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14-Dec-2021

13-Dec-2021 **OF JAPANESE-FUNDED “STRENGTHENING INTEGRATED RISK GOVERNANCE CAPACITIES OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC AND REGIONAL COOPERATION IN CENTRAL ASIA” PROJECT**

United Nations Development Program

The evaluation has been commissioned by the UNDP Office in Kyrgyz Republic

Draft evaluation report



Landslide, Kyrgyzstan

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November 2021

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

ADRC	Asian Disaster Reduction Centre
CESDRR	Centre for Emergency Situations and Risk Reduction
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRA	Disaster Risk Assessment
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
GIS	Geographic Information System
HR	Human Rights
KII	Key Informants Interviews
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MES	Ministry of Emergency Situations
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSC	South-South Cooperation
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

II. Executive summary

The evaluation report aims to:

1. Offer an independent evaluation of the Japanese-funded “Strengthening Integrated Risk Governance Capacities of the Kyrgyz Republic and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia” Project, implemented by the UNDP Office in Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.
2. Assess the extent to which the expected outputs and objective of the Japanese-funded “Strengthening Integrated Risk Governance Capacities of the Kyrgyz Republic and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia” Project have been achieved.
3. Review the successes and bottlenecks in terms of strengthening integrated risk governance capacities of the Kyrgyz Republic and regional cooperation in Central Asia.
4. Take a stock of findings for each evaluation criteria and propose conclusions accompanied by recommendations/lessons learned for possible improvements of the UNDP similar activities in strengthening integrated risk governance capacities of the Kyrgyz Republic and regional cooperation in Central Asia.
5. Assess to what extent has gender and human rights consideration been integrated into the project design and implementation activities.

The evaluation activities covered the implementation of the Project’s activities during the period of March 2017-December 2021. For conducting an external evaluation of the Project, the UNDP office in Kyrgyzstan hired an independent evaluation consultant in 2021.

The Kyrgyz Republic is a country facing several types of natural hazards (landslides, avalanches, earthquakes, floods, mudflows) and man-made hazards (technological accidents, fires, traffic accidents). These hazards in interaction with a high level of human, social and economic vulnerability and growing exposure cause often a major disaster resulting in considerable human, economic, environmental and social toll. In addition to human suffering the complexity of disaster impact reduces significantly the country economic growth rates and makes harder the tailoring of economic and social development interventions in a sustainable manner. Annual direct losses incurred from natural disasters are estimated in the range of \$30-35 million per year (1.0 - 1.5% of GDP) according to UNDP estimate. This negative impact is further exacerbated by the indirect and secondary losses.

In addressing huge challenges reflected in the country hazard/disaster context the national government supported by donor community as well as the United Nations and other international organization has been rightly attaching a constantly growing attention to disaster risk management and reduction during the last two decades. These efforts resulted in establishment of the National Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Platform and subsequent capacity building resulted in more communities steadily improving their knowledge about disaster hazards and risks including through engagement of various development agencies and donor countries. Local self-governments become more and more attached disaster management and reduction owing to lessons learned and increased public service delivery commitments. There were also positive international developments that DRR (Hyogo Framework for DRR 2005-2015, Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030) aspects became more and more acknowledgeable within sustainable development strategies and processes, which heightened on its turn the perspectives of convergence of national and municipal interventions.

The Japanese-funded “Strengthening Integrated Risk Governance Capacities of the Kyrgyz Republic and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia” Project, builds on the activities and results of the past UNDP interventions in Kyrgyzstan focusing on enhancing national capacities in managing and reducing the human, economic and environmental impact of disasters and linking these activities with its socio-economic and resilience building agenda. The Project’s activities were underpinned by policy level interventions of UNDP’s Programme on “Effective Disaster Risk Management for Sustainable Development and Human Security”. In addition to creating an enabling environment to integrate DRR into sustainable development priorities the Project aimed at strengthening several critical segments of the DRR portfolio such as hazard monitoring, early warning, disaster risk assessment (DRA), information management, strengthening disaster response capacities, building disaster resilience of local communities and regional cooperation on DRR in the framework of existing regional cooperation structure - the Centre for Disaster Response and Risk Reduction in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Based on available documents consulted, the written responses to the evaluation questionnaire and in-depth interviews of stakeholders from the national Project’s partners entities, CESDRR and UNDP Kyrgyzstan staff the final evaluation of the Japanese-funded “Strengthening Integrated Risk Governance Capacities of the Kyrgyz Republic and Regional Cooperation in

Central Asia” Project (further Project) identified the key findings/observations and proposed key recommendations/lessons learned as follows:

KEY LESSONS LEARNED:

The evaluation identified the following key lessons learned:

1. **Consistent alignment of the Project’s disaster risk reduction activities and outputs with the persisting national and regional disaster risk reduction challenges/needs, development goals, UNDP strategic priorities in general and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development boosted its relevance.**
2. **Well designed and managed programs/projects addressing the strengthening the national risk governance capacities lead potentially to a positive shift of disaster/emergency management authorities and of disaster risk management legislation by reducing focus on provision of disaster relief and rehabilitation and reinforcing disaster risk reduction actions.**
3. **Unpredictable emergencies such as for instance COVID-19 coupled with very high staff turn-over, often at decision making levels, in the national partner organizations represent a considerable risk for the technical cooperation projects implementation on time and in accordance with the original project design.**
4. **The presence of the gender mainstreaming and vulnerable groups of population inclusion in disaster risk reduction projects is an important prerequisite for addressing specific vulnerabilities and needs of all segments of the population and implementing the principle of Leave No One Behind. The Project faced several shortcomings in applying gender, rights-based and disability inclusion approaches in the design, with partial results in considering these issues during the implementation activities.**
5. **Important lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic was that the emergency situation can represent, in addition to multiple challenges, also the opportunity to explore new project implementation approaches, but also it means the need to be ready to mitigate the impact of the potential compound emergencies during the project lifetime.**
6. **The integrated risk governance involves different entry points such as legal framework development, advocacy, knowledge and recognition that development and disaster risk management are closely interconnected.**
7. **From the evaluator’s point of view the main lesson learned is concerning the usefulness of a comprehensive logical framework based on the Theory of Change to be included in the UNDP technical cooperation project documents. The absence of such framework reduces the transparency and efficiency of periodic monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved by the project.**

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

The evaluation resulted in the following key recommendations:

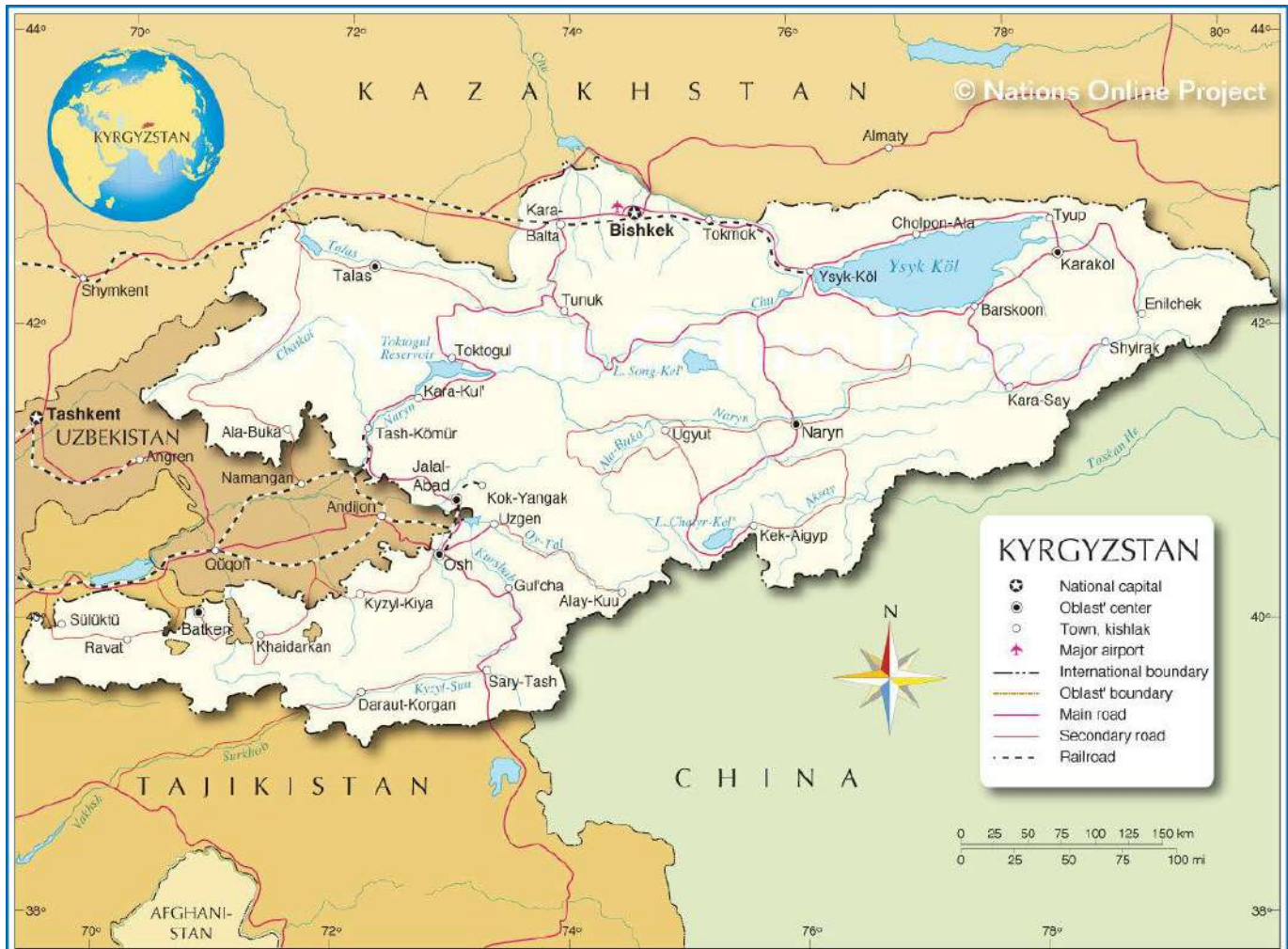
1. **UNDP to continue interventions in the Central Asia region countries with economies in transition and to maintain regular dialogue with their national authorities responsible for disaster and emergency management, to keep the momentum for maintaining their commitment to developing integrated disaster risk governance capacities.**
2. **In the design of the future technical cooperation projects include comprehensive logical framework based on the Theory of Change methodology to promote the transparency and efficiency of periodic monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved by the project.**
3. **UNDP to ensure that aspects related to gender mainstreaming, rights-based considerations and vulnerable groups inclusion approaches are sufficiently reflected in the design of the future disaster risk management projects, as well as integrated during in implementation of activities.**
4. **In the follow up to the Project, disaster risk reduction needs to be clearly defined in and conceptualized by national legislative and policy documents including the establishment of standards and criteria of progress**

for disaster risk governance. This should be achieved in the framework of continued strengthening of governance arrangements for the implementation of the Sendai DRR Framework.

