchildren attending 09-11 grades on various social issues, including an unorganized migration and its social consequences. Provision of legal aid through mobile consultations for women and youth in rural and remote areas on negative consequences of labour migration resulting in divorce, discrimination, domestic violence, abandonment, non-registration of marriages and divorces, settlement of alimony disputes, etc.

Type of activity	Year of Report	Description/Results	Comments
Awareness raising, Assessments, Coordination, Trainings	2017	Rapid assessment among the local population to identify opportunities for increasing the local employment conducted. By the result of assessment, request for proposals for conducting trainings on effective management of employment and organization of adequate referral services for departing and returning migrants for local officials responsible for employment, women and youth committees, religious leaders and community-based organizations working with youth and returning migrants developed and will be announced on January 2018.	Relevant to output
	2017	Collaboration with Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan on establishing and strengthening partnership with local public organizations and community groups to discuss, plan and implement activities aimed at addressing challenges and social consequences of unorganized and low-qualified migration in target districts is ongoing.	Relevant to output, not clear what is actually happening.
	2017	The mission members comprising Ms. Sheila Marnie, Programme Advisor, Regional Bureau of UNDP in Istanbul and Ms. Jasmina Papa, Specialist on Social Integration, Regional Bureau of UNDP in Istanbul from Istanbul Regional Hub (IRH) visited project sites in Ayni district in August 2017. The main purpose of the mission was to help UNDP to develop an integrated approach in promoting women and youth empowerment for future policy and local development programming, with a particular focus on employment and self-employment, taking into account the intersection of employment and social protection policies. Several recommendations on effective project implementation provided by the mission members and further applied by project staff.	Relevant to output
	2017, 2018, 2019	Coordination meetings with other international and public organizations working in the area conducted by project team to coordinate activities in the field. During the meeting, the representatives of MSDSP of the Aga Khan Foundation, AKFED, WHH, ACTED, CESVI, Oxfam, IPD (Innovations and Participation for Development), and Sarob which work under the umbrella of two different Consortiums (led by AKFED and WHH) shared their current and future plans, and potential tangencies and synergies with UNDP project were discussed. As a result of the meeting, the stakeholders, in order to use the intervention' resources in an efficient and effective way, agreed to further discuss their activities to avoid any duplications and overlaps.	Relevant to output. Meetings should be more frequently and much higher level of synergy and matching funds/activities could be developed as all international organizations support rural development in these two districts.
	2018	A brief analysis among the local population has been conducted to identify opportunities for increasing employment opportunities. Introduction of an online registration application for management of employment and internal migration has been proposed as an enabling tool both to track the availability of jobs at the local markets (mainly in the industrially developed regions of the country) and as a referral and organizational tool.	Relevant to output
	2018	Awareness raising and informational campaigns have been conducted, jointly with the representatives of local state departments responsible for employment and migration, on the importance of orderly and structured migration and has been disseminated through distribution of 5000 leaflets, one-pagers, informational brochures and infographics.	Relevant to output
	2018	More than 600 young people have participated in various community outreach events, which included provision	Relevant to output.

		of group and individual consultations on involvement into economic and business activities. "Youth Day – Safe Space", Women Entrepreneurship Day, International Day of Rural Women, and International Day for Eradication of Poverty have been used as platforms to emphasize the role of young men and women in the economic and social development of communities.	
	2018	From January 2018 to May 2018 awareness raising campaign on sustainable development goals, doing business and entrepreneurship were executed jointly with a project partner Business School "Synergy Tajikistan". In total awareness raising campaigns covered more than 1,400 (at least 40% women) people, including rural women, migrants' wives and young people, schoolchildren of 9-11 grades.	Relevant to output
Workshops, study tours, roundtables, Campaigns, etc.	2017	Awareness raising campaign on sustainable development goals, doing business and entrepreneurship, covering more than 1,800 (at least 40% female) local population, including rural women, migrants' wives and young people, schoolchildren of 9-11 grades conducted in targeted districts jointly with project partner Business School "Synergy Tajikistan".	Relevant to output
	2018	National Consultant on effective management of employment and migration processes at the local level was engaged. He conducted three one-day trainings on effective management of employment and organization of adequate referral services for departing and returning migrants for 72 representatives of local state departments of Kuhistoni Mastchoh and Ayni districts. A guide for civil servants on effective management of employment has been developed (Annex 10.14) and presented to relevant state sector departments and employees during a dedicated round-table. It is important to mention that the final version of the developed Guide was agreed with the administration of Ayni district.	Relevant to output. Follow-up?
	2018	Two open lectures in Ayni and Kuhistoni Mastchoh districts on start-up business and migration management conducted covering around 190 people, including youth and women. Additional lectures on small and medium business development have been conducted for young men and women in Ayni district covering 40 people (including 16 women).	Relevant to output
	2018	Four social videos on entrepreneurship were developed for awareness raising campaigns to promote business skills of youth. Developed videos cover various issues, such as questions and answers of successful entrepreneurs and youth, success story of doing business and how to start own business.	Relevant to output. It is missing information on broadcast and/or dissemination.
	2019	An Individual Consultant has been hired, who among other tasks, will assist UNDP Ayni in organizing a health caravan, for wives of migrants and family members on legal assistance, advice on negative social consequences of migration as divorce, discrimination and violence in the family, waiver of rights, refusal to register marriages and divorces, alimony issues. The consultations were attended by expert and consultants: a lawyer, a psychologist, representative of the employment and migrations services, etc.	Relevant to output.
	General Comments	Generally, activities were in line with the output description, but because of lack of alignment between objective and output 3, it is not easy to follow activities related to migration issues e.g. legal aid to families of migrants, number of women who wanted to divorce, health issues HIV/AIDS, training of public servants about migrant employment opportunities, etc.	

8.7 Annex 7 Budget Implementation Status

Project Component	Planned budget (\$)	% of Prog. cost	% of total cost	Actual Budget(\$)	Variance
Component 1. Increased income and job opportunities for rural women and youth through business skills development, vocational trainings and access to finance	732 518	53,4%	43,1%	603 602	-10%
Component 2. Improved access to social services for rural women and youth through enhanced capacities of local health and education facilities and increased community engagement for promotion of healthy lifestyles and education for all.	543 519	39,6%	32,0%	544 791	0%
Component 3. Improved awareness of rural women and youth on employment and labor migration issues	97 000	7,1%	5,7%	36 208	-46%
Sub-total Programme	1 373 037	100,0 %	80,8%	1 184 600	-7%
Total Staff and Project Management Support	215 532	12,7%	12,7%	361 970	25%
GMS (8%)	111 111	6,5%	6,5%	78 769	-17%
Total	1 699 680		100%	1 625 339	-2%

Cost Efficiency Calculation

1. Efficiency

1.1. Overall Cost Efficiency

OCE=Total budget / Total benefices (direct + indirect)

OCE=\$1 699 680 / 274 583

OCE= \$6.20

1.2. Targeted Cost Efficiency

TCE=Total budget / Total direct

TCE=\$1 699 680 / 11341

TCE= \$149.00

2. Cost Efficiency by outputs

CEF_Output1=Output1 budget / Total direct benefices

CEF_Output1=\$717 518 / 9050

CEF_Output1= \$79.00

CEF_Output2=Output2 budget / Total direct benefices

CEF2=\$593 519 / 1 969

CEF2= \$301.00

CEF_Output3=Output3 budget / Total direct benefices

CEF3=\$62 000 / 322

CEF3= \$192.00