FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Improvement of fire safety of population by strengthening capacity of the Fire and Rescue Services in the Kyrgyz Republic
Project (December 2019 - June 2024)

By

Gheorghe Caraseni

June, 2024

Acknowledgements

The evaluator expresses his thanks to UNDP Kyrgyzstan for providing the opportunity to carry out the final evaluation of the *Improvement of fire safety of population by strengthening capacity of the Fire and Rescue Services in the Kyrgyz Republic* Project (December 2019 - June 2024) funded by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

The evaluator especially thanks the UNDP project team who provided much appreciated guidance, all available information and timely logistical assistance in conducting the project evaluation during the data collection.

The evaluator also appreciated the opportunity to interact with the representatives of KOICA and the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Kyrgyz Republic and other project stakeholders and to gain their insights.

Disclaimer

This project evaluation report presents the view of the evaluator and does not necessarily fully correspond to the opinions of the UNDP or other stakeholders referred to in this report.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information given here is correct. Any factual error that may appear is unintended and falls under the responsibility of the evaluator.

Table of Contents

Acronyms

CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DRR	Disasters Risk Reduction
DRM	Disasters Risk Management
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
KII	Key Informant Interview
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MES	Ministry of Emergency Situation
RBM	Results Based Management
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOC	Theory of Change
UFE	Utilization-focused evaluation
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report is prepared following the outline provided in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the final evaluation of the *"Improvement of fire safety of population by strengthening capacity of the Fire and Rescue Services in the Kyrgyz Republic"* Project (2019-2024) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Kyrgyzstan and funded by KOICA.

The project *aimed* improving the quality of fire services and working conditions for firefighters and reducing vulnerability of the population of Kyrgyzstan to fires through creation of conditions for sustainable development in the four project sites: Osh, Bishkek, Suzak and Cholpan-Ata.

Reducing vulnerability of the targeted population to fires is achieved through two *components/outcomes*:

o   *Component I:* Modernizing Fire and Rescue units, i.e. constructing new buildings for Fire and Rescue units and equipping them with the necessary materials and equipment, including fire-fighting and Rescue machinery and equipment;

o   *Component II:* Carrying out joint partnership measures aimed at improving the regulatory framework of the Fire and Rescue Service on actions during disasters to protect the population, especially for most vulnerable groups, such as women and children.

The ***purpose of the evaluation*** is to assess performance of the project, potential impacts, sustainability of benefits and draw lessons that can inform future Disaster Risk Management (DRM) actions to be further used and implemented by UNDP and other development partners.

The *evaluation methodology* included a participatory and mixed data collection approach and mostly qualitative methods, including: *desk review* of the project documents, *individual interviews and focus group discussions* with the stakeholders and *direct observation* during the field visit to the firefighting and rescue units from Bishkek, Osh and Suzak , as well as to the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES).

Overall, the data obtained from the desk-review and face-to-face interviews and FGDs ensured sufficient information for triangulation and synthesis of objective conclusions about the project implementation. Still, the evaluation encountered some ***data limitation*** issues regarding the impact level changes generated by the project given the fact that the firefighting units only some months ago became operational. As a <u>mitigation measure</u>, the evaluation consultant attempted to assess the early signs of potential impact.

Conclusions

1. The project is highly relevant to the national capacities needs of the MES and firefighting and rescue units and is strongly aligned to the civil protection and DRM priorities and policies of Kyrgyzstan.

The project is needs-based and its design is consistent with interlinked results-chain and without the major gaps between the objectives-indicators-activities-targets. The intervention logic combined *hard* (infrastructural) and *soft* (capacity development and policy revision) interventions, which were complementarily and contributed to building the resilience of the national institutions and local communities to disaster risks for upholding the right of a human being to live in a fire-safe environment and achievement of a safe and secure society in Kyrgyzstan. The project is rights-based focused on the *„duty bearers"* or supply side (MES and firefighting units) or supply side*,* while the *„rights holders"* or demand side (people of Kyrgyzstan, especially women and children) are final beneficiaries. The gender aspects are mostly integrated in the project document, especially in relation to the component II. The

project contributed to implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) and national DRR 2030 Strategy.

2. The project is internally and externally coherent and illustrates good complementarity and synergetic effects with other similar initiatives focused on increasing the firefighting and rescue capacities of Kyrgyzstan.