5. The integration of DRR into development is in Central Asia countries at initial stages. There is a need to address disconnect between DRR and development, which is caused by the fact that both require cross-sectorial approached, by mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development efforts and into key sectors outside the disaster management domain and ensure coordination between those sectors and the disaster management systems.

III. Introduction

Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked, largely mountainous country in Central Asia, bordered by China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The population of slightly above six million is predominately young.¹ Kyrgyzstan is a lower-middle-income economy, with per capita gross national income of \$1,170 in 2015.² Its 0.655 human development index³ ranking classifies it as a medium human development country.



Geological and hydro-meteorological hazards, exacerbated by climate change and population growth are driving increased risks across Kyrgyzstan territory. Unpredictable hazards can have devastating cascading or compounded impacts on all sectors, with

¹ Over half of population is under 25. National Statistical Committee

² <http://data.worldbank.org/country/kyrgyz-republic>

³ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/KGZ.pdf

long-lasting, debilitating socio-economic and environmental consequences. The process of increasing economic losses from disaster events is among the significant global trends of the 21st century. Against the backdrop of the disruption and upheaval caused by the pandemic, millions of people also experienced severe disaster events during 2020. In inflation-adjusted terms, global economic losses from natural and man-made catastrophes were USD 202 billion in 2020, up from USD 150 billion in 2019.⁴ A recent research carried out by the UN International Secretariat for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) concluded that economic losses caused by natural disasters were reaching globally an average of USD 250 billion to USD 300 billion per year. Similar trend towards a rising number of disasters has been observed also in Kyrgyzstan. First, number of disasters occurred in the country in 1991-2000 decade was 1225, while during the following 2001-2010 decade it increased to 2353. Low resilience of people and communities, limited policy and institutional frameworks, and poor forecast and response capabilities impede adequate response to climate change and disasters in the country. Disaster management governance relies on an emergency management structure that is insufficient for a system-wide approach to addressing risks. A multi-disciplinary 'risk governance' paradigm needs to be adopted in Kyrgyzstan.⁵

Constantly growing disaster losses magnified by climate change represent an important threat to low and middle-income countries, and Kyrgyzstan and the Central Asia countries are no exception. Such perspectives have increased the awareness of international and national communities for the need to advocate and apply in disaster prone countries a comprehensive and integrative approach to Disaster Risk Management (DRM), which represent a shift from traditional disaster management (DM) practices.

The abundant literature addressing hazards and disasters usually recognizes four principal stages in disaster management cycle: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Historically all these stages were seen as the domain of civil protection (CP), emergency management and/or humanitarian agencies. The recognition of the important role of development actors in many stages of disaster management cycle has slowly taken roots in recent decades. This evolution represented a shift from disaster management to disaster risk management, including Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) component. This shift is not feasible without credible and adequate enabling environment to integrate DRR into sustainable development concept, building disaster resilience at local communities and incentives for DRR. Last but not least, DRR activities have to be based on a comprehensive disaster risk assessment/evaluation an supported by up-to-date information management systems for guiding adequate decision making.

Involvement of UNDP in DRR sector in general has gradually grown up since 2005 from community level activities to national level policy developments, including legislation. UNDP's intervention was supported by UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) and aimed at creation an enabling environment both at the central and local levels for decentralized DRR to better guide disaster risk management and development policy and allocation of resources towards local level DRR activities. Despite significant achievements that have been made so far, there are still tremendous challenges towards shifting the focus of the past disaster management policies and practices focusing on response and post-disaster recovery to comprehensive DRR to effectively reduce socio-economic and environmental impacts of disaster risks. It is therefore, UNDP's engagement in Kyrgyzstan in DRR sector has been significantly broadened in 2012 to support DRR as a comprehensive, integrated and cross-cutting intervention both at national and local levels and across sectors under UNDAF⁶ and UNDP Country Programs' Action Plans. This approach supports national partners in addressing DRR as a comprehensive, integrated and crosscutting dimension, synergetic with interrelated issues of governance, poverty reduction, climate change, environmental protection, sustainable development and conflict prevention programming. UNDP has also been active in regional contexts since 2010, which encompass the engagement into regional dialogues on creation of the Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction in Almaty (CDRRR), conducting regional level events of Disaster Risk Assessment and Information Management, building partnerships between Secretariats of the National Platforms of the Central Asia countries, implementation of joint activities of cross-border nature and implementation of regional level priorities at the country context on various dimensions.

The Japanese funded Project was designed to support the critically needed shift from disaster response/recovery attitude to much more efficient and effective approach based on DRR concept. This approach should avoid that Kyrgyzstan is trapped in a vicious and self-fulfilling cycle of disaster-respond-recover-repeat again and again. The project was designed as an integral part of UNDP's "Effective Disaster Risk Management for Sustainable Development and Human Security" Programme, which on its turn was already engaged into policy level interventions for putting in place appropriate institutional frames of Disaster Risk Assessment, Monitoring and Forecasting and Regional Cooperation. However, the Project did not create new and parallel structures but rather brought previous achievements in disaster risk management to new qualitative levels.

⁴ <https://www.swissre.com/dam/jcr:ebd39a3b-dc55-4b34-9246-6dd8e5715c8b/sigma-1-2021-en.pdf>

⁵ Country programme document for Kyrgyzstan (2018-2022)

⁶ UNDAF stands for United Nations Development Assistance Framework

The Project was implemented by the UNDP Office in Kyrgyzstan, as a lead implementing partner in close cooperation with several Ministries and agencies as partners, Ministry of Emergency Situations in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and KYRGYZHYDROMET, Kyrgyzstan. In addition, several activities were involving local level partners such as local state administrations, local self-governments and local Civil Protection Commissions from several regions in Kyrgyzstan.

This report presents a comprehensive information about the evaluation results of the Project. The evaluation covered the full project implementation during the period of March 2017-December 2021. The focus of this evaluation exercise was to conduct an external independent assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability impact, including national ownership, gender equality and human rights considerations of the UNDP and its implementing partners activities and to measure the extent to which the outputs of the Project in supporting Kyrgyzstan in the development of enabling environment for National Risk Assessment Framework created to apply innovative tools; strengthening National Disaster Risk Monitoring and Early Warning systems as well as avalanche-risk reduction capacities alongside transport corridors; enhancing disaster response and early warning capacities; as well as the regional cooperation among the Central Asia countries in the context of the Centre for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction in Almaty, Kazakhstan were achieved.

IV. Evaluation Methodology and Limitation Factors

- *Description of interventions, evaluation scope and objective*

Subject of the evaluation are **the interventions carried out in the framework of the UNDP Project “Strengthening Integrated Risk Governance Capacities of the Kyrgyz Republic and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia” funded by Japan**, implemented by the UNDP Office in Kyrgyz Republic in partnership with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The overall budget available for the Project’s activities was USD 5’496’245.33. The contribution from the Japanese Government amounted to USD 5’373’811.39 and UNDP own resources represented USD 122’433.94.

The purpose of the Project was to strengthen the integrated disaster risk governance capacities in Kyrgyzstan and regional cooperation in Central Asia through achievement of four expected outputs:

- **Output 1.** An enabling environment for National Risk Assessment Framework created to apply innovative tools
- **Output 2.** National Disaster Risk Monitoring and Early Warning systems as well as avalanche-risk reduction capacities strengthened alongside transport corridors
- **Output 3.** Disaster response and early warning capacities strengthened
- **Output 4.** Increased regional cooperation of Central Asian (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) Disaster Management Authorities facilitated under the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue.

The design of the project envisaged the expected outputs to be supported the implementation of the following activities:

Activities supporting output 1:

- Engage Japanese expertise for conduct technical assessments of existing capacities of Disaster Monitoring and identify possible solution packages in applying innovative tools such as GIS and remote sensing techniques
- Operationalize the republican level cements of the National Disaster Risk Monitoring System
- Training of the Ministry of Emergency Situations staff to handle with the equipment purchased

Activities supporting output 2:

- Purchase of equipment for strengthening monitoring capacities of avalanche-monitoring stations
- Purchase of equipment for strengthening capacity of avalanche-risk reduction unit of KYRGYZHYDROMET
- Construction of two avalanche-monitoring stations of KYRGYZHYDROMET (DOLON and CHAPCHYMA)

- Training of staff of KYRGYZHYDROMET on snow-survey, GIS by engaging Japanese experts

Activities supporting output 3:

- Purchase of automobiles and rescuing equipment for establishing 22 Fire-Rescuing Services
- Extending the geographical coverage of IUMS and NEWS in Jalal-Abad, Chui and Issyk-Kul oblasts

Activities supporting output 4:

- Conduct a 3-days training in CDRRR Almaty for the Expert Groups of Disaster Management Authorities of CA (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) countries by involving knowledge and capacity of Asian Disaster Reduction Centre in Kobe, Japan (ADRC)
- Conduct two times 2-day meetings of the Expert Working Group of CA (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) countries to discuss the implementation of the Framework of cooperation on strengthening regional collaboration in Central Asia (FOC) and agreeing upon with Disaster Management Authorities of CA countries
- Conduct Regional high-level event of Disaster Management Authorities in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) for increased coordination on implementation of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction priorities and of the Framework of cooperation on strengthening regional collaboration in Central Asia through providing consultancy services
- Conduct practical/infrastructural measures aimed at reducing risks of transboundary hazards: embankment of the most dangerous areas of the left riverbed of Chu river

The Project's principal decision body was **the Project Board** composed by the Senior Supplier (Japan), Executive Agency (UNDP Resident Representative or his/her Deputy) and Senior Beneficiary (Ministry of Emergency Situations, Kyrgyzstan) and Central Asia CESDRR. Project Board was a group of responsible parties for making by consensus management decisions for a Project when guidance was required by the Project, including recommendation for UNDP/Executing Agency approval of Project plans and revisions. Project assurance was performed by the DRM and Environment Policy and Programme Analyst and the UNDP Program Associate to support the Project Board by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring of project results. This role ensured that appropriate program management milestones were managed and completed.

The evaluation's scope included attention to the quality and levels of implementation of all planned Project's activities and the degree of the activities' contribution to the four expected outputs during the period of March 2017-December 2021. During its duration the Project was expected support the strengthening of the integrated disaster risk governance capacities in Kyrgyzstan and of regional cooperation in Central Asia in the same area. The evaluation process was consultative, inclusive and participatory. To this end the evaluator reviewed, gauged and analyzed the pertinent documents/reports produced in the framework of the Project during the period 2017-2021. Desk review of relevant documents such as project documents, progress reports, financial records, meeting minutes and monitoring reports, and secondary data or studies relating to the country context and situation. The documentary review was accompanied by the online surveys and online interviews of the project stakeholders (partners, beneficiaries and implementing agencies). The evaluation focused on the activities, processes and arrangements for supporting the integrated disaster risk governance capacities in Kyrgyzstan and in the context of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue. A special attention was paid on the assessment of the extent to which the planned impact/purpose was realized, the expected outputs achieved and the planned activities implemented. Attention was paid to the factors/circumstances that influenced the results, whether intended or unintended, management and monitoring processes and the Project interaction with key stakeholders. The UNDP staff who had responsibility for the Project management and implementation, the Project focal points of the recipient organizations as well as major international partner – Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction, were consulted/interviewed during the evaluation process.

The overall objective of this final evaluation was to assess achieved results under Project, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of activities implemented, sustainability of benefits and draw lessons that can inform future Disaster Risk Management interventions to be implemented by UNDP and other development partners.

The main purpose of this final evaluation was to assess the programmatic progress, performance of the project interventions from the point of view of relevance, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency, sustainability as well as analysis of lessons learnt highlighting areas where the project performed well and/or less effectively than anticipated. The findings of the evaluation will contribute to effective programming, refining the approaches, organizational learning and accountability. The findings of the evaluation are expected be used to engage policy makers and other disaster risk management and development stakeholders at local, national and regional levels in evidence-based dialogues and to advocate for gender-responsive and inclusive strategies to promote integrated risk governance capacities.

The evaluation presented an opportunity to assess the achievements of this project and its overall added value to building integrated disaster risk governance capacities in Kyrgyzstan and regional cooperation in Central Asia. The evaluation approach also looked at mainstreaming of human rights and gender equality principles by the Project. The consideration of universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality needs were integrated at all stages of the evaluation, in compliance with the United Nations Evaluation Group's revised gender-related norms and standards. Therefore, the evaluation assessed how the vulnerable groups and gender considerations were included in the project design and implementation process. All available information, documents, brochures and the Project's progress reports were reviewed and analysed by the evaluator.

- **Evaluation approach/methods and data analysis**

The evaluation framework, as it was framed by the Evaluation Terms of Reference (TOR) prepared by the UNDP, provided a foundation for the evaluation approach and overall methodology. The respective TOR cleared by the UNDP are available in Annex 1.

The evaluation activities were guided by the basic principles of effective and sound evaluation including:

- The OECD/DAC evaluation criteria as an essential background (Box 1)
- Special emphasis on distinguishing as rigorously as possible, at all stages of the evaluation process, between findings (facts), conclusions (interpretation of the facts, drawing on the judgement of the evaluator), recommendations (reasoned advice based on the evaluation findings and conclusions) and lessons learned (inputs for capacity building actions)

Box 1: The OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria

The OECD-DAC evaluation criteria are:

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| • Coherence: The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution |
| • Effectiveness: The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve its objectives, and its results including any differential results across groups. |
| • Efficiency: The extent to which the intervention delivers or is likely to deliver results in an economic or timely way. |
| • Relevance: The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries' global, country and partner/institution needs, policies and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change. |
| • Impact: The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. |
| • Sustainability: The extent to which the net benefits of interventions continue or are likely to continue. ⁷ |

Final evaluation of the Project was conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines.⁸ In view of travel limitations, the evaluation was conducted online applying for the assessment the Project standard evaluation criteria, as elaborated in the evaluation's TOR, in line with the United Nations Evaluations Group norms and principles. The process was also guided by the evaluation questions, which final version was established in close coordination and consultation with UNDP Kyrgyzstan.

In line with the TOR and its refinement after the consultations with the Project management the evaluation addressed the following issues, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability/impact including national ownership and gender equality/human rights consideration as follows:

1. Review of the relevance of the Project's design and activities in light of the Kyrgyz Government's priorities, UNDP's programmatic priorities and persisting key challenges of integrated disaster risk governance capacities, and requirements of regional cooperation in Central Asia in the context of SSC/Triangular cooperation, as well as the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries, including gender and human rights consideration.

⁷ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

⁸ http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf

2. Assessment of the effectiveness of the Project's activities and outputs in achieving its intended objective and contributing to its strategic vision, its flexibility and adaptation to the context, strategic coherence in supporting institutional strengthening and national capacity in DRR, as well as effectiveness of Project adoptive capacity to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kyrgyzstan.
3. Assessment of the efficiency with which the Project utilized its funding as per agreed work plan to achieve the projected targets, performance of the M&E mechanism, efficiency of its staffing/coordination in delivery of its activities in a timely manner, in delivering value for money and using the Project Board.
4. Review of the sustainability and national ownership of the Project's outputs in the recipient country focusing on the degree to which the Project results are likely to be sustainable beyond its lifetime, the extent to which the DRR regulatory frameworks in place will support the continuation of benefits, and the extent of the commitment of the national partners to providing continuing support to DRR activities (staff, financing etc.)

For each of the evaluation criteria the TOR identified a cluster of orientation questions/sub-questions. Following several consultations with UNDP it was agreed to apply for the evaluation of each criteria the key impact assessment assumptions as follows in Box 2:

Box 2:

Impact assessment assumptions	
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All Project components relevant to national and regional needs/priorities, challenges -Entire Project relevant to needs/priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries -The Project objective fit in UNDP's programmatic priorities in Kyrgyzstan -SSC/Triangular cooperation was promoted by the Project -Gender, Human Rights, LNOB consideration were integrated into the Project design/implementation
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Extent in achievement of the intended objective of the Project -Degree of flexibility, innovation and adaptability to the context during the Project implementation -Extent of the Project complementarity with different entities ensuring strategic coherence of approach -Degree of the Project contribution to improvement of the national government capacity/institutional strengthening -Degree of UNDP ability to adapt the Project to the effects of COVID-19 in Kyrgyzstan
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Efficiency in utilizing funding as per agreed work plan to achieve the projected targets -Performance of the project M&E mechanism and the use of various M&E tools -Analysis of the role of the Project Steering Committee and Board, and whether it was optimally used -Factors and constraints affecting efficiency of the Project implementation -Efficiency in overall staffing, planning and coordination with partners -Did the Project provided value for money spent-resources spent efficiently
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Preliminary indications of the Project results likely to be sustainable beyond the Project lifetime -Did the Project design include an sustainability and exit strategy -Level of commitment of the Government to sustaining and continuing similar activities -Extent of existence of the regulatory frameworks supporting the continuation of the Project benefits -Level of enhancement of the national capacities after Project completion

Rating for the levels of accomplishment for each evaluation criteria was established on four-point scale as follows: **high, partial, little and poor**, see the box 3:

Box 3:

GRADE	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENTS
High	More than 75 % relevant, effective, efficient, sustainable
Partial	Between 45-74 % relevant, effective, efficient, sustainable
Little	Between 25-44 % relevant, effective, efficient, sustainable

Poor	Less than 25 % relevant, effective, efficient, sustainable
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The suitability/relevance of the Project's activities with regards to gender equality, empowerment of women and incorporation of the perspective of the most vulnerable groups was reviewed as well. The approach was guided by the gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards. A gender analysis was reflected in the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. The UN SWAP performance indicators⁹ provided an additional guidance for evaluation activities to support a gender sensitive evaluation.

The feedback received from the interviews and completed questionnaires was integrated into the evaluation report after a careful analysis, cross-checking and triangulation. The research methods applied were predominantly qualitative, with a quantitative element limited to descriptive statistics. The outcomes generated by desk reviews, interviews and evaluation questionnaires were synthesized and aggregated by main issues. The data and information received were triangulated and cross-validated considering carefully the issues of convergence and divergence.

The evaluation was carried out in five phases:

- 1) Preparation: gathering and analysing project data, conceptualizing the evaluation approach, internal consultations involving UNDP Bishkek staff and the evaluator on the approach, refining the TOR and stakeholders mapping.
- 2) Inception: consultations between the evaluator and the programme managers, portfolio review, finalization of stakeholder mapping, inception meeting with the review of the result logics, analysis of information relevant to the initiative and finalization of evaluation methodology.
- 3) Data collection and analysis: in depth desk research, in-depth review of UNDP project document, UNDAF and others, staff and partner survey. Interview online with relevant stakeholders on an individual basis and in groups.
- 4) Analysis and synthesis stage including analysis of data and interpretation of findings and drafting and validation of an evaluation report.
- 5) Finalization of the report and its dissemination.

The evaluation matrix was designed by the evaluator to facilitate evaluation process and ensure its clarity and transparency(Box 4). The matrix brought to one place an overview of the evaluation criteria, data sources, data collection and analysis methods and indicators of successful accomplishment of outputs. Key questions related to each of the five evaluation criteria are described in the section containing the evaluation findings.

Box 4: Evaluation matrix:

Evaluation criteria	Data sources	Data collection and analysis tools/methods	Indicators of success
Relevance	The project and quality management documents, monitoring/reporting documents, legislative frameworks, financial reports, mission and workshops reports, feedback from interviews/surveys.	Desk review/analysis of key documents related to the Project, individual interviews, focus groups session, KII, surveys, analysis, synthesis, triangulation and cross-validation of views and information.	Extent to which activities and achieved outputs were consistent with national priorities/needs of beneficiaries, the UNDP mandate, promotion of SSC and mainstreaming of gender and HR considerations. Degree of congruence between the perception of what is needed by the Project planners/implementers and the perception of what is needed as seen by beneficiaries.
Effectiveness	The project and quality management documents, monitoring/reporting documents, legislative frameworks, financial reports, mission and	Desk review/analysis of key documents related to the Project, individual interviews, focus groups session, KII, surveys, analysis, synthesis, triangulation and cross-validation of views and information.	Extent to which the expected results of the Project's activities/outputs have been achieved. Extent to which the challenges/obstacles to implementing of planned activities/outputs and achieving the expected outcomes/impact have been addressed effectively such as COVID-19 pandemic etc.

⁹ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1452>

	workshops reports, feedback from interviews/surveys.		
Efficiency	The project and quality management documents, monitoring/reporting documents, legislative frameworks, financial reports, mission and workshops reports, feedback from interviews/surveys.	Desk review/analysis of key documents related to the Project, individual interviews, focus groups session, KII, surveys, analysis, synthesis, triangulation and cross-validation of views and information.	Extent to which human and financial resources have been used wisely to achieve expected results. Extent to which activities have been implemented according to planned schedule and within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources. Degree of the implementation of planned activities within the planned timeframes, producing value for money, using M&E tools and supported by management structures.
Sustainability	The project and quality management documents, monitoring/reporting documents, legislative frameworks, financial reports, mission and workshops reports, feedback from interviews/surveys.	Desk review/analysis of key documents related to the Project, individual interviews, focus groups session, KII, surveys, analysis, synthesis, triangulation and cross-validation of views and information.	Level of likelihood that the beneficiaries and stakeholders will continue, scale up, institutionalize their engagement in the similar activities and demonstrate ownership of the work accomplished by the Project. Number of laws, regulations, policies related to the Project purpose and considering also gender and vulnerable groups aspects.
Gender and human rights consideration	The project documents, logical framework, monitoring documents, policy guidelines, financial reports, mission and workshops' reports, country and smart cities profiles, feedback from interviews.	Desk review/analysis of key documents related to the Project, individual interviews, focus groups session, KII, surveys, analysis, synthesis, triangulation and cross-validation of views and information.	Extent to which gender and human rights considerations have been integrated into the project design and implementation, including LNOB principle.

- **Limitation factors**

The evaluation process was impacted by a series of limitation factors, as follows:

- The major constraint was the overall global political, economic and emergency situation due to the COVID-19 public health crisis. The COVID-19 was declared by the World Health Organization as a worldwide pandemic. The pandemic management measures put in place by the beneficiary countries, as well as by the UN system prevented travels to/from the beneficiary countries and led to the changes in the execution of the planned Project's activities as well as of the evaluation process.
- Majority of the interviewed stakeholders were involved only in some areas of the Project activities and were not in a position to provide a "comprehensive picture" of the Project's successes and failures.
- The originally planned in-depth in-person interviews with the key stakeholders could not be conducted due to personal distancing measures imposed by the COVID-19.
- The interviewed stakeholders had difficulty in providing sufficient information about the integration of gender and human rights considerations during the design and implementation of the Project.
- Interviewees from the UNDP partner organizations were not aware of the Project's M&E and financial management related issues
- The capacity development workshops' results/impact were not consistently assessed and documented, that made the fair assessment of their impact on the Project's expected outputs and its overall objective difficult.
- The Project document doesn't include a comprehensive outline of the Theory of change. Project document defined expected outputs, outputs implementation deadlines and indicative activities. However, the overall expected impact and expected outcome(s) were not clearly articulated.

V. Findings and conclusions

The findings' section is based on the reading, analysis and triangulating of all available documents and the feedback received from the KII and surveys completed by the main stakeholders. The contributions from the stakeholders were received or in writing by responding to the survey questionnaire and/or during the internet-based interviews. These activities generated sufficient information about the Project formulation and management process, its activities implemented and accomplishments attained. Originally planned face-to-face interviews were not possible as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic health protection measures. The evaluation findings are organized under four headings, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability. For each of the evaluation criteria a set of several specific questions was designed respecting the Project's background and the results expected from the evaluation. Descriptive assessment and analysis of findings based on the feedback received from the contacted stakeholders and the reviewed documents was then reflected in conclusions for each evaluation criteria according to the qualification ratings, as demonstrated in the Box 3 above.

1/ RELEVANCE

The relevance chapter analyses the information from the documentary review complemented by the opinions received from the key stakeholders in responding to **the evaluation question 1** and its several sub-questions as indicated in the Terms of Reference for this evaluation:

Question 1: To what extent has the current UNDP project supported the government of the Kyrgyz Republic in achieving the national development goals, responding to unexpected events, implementing the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and delivering intended results?

Sub-questions:

- o Was the project relevant in addressing key challenges of integrated disaster risk governance capacities and regional cooperation in central Asia identified in the Project Document?
- o Has the Project objective corresponded to the UNDP's priorities in Kyrgyzstan?
- o To what extent were the interventions relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries?
- o To what extent have **gender and human rights** considerations been integrated into the program design and implementation?
- o To what extent did the UNDP project promote SSC/Triangular cooperation?

Kyrgyzstan is particularly vulnerable to climate change, the effects of which include glacial melting and higher risks of glacial lakes outflows, disrupting the water regime and leading to disasters.¹⁰ Extremes in weather and climate, and unsustainable natural resources management, are causing over 20 kinds of dangerous processes that trigger natural disasters,¹¹ making the socio-economic situation fragile due to natural hazard threats and increasing pressure upon local communities. Direct economic losses deriving from natural disasters are estimated at 1-1.5 per cent of annual gross domestic product.¹² Low socio-economic resilience of people and communities, limited policy and institutional frameworks for disaster risk management, and poor monitoring early warning and response capabilities impede adequate response to natural disasters. Prior to the Project, disaster management governance relied on an emergency management structure that was insufficient for a system-wide approach to addressing risks. National Disaster Risk Reduction policies and practices were predominantly built upon post-disaster response and recovery across sectors. These policies and practices were not aligned with the internationally recognized best practices as well as the internationally recognized DRR strategy and policy outlined in Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/CONF.224/CRP.1) which strongly encourages the evaluation of the risks accompanied by early risk-mitigating interventions.

Against the above mentioned context, the multi-disciplinary 'risk governance' paradigm needed to take stronger roots in Kyrgyzstan. The Project's design and its activities and outputs were fully relevant in addressing this persistent challenge by strengthening the national capacities in responding to unexpected hazard-related events. The Project's focus constituted an important step in strengthening integrated risk governance and related institutional mechanism and methodology in the field risk identification, assessment, as well as in monitoring, forecasting and responding to emergencies in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.

¹⁰Common country assessment, 2016

¹¹ http://mes.kg/upload/kniga_2015/book_rus000.html

¹² <http://www.gfdr.org/sites/gfdr.org/files/KyrgyzRepublic.pdf>

The Project's outputs were strongly anchored in national development priorities, most specifically in supporting the national Government priorities as identified in the National Strategy on Sustainable Development for 2013-17 adopted by the Presidential Decree dd. January 21, 2013 with ref. # 11 ii) and the « Concept and Strategy for the Integrated Security of the Population and Territories of the Kyrgyz Republic in Emergency and Crisis Situations until 2020 ». ¹³ The Project contributed to implementation of several tasks defined in « Concept and Strategy for the Integrated Security of the Population and Territories of the Kyrgyz Republic in Emergency and Crisis Situations until 2020 » such as :

- creation of the Unified Disaster Monitoring System that applies satellite, GIS and remote sensing techniques and of the Unified Information and Management System for Forecasting, Early Warning, Prevention and Elimination of the Consequences of Emergencies and Crisis Situations of Government Bodies in the Field of Population and Territory Protection;

- creation of unified forces and means intended for carrying out emergency rescue and other urgent work to prevent and eliminate emergency and crisis situations, ensuring their constant readiness;

- development of unified approaches to the training of the leadership of the governing bodies and formations of the Civil Protection, which are part of the unified system of protecting the population and territories from emergencies and crisis situations, as well as training and informing the population on ways to protect against them;

- creation of a centralized system for early warning and warning of the management personnel of the management bodies that are part of a unified system for protecting the population and territories from emergencies, functioning in peacetime and wartime.

The project's activities in the field of disaster risk management were also aimed at improving legal framework for the mainstreaming disaster risk management/reduction into sustainable development actions, developing a state system for integrated monitoring and forecasting of hazardous processes and phenomena, and creating a unified information and management system in emergency and crisis situations, as well as the National Comprehensive Public Information and Alert System, strengthening the capacity of emergency response services and strengthening regional cooperation in the field of disaster risk reduction in Central Asia.

By its focus on DRR activities the Project supported the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its :

- Goal 1.5 « By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters »,
- Goal 11.5 « By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations » and
- Goal 17.6 « Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation.... ».¹⁴

The contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is significant in the current context when not a single country was on track to complete the Sustainable Development Goals within the last decade, given rising rates of social and economic inequality, food insecurity, and climate change. Thus, the SDG implementation require renewed support and financing as demonstrated by the Project. The Project was consistently anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and committed to the principles of equality, universal cooperation and leaving no one behind by helping participating recipient countries achieve sustainable development by accelerating structural transformations for sustainable development and building resilience to crises and shocks. This approach was well aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021 which identified “build resilience to shocks and crises” as well as “South-South and Triangular Cooperation” among its priority areas.

Last, but not least the Project supported the successful implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/CONF.224/CRP.1).

Interventions of the Project were fully relevant in addressing the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries – namely of the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES) in the development of enabling environment for National Risk Assessment Framework including application of innovative GIS and remote sensing techniques, strengthening National Disaster Risk Monitoring and Early Warning Systems and rapid disaster response capacities; of the KYRGYZHYDROMET in enhancing its avalanche monitoring and early warning system, and, at last but not least, of the population at large living in disaster-prone regions.

The representative of the MES confirmed that “*The project activities have become a starting point in the creation of an institutional mechanism and methodological foundations in the field of monitoring and forecasting emergencies in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic. The*

¹³ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/93261/10?cl=ru-ru#p1>

¹⁴ https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%202021%20refinement_Eng.pdf

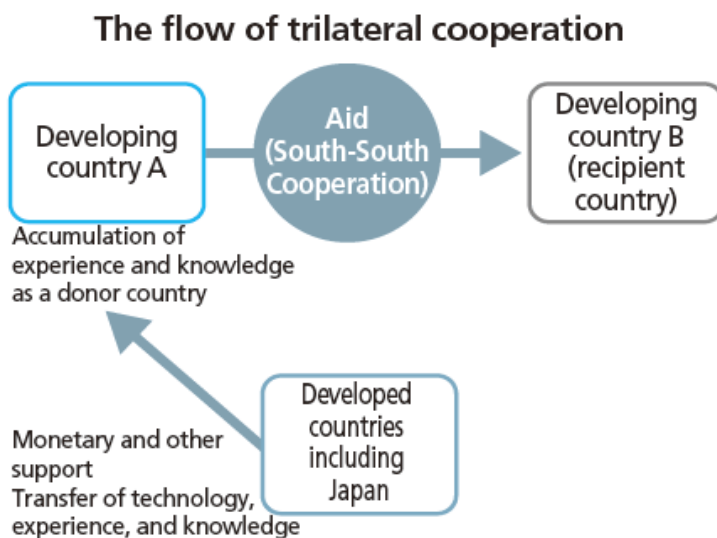
Monitoring Department estimates the support from the project as very high. Modernization of the material and technical base and the use of innovative technologies, such as satellite, geoinformation systems, the possibility of using products of remote sensing of the earth made it possible to process large amounts of rapidly changing information, this made it possible to significantly expand the possibilities of socio-economic planning. The Monitoring Department estimates the degree of compliance with the needs and priorities of the target groups as very high. »

The Project aimed to improve disaster-safe environments for the whole population living in targeted regions, ensuring their basic human right to be safe and protected. The outputs accomplished will provide benefit to all social groups – women, men, children, elderly, people with disabilities etc. applying the “Leave No One Behind” approach. Multiple pieces of training were provided to national partners encouraging women participants to join capacity building events. However, it should be noted that the Project was focused on the methodological issues related to National Disaster Risk Assessment and engagement with disaster management and monitoring/early warning scientific authorities at different levels, and not on the concrete engagement with the most vulnerable groups.

The representative of KYRGYZHYDROMET thought that: “Construction of 2 avalanche stations improves avalanche monitoring and forecasting of avalanches, to ensure the safety of travel on the Bishkek-Naryn-Torugart and Ala-Buka-Kanyshkiya highways. Every year, avalanches cause significant damage to the economy of the republic. Mainly, avalanches affect roads and transport, communication lines, power transmission lines, forests, industrial and civil objects, recreational areas under construction in the highlands. The main danger of this natural phenomenon is that every year people die in avalanches: shepherds and hunters, drivers and passengers of high-mountain highways, tourists and skiers, climbers, residents of mountain villages. “

Activities carried out to accomplish the output 4 were instrumental in enhancing the regional cooperation as a pertinent example of the south-south cooperation (SSC) of the Central Asian countries’ (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) disaster management authorities at both decision making and technical levels. Moreover, several activities promoted trilateral cooperation with key partners, Japan, as developed country, Kyrgyzstan, as developing country “A” and several countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and partially Uzbekistan) as developing countries “B”, as demonstrated in the following chart 1:

Chart 1:



The support provided by the Project to the Centre for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction, Almaty strengthened its functions as a permanent intergovernmental body for the Central Asia countries, an international organization created to provide effective mechanisms for mitigating the risks of emergency situations and reducing their consequences, promote joint response through measures agreed by the Parties, stimulating regional and international cooperation.

As a result of its activities, the Centre currently has the status of :

- ◆ Secretariat of the Regional Forum - Meeting of the heads of emergency departments of Central Asian countries.
- ◆ Regional Resource Centre of the Regional Platform for DRR Monitoring of the “Action Plan for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework Program for DRR for 2015-2030. in the region of Central Asia and the South Caucasus”.

Center for Emergency Situations
and Disaster Risk Reduction**CESDRR**Центр по чрезвычайным ситуациям
и снижению риска стихийных бедствий**ЦЧССРБ**Secretariat of the Regional Forum -
Meeting of the Heads of Emergency
Authorities of Central Asian Countries73, Amangeldy Str., Almaty, 050022
Republic of Kazakhstan
tel.: +7 (727) 220 - 73 - 31, 220 - 73 - 32,
email: cesdrn@cesdrn.orgСекретариат Регионального Форума -
Совещания Глав чрезвычайных
ведомств стран Центральной АзииРеспублика Казахстан,
050022, г. Алматы, ул. Амангельды 73,
тел.: +7 (727) 220 - 73 - 31,
220 - 73 - 32, email: cesdrn@cesdrn.org

While the issues related to gender inclusion and empowerment have not been explicitly mentioned in the Project document, they were addressed during the implementation of activities. The UNDP Kyrgyzstan Country Programme Document 2018-2022 considers the « Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management » as one of the key pillars of UNDP activities in the country. In line with this overall UNDP strategy the Project management designed for each implementation year a specific Gender Action Plan. These Plans included concrete indicators for measurement of the gender mainstreaming, as e.g. :

- Trainings with gender related session
- Inclusion of gender related topics in action points from expert group seminars
- Use of the call centres 112 for reporting gender based violence
- Use of the emergency forecasting/warning systems, rescuing services and risk reduction measures for benefit of all-women, men children, disabled etc.

Several interviewed stakeholders confirmed that the call centres 112 established by the Project are often being use for reporting gender based violence cases. The call centres 112 use is available to women, men and children as well as all high vulnerable groups of population (LGBT, elderly, people with disabilities, minorities, refugees etc.) with a full respect of the **LNOB principle**.

Project management was developing **Gender Action Plans** on a yearly basis, including dedicated budget, time frame and indicators of achievement. Main focus of these Plans was on integration of gender aspects in the training programmes and UNDP/Government commitments that 100% of the total amount of resources allocated to the Project's activities will be use for benefits of women, men, including children and disabled. Women from the partners' organizations were consistently encouraged to take part in the capacity development activities.

Analysis of the feedback received from the stakeholders complemented with the analysis of the main Project-related reports and documents, resulted in the conclusion that the Project's design, objective, outputs and activities were **highly relevant** in supporting the government of the Kyrgyz Republic in achieving its national development goals, responding to unexpected events, implementing the 2030 Agenda and delivering intended results.. **It can be concluded that the Project was a need of the hour.**

2/EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness section presents key findings by analysing the feedback obtained during the documentary review and complemented by the opinions received from the key stakeholders in responding to **the evaluation question 2** and its several sub-questions as indicated in the Terms of Reference for this evaluation.

Question 2: To what extent did the project achieve its intended objectives and contribute to the project's strategic vision? Did the Project's outcomes produced the desired change?

Sub-questions:

- o Assess the degree to which project implementation was flexible, innovative, and adaptive to the context.
- o To what extend did the Project mainstream a gender dimension and support gender responsive Disaster Risk Management.
- o To what extent did the Project complement work with different entities and have a strategic coherence of approach.
- o To what extent has UNDP Project contributed towards and improvement in national government capacity, including institutional strengthening?
- o Has UNDP been able to effectively adapt the Project to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Kyrgyz Republic?

The strategic objective/vision of the Project was “the strengthened integrated disaster risk governance capacities in Kyrgyzstan and the enhanced regional cooperation on disaster risk management in Central Asia”.

The starting point for assessing the extent to which the strategic objective of the Project was achieved was taking stock of the activities/actions implemented, as well as outputs actually delivered. The Project was supposed to deliver 5 activities by implementing 14 actions leading to attainment of 4 outputs. All planned activities/actions proposed in the Project design have been implemented with a few minor modifications in the nature of the specific actions.

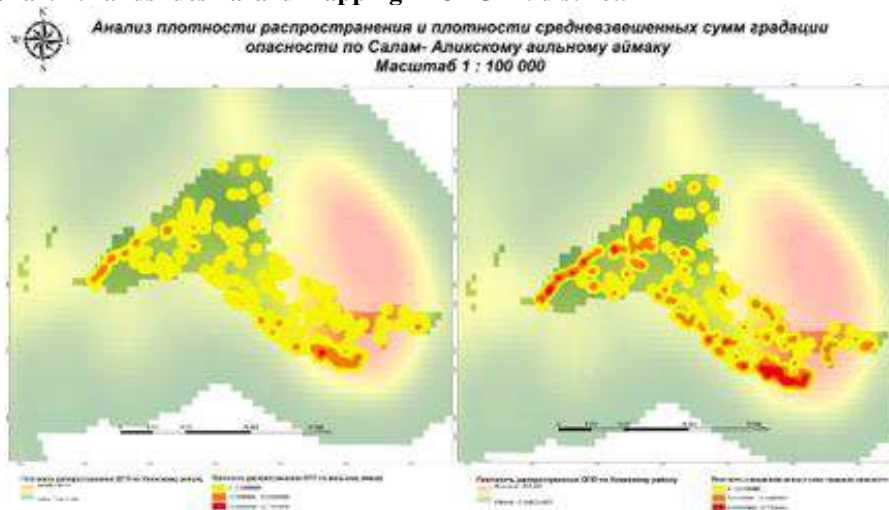
Encouraging signs of the desired change leading to the achievement of the Project's strategic objective are evident in the upgrading of the enabling environment for National Risk Assessment Framework by the adoption of the Governmental Resolution concerning the National DRR Strategy 2020. The Project has effectively supported the implementation of the objectives of the National DRR Strategy 2020 by creation of the unified disaster information, early warning, monitoring and forecasting system that applies satellite and geographic information system procedures and remote sensing techniques, strengthening avalanche risk monitoring and early warning systems, extending and strengthening the network of disaster/emergency response facilities and their rapid response capacities as well as relevant capacity building activities.

UNDP Project made a reasonable contribution towards an improvement in national government capacity, including institutional strengthening by delivering a series of knowledge management activities. Main capacity building actions included the training of the MES staff on the use of GIS and remote sensing techniques, training of the KYRGYZHYDROMET staff to use GIS and snow survey, training of emergency workers in first aid and rescue, including psychological assistance to the persons affected by disasters.

The project implementation was flexible, innovative and adaptive to the context. E.g. in order to increase the effectiveness and coherence of its activities, the Project established coordination with the World Bank Project "The Disaster Risk in Kyrgyzstan Data Platform" to avoid the duplication of activities and achieving an optimal value for money spent. The Data Platform of the Kyrgyz Republic on disaster risks established by the World Bank Project was designed for building capacity and support for making effective decisions on disaster risk management in Kyrgyzstan. The platform is the main storage, retrieval, distribution, display, input and analysis of data aimed at reducing risk and mitigating effects of natural disasters, providing different levels of authorities, private sector and the public with more information and tools through which they can make weighted decisions. Users working in the field of disaster risks can quickly find the necessary data, view and download them to their computers, upload their data and exchange them through the platform services. In the Data Platform, there are also tools that allow drawing maps from existing cartographic layer, printing them out or publishing them on the Internet in the form of interactive web maps. The national authorities dedicated its efforts to ensure an effective interconnection between the Data Platform developed in the context of the World Bank support with the unified disaster information and monitoring system developed by the UNDP Project.

Procurement of a state-of-the-art hardware and software to establish unified disaster information and monitoring system that applies satellite, GIS and remote sensing techniques facilitated application of flexible and innovative approaches by the MES in monitoring different hazards that could result in disasters. The effective operations of these innovative systems was ensured by comprehensive training sessions. The innovative spatial and GIS techniques have already been effectively applied for a practical mapping of hazardous areas as demonstrated in the following chart:

Chart 1: Landslides hazard mapping in UZGEN district.



Effectiveness and flexibility of the disaster risk reduction system in Kyrgyzstan was enhanced by extending the network of emergency response facilities and strengthening their capacities. To this end 22 pick-up vehicles equipped with modern emergency rescue equipment were delivered by the Project. In addition to the work carried out in the capital Bishkek, an Unified

Information Management System (UIMS) for disaster and crisis settings was established also in several regional centres, JALABAD, ISSYK-KUL and CHUI, including early warning and early action capabilities and 112 call centre. MES emergency response staff received a training in first aid and psychological assistance during disasters. Before the Project implementation the rescue functions were almost exclusively provided by the medical sector and the rescue services were available in a limited number of settlements. As a result of the Project's intervention the rescue services are available in a considerably higher number of settlements. This change increased the resilience capacity of a much larger proportion of the population to the negative consequences of emergencies and disasters. Moreover, the strengthening of the emergency response facilities and their capacities will enable the MES to address more effectively and flexibly the future priorities such as creation of the different specialized rescue services (mountain rescue, biological, chemical, forest fires, protection of critical infrastructure and water diving special rescue services).

Photo: Official ceremony of handover of 22 emergency rescue vehicles to the Kyrgyz authorities by the Project



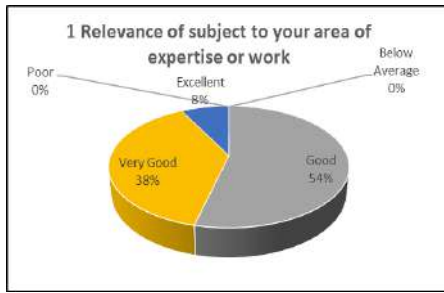
Adaptive, innovative and flexible approach of the MES will be further strengthened by the plans to mutually connect all monitoring resources/capacities at the national level, municipal level, scientific/engineering institutions into a comprehensive and integrated monitoring network to support the risk-informed governance and sustainable development. In a longer run the strategic vision of the MES is to further refine the activities of the Disaster Monitoring Centre to ensure a desired change in the national risk governance approach: “shift from disaster management to risk management, and from post-disaster recovery to comprehensive risk reduction”. By the Project contribution to this shift its strategic objective was achieved by producing a desired change in national and regional philosophy on how to address more effectively the risk originating from natural, technological and health hazards.

Innovation took place also in KERGYZHYDROMET in its approach to avalanche related hazards monitoring/early warning activities by upgrading its respective hardware and software. The effective operations of these innovative systems was ensured by a series of training sessions.

UNDP and its principal national partner, MES, faced a limited challenges in adapting the Project to the effects of COVID-19 pandemic in Kyrgyzstan. As a matter of fact, the majority of the Project activities/actions have been at a very final stage when the COVID-19 health emergency raised to the level of pandemic. The activities delayed by COVID-19 were those related to the construction of the avalanche monitoring stations. UNDP and KERGYZHYDROMET were not able to adapt the implementation of pending activities to the effects of the pandemic coupled with harsh geographic and weather condition in the construction sites. On a positive side it has to be noted that MES established during the pandemic a new 112 hot line - special line for the Ministry of Health which facilitated a more rapid mapping of a new COVID-19 cases and ensured effectiveness in rapid life-saving responses.

The Project's activities included several capacity development activities (workshops, trainings, expert working group sessions) as a vehicle to achieving the expected outputs and the overall objective. While such a strategy was pertinent, it was not supported by an effective monitoring/evaluation of the training events' impact. The monitoring system failed to track sufficiently the contribution of the capacity development activities in reaching of the expected outputs and the overall objective of the Project. This assessment is based on the fact that the impact of the workshops and application of the training and methodological tools on the recipient countries participants capacity strengthening was not sufficiently measured. Good practice suggests that capacity development events should include robust evaluation segment (quiz, evaluation questionnaire, etc.) as tool for measuring the extent of their impact on the Project outputs and its overall objective. The absence of appropriate evaluation of the capacity developments activities' impact was judged as a shortcoming. This situation made the assessment of the level of effectiveness of the trainings with respect to the expected outputs and the overall objective quite challenging. Therefore, the overall scoring is predominantly based on the feedback received from the interviewed stakeholders. It would be more appropriate if the future UNDP Projects with capacity development activities include a systematic assessment of the contribution of the capacity

development events by using the tools facilitating the measurement of the effectiveness that could be graphically in charts similar to those outlined in the following pictures:



The project has effectively complemented its work with other entities and initiatives to ensure a strategic coherence of approach. Up to the beginning of the Project 1st phase in 2012, the risk governance capacities of the Kyrgyz republic were based on an obsolete and limited focus on emergency response/recovery action. According to the estimation of the MES the effective shift from this “old fashioned” approach to a new “integrated” risk governance capacities, including a continued capacity building and maintenance, would require a minimum of USD 20 million to replace old “soviet time” systems, equipment and procedures. The Project under evaluation was not in a position to cover all these needs. However, thanks to joint UNDP/MES efforts several additional international cooperation were mobilized to complement results of the Project. E.g. MES established cooperation with World Bank, WFP, OSCE, ADB, ADPC and others.

Enhanced regional cooperation of the Central Asia disaster management authorities was facilitated by the existence of the regional Centre for Disaster Response and Risk Reduction (CDRRR) based in Almaty. In addition to further refining of the regional cooperation frameworks, operational mechanisms, plans and communication systems, the improved regional cooperation resulted in an increased attention to the management of “transboundary risks”. This focus was important since the attention to transboundary risks in Central Asia has been stagnant since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Project made a partial contribution to enhancing gender mainstreaming and supporting gender responsive disaster risk management. While a new unified information management and satellite mapping system can facilitate the collection of information concerning the gender structure of the population living in the high risk areas as well as the information about the percentage of elderly, children, girls and boys and about other highly vulnerable groups of populations (Internally Displaced Person, minorities, LGBTs, etc) which require a specific attention during major emergencies, this new potential has not been explored so far. Adequate mapping of these population groups with a specific needs during emergencies should also open door for the implementation of LNOB principle during emergencies. Similarly, the activities proposed in the Project yearly Gender Action Plans did not live up to the expectations.

On a positive side, the emergency hot line 112 can receive phone calls from all the regions and majority of the districts of the country to inform the emergency management authorities about the gender based violence, violence against the children or against other highly vulnerable groups. The interview with the Chief of the Crisis Management Centre of the MES confirmed that the hot line 112 is often used to denounce the gender based violence, violence against the children or against other highly vulnerable groups.

Analysis of the feedback received from the stakeholders complemented with the analysis of the main Project-related reports and documents, resulted in the **conclusion** that effectiveness the Project’s operations was **partially satisfactory**.

3/EFFICIENCY

The efficiency of the Project was evaluated with the analyses of the available progress reports and terminal report, as well as with the analyses of the information obtained during the documentary review complemented by the opinions received from the key stakeholders in responding to **the evaluation question 3** and its several sub-questions as indicated in the Terms of Reference for this evaluation:

Question 3: Assess whether UNDP has utilized Project funding as per the agreed work plan to achieve the projected targets

Sub-questions:

- o Analyse the role of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and whether this forum is optimally being used for decision making.
- o 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.
- o 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 (e.g. Covid-19 factor).
- o How efficient was the overall staffing, planning and coordination within the project (including between the two implementing agencies and with stakeholders? Have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- o How efficiently did the project use the project board?
- o Overall, did the project provide value for money? Have resources been used efficiently?

The project was financed by the Government of Japan and by UNDP from its own resources as shown in the below table :

Table : Summary of the Project budget

Summary Table		Amount (\$)
Total received budget from Japan		5 373 811,39
Expenditures for 4 years (2017-2021) with GMS		4 604 291,75
Existing commitments (existing contracts' amount)		382 244,90
Pending commitments		387 274,71
Japan Grand Total		5 373 811,36
UNDP own resources for Bashky-Terek		67 433,97
UNDP own resources for Chatkal		40 000,00
UNDP own resources for CESDRR		15 000,00
Grand Total		5 496 245,33

The Project Document signed by the implementing partners (UNDP and MES) in March 2017 stipulated that the activities would be initiated in March 2017 and completed in December 2019. Considering the complex nature of the project's activities and the state-of-the-art nature of the expected outputs, it can be said that the originally agreed duration for the Project's implementation period was underestimated. In addition, the conditions for the preparation and delivery of activities/actions became complicated by changes in the national government, including the MES and KYRGYZHYDROMET, and to some extent also by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. However, in spite of these objective difficulties, the extension of the implementation period until end of 2021 with some activities shifted to 2022 cannot be justified and is considered as an efficiency shortcoming.

The Project Steering Committee/Board (PSC) was composed by the representatives of UNDP, MES and the Government of Japan/donor. PSC held coordination meeting at decision making level on a yearly basis. During these sessions UNDP briefed its partners about the project goals and planned activities for the coming year as well as about the Project's achievements and challenges faced during the previous year(s). PSC played an efficient role in information sharing among the partners, analysing the Project achievements, updating a yearly work plans priorities and addressing the challenges faced. The discussions held and decisions taken during the PSC meeting were recorded in written minutes including action points. In addition, UNDP Project team held several meeting in a working level with the Project partners to ensure a coordinated implementation of the decisions taken by the PSC. The Project had the Monitoring and Evaluation plans developed annually as part of the Annual Work Plans (AWP) (AWP also includes procurement, gender, communication plans). Besides the project performance results were updated and tracked in the Atlas Project Management system regularly, at least twice a year to update the status of indicators and targets, activities, and risk management. Every two years the project was going through the Quality Assurance Performance exercise.

The consultant carefully examined all four technical cooperation outputs as well as output 5 related to the Project management to assess the level of efficiency in utilizing funding as per agreed work plan to achieve the projected results. The basis for this assessment was the last Project's financial report sent to donor on 31 July 2021 (Annex 2). From this report it is evident that the funding was not always utilized as agreed in the work plan. While for the achievement of outputs 1, 4 and 5 the financial resources were spent according the designed work plan, major discrepancies between the work plan and the actual use of financial resources as of 31 July 2021 were found in relation to output 2 (overspending of almost USD 300,000) and output 3 (underspending of

almost USD 300,000). What is positive that the last financial report (Annex 2) statement indicates that all planned actions, activities and outputs should be accomplished in line with the overall budget as planned. As already mentioned above, the Project established coordination with the World Bank Project “The Disaster Risk in Kyrgyzstan Data Platform” to avoid the duplication of activities, ensuring an efficient use of resources and achieving an optimal value for money spent. Purchase of the Project inputs was carried out through a tender system to ensure transparency and efficiency in the procurement activities.

The evaluation may caution that, considering the absence of credible and comparable data, it was not feasible to assess and comment on relative cost and time efficiencies of the UNDP Project model compared to similar public and private initiatives. Moreover, it was not feasible to measure both resources invested and outputs produced in the same comparable metrics (E.g. money, man/day, etc.). This limitation in application of direct measures of efficiency resulted in application of indirect assessment of the Project efficiency in implementing all planned activities/actions and achieving its outputs and the overall objective.

A shortcoming with regard to the efficiency in the implementation of planned activities/actions were several delays in the activities delivery against the timetables agreed in the original work plan/Tentative Project Implementation Timeline. The following activities have been delivered with delays:

Action 1.1.1: Conduct technical assessments by the experts from Japanese Disaster Management Structures to identify possible solution packages in applying innovative tools such as GIS and remote sensing techniques in Disaster Risk Reduction – planned for the second quarter 2017 – delivered in the second quarter 2018.

Action 1.1.2: Procurement of hardware and software to establish unified disaster monitoring system that applies satellite and Geographic Information System (GIS) and remote sensing techniques - planned for the fourth quarter 2018 – delivered in the second quarter 2019.

Action 2.1.1: Upgrading logistical infrastructure of the national avalanche-risk reduction (KYRGYZHYDROMET), monitoring and early warning systems - planned to be completed by the end of 2018 – completed in 2019.

Action 2.1.2. Construction of two avalanche monitoring stations - planned to be completed by the second quarter of 2019 – completed partially in 2021 with the final completion estimated in 2022. Instead of two avalanche monitoring stations, there will be three stations constructed.

Action 3.1.1: Purchase of equipment to establish 22 Fire-Rescuing Facilities under the Ministry of Emergency Situations – planned to be completed in 2017 -completed in 2018

Action 3.2.1 and 3.2.2: Purchase of hardware and software complex to establish additional Call Centres - Duty Dispatch Units 112 (DDUs) and Purchase of hardware and software complex to establish National Early Warning System (OKSION) in additional regions - planned to be completed in 2017 -completed in 2018.

All actions supporting the implementation of the activity 4.1 as a precondition of the achievements of the Output 4 were implemented on time and in full.

Major implementation delays concerned the activity 2.1.2. Construction of two avalanche monitoring stations at CHAPCHYMA and DOLON as agreed by all stakeholders during the Project design. The overall efficiency was impacted negatively by the KYRGYZHYDROMET formal request sent to UNDP in September 2017 to shift the place of construction of the avalanche station from Chapchyma Pass to Bashky-Terek village of Chatkal region. Then, UNDP was working during 2017 and 2018 on obtaining the required title documents and the design-estimation documentation for the construction of the avalanche station in CHATKAL. The construction company was selected as a result of open international bidding, the contract was signed in November 2018. Construction works of the avalanche station in CHATKAL started only in April 2019 due to difficult geographic and climatic conditions.

In April 2019, a new Director of the KYRGYZHYDROMET was appointed and in June 2019 UNDP received a letter from KYRGYZHYDROMET requesting to stop the construction in CHATKAL and shift the construction of the avalanche station back to CHAPCHYMA. For this period, the volume of work performed in CHATKAL was estimated at USD 67.000.

Considering that the Project has already spent funds on construction work on the CHATKAL site, the donor asked not to leave the facility incomplete and to ensure the effective use of the allocated funds, i.e. finalize the completion of the facility. The project offered the national partner different options for performing work on both sites. However, KYRGYZHYDROMET was against the continuation of construction in CHATKAL.

A mutually acceptable decision: the completion of work at CHATKAL and the construction of a third station at the CHAPCHYMA site (requested by KYRGYZHYDROMET) was approved by national partners after the appointment of a new Minister of Emergency Situations and Director of KYRGYZHYDROMET at the end of 2020.

In 2021, the project took measures to develop updates to the design for CHATKAL and a new design and the required documentation for the third site (CHAPCHYMA), and issued a tender for the selection of a contractor proposing the most efficient and economic conditions. Given the difficult geographic and climatic conditions, which determine a very short construction season, work at two stations, CHATKAL and CHAPCHYMA, will be completed in the summer of 2022.

The level of the efficiency was negatively impacted by several challenges which were beyond the Project management control, such as:

- The complexity of the political and social environment in Kyrgyzstan as a country with economy in transition. Political challenge was characterized by significant political and economic changes occurring in the country.
- In Kyrgyzstan, the decentralization of responsibilities of disaster risk management to the local level is taking initial roots, however, the city governments, as a rule, are not equipped to collect, analyse and use in the disaster risk management relevant data (institutional and political challenge).
- COVID-19 pandemic outbreak created an additional challenge for a smooth implementation of some operations planned by the Project.

Given the nature and extent of the political and institutional changes, these challenges were overcome partially only.

Important lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic was that the emergency situation can represent, in addition to multiple challenges, also the opportunity to explore new implementation approaches and to increase awareness about the need to mitigate the impact of the potential compound emergencies in the future. As an example can be mentioned the use of a newly established 112 Call Centre for monitoring/reporting new cases of COVID-19. Another lesson was, that COVID-19 pandemic increased the awareness about the need for a careful consideration of the potential risks generated by unexpected crisis/emergencies in the preparation of the future projects.

On a positive side, UNDP was proactive in seeking contributions in kind from other stakeholders to increase the project financing. Additional resources were mobilized from the recipient governments in providing workshop premises, assistance in logistics and information sharing, from the ADRC in providing expert support and from the UNDP country offices in supporting preparation and implementation of national workshops.

The prevailing opinion of the interviewed Project stakeholders confirmed that the UNDP Project management team was highly diligent in seeking out budgetary discipline and cost efficiencies. These efforts resulted in a wise and adequate allocation of resources that facilitated the achievement of the Project objectives within the anticipated budget.

The Project management cost of the UNDP (approximately 7,4 % of the overall budget) as well as the indirect support cost (8 %) look realistic. The Project achieved its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources. The human and financial resources allocated to the Project were used efficiently and commensurate to the Project results. However, the delivery of the Project funds and activities was very low in the initial 2 years of the implementation period. The Project was sufficiently staffed, efficiently keeping a constant dialogue with implementing agencies and other stakeholders. The staffing was aligned with the "Project Organizational Structure" agreed in its design phase. The planned Project outputs were achieved in full, however not in 2019 as originally planned but with considerable delays resulting in extension of the Project implementation period until 2021, with an additional shift concerning the construction of the avalanche monitoring stations until 2022 due to harsh geographic and weather conditions at the construction sites.

Analysis of the feedback received from the stakeholders' interviews complemented by the analysis of the main Project-related reports and documents, resulted in the **conclusion** that efficiency the Project in the implementation of its work plan was a **partially satisfactory**.

4/ SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the Project's impact was assessed through the analyses of the available progress and terminal reports, as well as with the analyses of the information obtained during the review of other pertinent documents and complemented by the

opinions received from the key stakeholders in responding to **the evaluation question 4** and its several sub-questions as indicated in the Terms of Reference for this evaluation:

Question 4: 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.

Sub-questions:

- How strong is the commitment of the Government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of the Project's support and continuing similar initiatives?
- To what extent are policy and regulatory frameworks in place that will support the continuation of benefits?
- To what extent have national partners committed to providing continuing support (financial, staff, aspirational, etc.)?
- Specific focus on sustainability vis-a-vis on gender equality and human rights: To what extent has gender and human rights considerations been integrated into the project design and implementation?

All interviewed stakeholders agreed that the Project's outcomes and its strategic objective have a promising perspective for being sustained by the Governments of Kyrgyzstan as well as of the countries involved in development of the output 4 beyond the Project's lifetime. This was considered as a result of various positive factors, such as enhanced organizational and management capacity of the participating partners, developing sustainable partnerships among main stakeholder and adaptability to the main recipient country and other Central Asia countries' needs. Concerning the future perspective of sustainability, it was important, that the implemented activities buttressed the levels of awareness of the importance of the strengthening of the integrated risk governance capacities of in Kyrgyzstan and of the respective regional cooperation in Central Asia as an important condition of sustainable development. This awareness went hand in hand with a growing understanding of this concept, and its practical application. The high motivation of the partners participation in all activities indicate that stakeholders of the recipient countries own the outputs of the Project sufficiently.

KII confirmed the commitment and readiness of the main partners, MES of Kyrgyzstan, KYRGYZHYDROMET and CESDRR to continue consolidation of the Project's outputs and objectives in the future. E.g. KYRGYZHYDROMET representative declared a strong interest in maintaining the results of the project and continuing similar activities. The organization plans to construct another three avalanche monitoring stations with its own resources. In order to increase the potential for preventing avalanche risks with a potential to cause significant social, economic and environmental damage to villages and cities of the Kyrgyz Republic, the institution will propose to the Government to install three more avalanche stations on the following roads: an alternative road Balykchy-Kazarman-Jalalabad, on the Alabel section of the Bishkek highway-Osh and on the road Myrzake-Kara-Kulja-Alaikuu. The national partners declared their commitments in providing aspirational, staff support and financial support in sustaining the outputs achieved commensurate to the budgetary provisions available in the state budget.

MES informed that building institutional capacity in disaster risk reduction and integrated risk governance capacities is an integral part of the state policy in the field of civil protection of the population in the territory of the country. MES is strongly interested in maintaining the results of the project and in continuing similar initiatives. However, considering the travel limitations due to COVID-19 the evaluation was not in a position to assess the degree of involvement and aligning with the existing priorities of the local government of the targeted areas. On a positive note, it was confirmed that the representatives of the local government from the targeted areas participated in several capacity development events organized by the Project.

The integrated risk governance involves different entry points such as legal framework development, advocacy, knowledge and recognition that development and disaster risk management are closely interconnected. In Kyrgyzstan, disaster risk reduction policy is primarily regulated by the National Sustainable Development Strategy for 2013-2017, which was adopted by Presidential Decree No. 11 of January 21, 2013; The Strategy for the Integrated Security of the Population and Territories in Emergency and Crisis Situations until 2020, adopted by the Government Decree No. 357 of June 2, 2012; Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 569 dated October 23, 2019 "On the Unified System for Comprehensive Monitoring and Forecasting of Emergencies in the Kyrgyz Republic", Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 550 dated November 22, 2018 "On the Classification and Assessment Criteria for Emergencies in the Kyrgyz Republic", and a key document: "The Law of the Kyrgyz Republic On Civil Protection No. 54", dated 24 May 2018, and many other regulatory resolutions included in this Law covering preparedness for and reduction of risks in emergencies.



ЗАКОН КЫРГЫЗСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ от 24 мая 2018 года № 54 О Гражданской защите

The proliferation of regulatory documents for disaster risk management since 2018 reflects a growing interest of the national government in this field. The following regulatory frameworks in place should play a catalytic role in supporting the continuation of the Project's benefits:

- a) New edition of the Law on Civil Protection - <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/111787?cl=ru-ru>
- b) Strategic document "Concept of protection of the population and territories from emergencies" - <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/11990>
- c) Regulations on the Unified Integrated System for Monitoring and Forecasting Emergencies (regulates the activities of the system created within the framework of Output 1) - <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/157218>
- d) Regulations on the Unified Information Management System (regulates the activities of the system created and expanded within the framework of output 3) - <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/94002>

The evidence of the growing interest in the improvement of the national legislative and regulatory documents was confirmed by the national stakeholders from all recipient countries. The Project overall objective continues to be pertinent and its activities can be replicated in other countries and regions in which UNDP supports the strengthening of disaster risk management portfolio. A long-term sustainability of the Project impact will very much depend on the capacity available in the UNDP for efficient employing of the online resources for a broad dissemination of relevant lessons learned, best practices, knowledge and expertise accumulated in the course of its implementation.

The Project contributed to strengthening the application of gender mainstreaming in a partial manner. This subject was not explicitly considered in the Project Document. Therefore, it was not considered as an issue of a major focus. Nevertheless, as already mentioned above, the Project management designed for each implementation year a specific Gender Action Plan, in line with the overall UNDP strategy. These Plans included concrete indicators for measurement of the gender mainstreaming, as e.g. :

- Trainings with gender related session
- Inclusion of gender related topics in action points from expert group seminars
- Use of the call centres 112 for reporting gender based violence
- Use of the emergency forecasting/warning systems, rescuing services and risk reduction measures for benefit of all-women, men children, disabled etc.

Several interviewed stakeholders confirmed that the call centres 112 established by the Project are often being use for reporting gender based violence cases. The call centres 112 use is available to women, men and children as well as all high vulnerable groups of population (LGBT, elderly, people with disabilities, minorities, refugees etc.) with a full respect of the LNOB principle. Project management was developing Gender Action Plans on a yearly basis, including dedicated budget, time frame and indicators of achievement. Main focus of these Plans was on integration of gender aspects in the training programmes and UNDP/Government commitments that 100% of the total amount of resources allocated to the Project's activities will be used for benefits of women, men, including children and disabled to protect their human right "to be protected against risks". Women from the partners' organizations were consistently encouraged to take part in the capacity development activities. In general, the results of the project are aimed at reducing risk and vulnerability for the entire population, for protecting people from disasters' negative impact. This means that 100% of the total allocated budget will be for the benefit of men, women, children including the disabled as well as the population groups with an increased vulnerability to the natural hazards impact.

Documentary review and the interviews with the stakeholders have not indicated any possible unanticipated or negative effects of the interventions on human rights and gender equality.

The Project outputs contributed to the awareness raising about the need for a more systematic and comprehensive consideration of gender mainstreaming principles and the special needs of the most vulnerable groups. The extent, to which this awareness will be reflected in a practical implementation of the disaster risk management actions, can, realistically, be assessed only in the years to come.

A future sustainability of the Project results will also depend on the capacities of the recipient countries to gather effectively all data and information required for the evidence-based disaster risk governance capacities policy development and the enhanced political commitment and capacity building of people involved in this process. It is to be noted that limited national resources for sustainable development of integrated risk governance capacities in the recipient countries can constitute a slowing-down factor in achieving a significant level of sustainability and ownership of the outputs of the work implemented in the Project.

Analysis of the feedback received from the stakeholders complemented with the analysis of the main Project-related reports and documents, resulted in the conclusion that the perspectives for sustainability of the Project's outputs and impact in Kyrgyzstan and the countries participating in the activities resulting in achievement of the output 4 was **highly satisfactory**.

VI. Lessons learned

The lessons learned are based on the findings and conclusions described in the section V. originating from the documentary review, responses received to the questionnaire and during in-depth interviews with the stakeholders, and are presented below.

8. **Natural hazards in Kyrgyzstan and the Central Asia region occur along many lines including earthquakes, landslides, floods, droughts, mudslides, avalanches. This coupled with a high degree of the social and economic vulnerability requires and increased attention to the strengthening of integrated risk governance capacities.**
9. **Consistent alignment of the Project's disaster risk reduction activities and outputs with the persisting national and regional disaster risk reduction challenges/needs, development goals, UNDP strategic priorities in general and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development boosted its relevance.**
10. **Well designed and managed programs/projects addressing the strengthening the national risk governance capacities lead potentially to a positive shift of disaster/emergency management authorities and of disaster risk management legislation by reducing focus on provision of disaster relief and rehabilitation and reinforcing disaster risk reduction actions.**
11. **Unpredictable emergencies such as for instance COVID-19 coupled with very high staff turn-over, often at decision making levels, in the national partner organizations represent a considerable risk for the technical cooperation projects implementation on time and in accordance with the original project design.**
12. **Sharing of the best practices from the implementation, successes attained and challenges faced by the country-level disaster risk reduction projects through appropriate regional and SSC/triangular cooperation arrangements increases the catalytic impact of projects.**
13. **The effectiveness and overall impact of capacity development initiatives (seminars, workshops, trainings etc.) is difficult to measure if these events do not include appropriate tools for the event evaluation (questionnaires, quiz, etc.).**
14. **The presence of the gender mainstreaming and vulnerable groups of population inclusion in disaster risk reduction projects is an important prerequisite for addressing specific vulnerabilities and needs of all segments of the population and implementing the principle of Leave No One Behind. The Project faced several shortcomings in applying gender, rights-based and disability inclusion approaches in the design, with partial results in considering these issues during the implementation activities.**
15. **Important lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic was that the emergency situation can represent, in addition to multiple challenges, also the opportunity to explore new project implementation approaches, but also it means the need to be ready to mitigate the impact of the potential compound emergencies during the project lifetime.**
16. **Unrealistic design of the project document has a potential to undermine the efficiency of the project implementation phase.**

17. The integrated risk governance involves different entry points such as legal framework development, advocacy, knowledge and recognition that development and disaster risk management are closely interconnected.
18. From the evaluator's point of view the main lesson learned is concerning the usefulness of a comprehensive logical framework based on the Theory of Change to be included in the UNDP technical cooperation project documents. The absence of such framework reduces the transparency and efficiency of periodic monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved by the project.

VII. Recommendations

6. UNDP to continue interventions in the Central Asia region countries with economies in transition and to maintain regular dialogue with their national authorities responsible for disaster and emergency management, to keep the momentum for maintaining their commitment to developing integrated disaster risk governance capacities.
7. Donors and UNDP know-how and financial support continuation for further strengthening of national disaster risk management systems in Kyrgyzstan will be crucial because government funds are not available for some areas of disaster risk reduction activities.
8. Systematically assess, monitor and document the usefulness and impact of the capacity development workshops/seminars by canvassing feedback from the participants through a well-tailored questionnaire or quiz approach application and internet-based tools as e.g. Survey Monkey. These assessments should include a space for qualitative comments and proposals by participants
9. In the design of the future technical cooperation projects include comprehensive logical framework based on the Theory of Change methodology to promote the transparency and efficiency of periodic monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved by the project.
10. UNDP to ensure that aspects related to gender mainstreaming, rights-based considerations and vulnerable groups inclusion approaches are sufficiently reflected in the design of the future disaster risk management projects, as well as integrated during in implementation of activities.
11. National governments in Central Asia need to assume a stronger leadership and demonstrate commitment to developing and implementing adequate disaster risk reduction governance system, mechanisms and concrete activities at all administrative levels and across relevant sectors as well as to ensure that DRR architecture is extended from national to community level.
12. In the follow up to the Project, disaster risk reduction needs to be clearly defined in and conceptualized by national legislative and policy documents including the establishment of standards and criteria of progress for disaster risk governance. This should be achieved in the framework of continued strengthening of governance arrangements for the implementation of the Sendai DRR Framework.
13. The integration of DRR into development is in Central Asia countries at initial stages. There is a need to address disconnect between DRR and development, which is caused by the fact that both require cross-sectorial approached, by mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development efforts and into key sectors outside the disaster management domain and ensure coordination between those sectors and the disaster management systems.

VIII. Annexes

1. Annex 1: TOR for the evaluation of the Project
2. Annex 2: Project financial report as of 31 July 2021

3. Annex 3: Evaluation questionnaire
4. Annex 4: List of the interviewed stakeholders
5. Annex 5: List of key documents reviewed