The project is responsive to the changing national emergency needs and requests of the national partner, MES, and promptly adjusted its delivery and type of assistance taking into consideration the firefighting assistance provided by other international actors and existing further infrastructural development gaps. The project is also coherent and aligned to the strategic priorities of the UN in Kyrgyzstan, UNDAF and UNDP Kyrgyzstan Country Programme.

3. The project is mostly effective and reached its objective within Component I - improved the fire-fighting and rescue facilities in the four targeted sites of Kyrgyzstan, which positively influenced the operational capacity of the fire-fighting and rescue units and the quality of the respective services.

The project was heavily influenced by mostly external factors. Nevertheless, it successfully constructed and equipped the envisaged firefighting facilities in the four targeted sites, three of which are operational and regularly use the firefighting and rescue equipment, tools and trucks/cars with some exceptions described in the report. The consolidated data regarding the qualitative changes (reducing response time) of the firefighting services is missing, but the project modernized the infrastructure and created enabling environment, including well and qualitatively equipped facilities necessary for improving the quality and promptness of the firefighting and rescue interventions.

4. Overall, the project management was flexible and adaptive and the project operated mostly in an efficient manner reaching the majority of the targets within the extended project duration and budget.

The project was adequately staffed and the financial resources were used for the budget lines as planned without the significant deviations, except the approved reallocations and extensions. No information was found about misuse of financial resources or contra-productive partnerships. On contrary, the project promoted partnerships between the emergency departments of the South Korea and Kyrgyzstan. The project was implemented by UNDP in regular communication and close partnership with KOICA through joining of efforts aimed at increasing the fire-fighting capacity and, at the same time, raising awareness of the public and especially among women and children on critical safety measures that they need to acquire to properly act during emergency situations. The evaluation did not find any alternative solutions, which could be provided at fewer expenses and/ or would be more economical for the project.

5. The long-term changes generated with the project contribution, i.e. the impact of the infrastructural related achievements is premature to be assessed, although some positive early sings of potential impact.

Given the fact that three firefighting units became operational only a few months ago, while the last one in Bishkek was still under construction finalization phase, the evaluation was unable to find relevant data regarding the dynamics of human casualties and physical damage caused by fires in the piloted sites as well as projects' contribution to reducing those values. Still, there is some proxy data presented in the report, which apparently illustrate some positive tendencies in decreasing the statistics of fires, human casualties and damages in Issyk-Kul oblast, including Cholpan Ata and Osh city, unlike Jalal-Abad oblast, which includes Suzak rayon.

6. Generally, the sustainability perspectives of the achievements are mostly promising with strong national and local ownership of the Government and LSG to sustaining the results and continuing similar DRM and civil protection initiatives.

The project enhanced country's sustainability to disasters, including man-made ones. The promising sustainability of the project results are supported by the explicit political will of the Government regarding the implementation of the current DRR Strategy and engagement of the local communities in increasing DRM literacy by other actors.

Overall, the project performed in internalization of the '*hard'* interventions results, particularly infrastructure development and special firefighting and rescue equipment. There is an open commitment of the MES to take over the project achievements and deliverables in relation to administrative and financial management, thus ensuring the "shared responsibility" of national partners.

Lessons Learnt

Based on the above-described findings, the evaluator suggests two lessons that may be of value:

1. *After provision of the firefighting equipment, including trucks, it is necessary to track the use of it.* Formally, the task is getting completed once the equipment is officially provided to the MES. However, from the performance management perspectives, there is a need to monitor the functionality and use of the equipment as well as the changes generated by the technical support and or the respective bottlenecks/difficulties. The issues with the registration of the track from firefighting unit of Suzak and adaptors for the truck from Osh are illustrative and provide valuable lesson in this regard.

2. *Joint implementation approach involves well communication and information/report sharing between UNDP and KOICA, but also vice versa from KOICA and UNDP* as well, because both partners are contributing to the same long-term expected changes, i.e. impact. This is valid regarding sharing the baseline study report, capacity development reports, policy reviewing findings and recommendations as well as monitoring reports.

Recommendations

The evaluator suggests six prioritized recommendations explained to his best professional judgment following analysis of the data, presentation and consultations with the stakeholders.

N	Recommendations
Rec. 01	*Capitalize on the achievements and keep further supporting enhancement of the national fire-fighting capacity for improvement of the fire safety of the population of Kyrgyzstan.*
Rec. 02	*Prioritize providing much- needed technical equipment and tools to a larger number of firefighting and rescue units as well as renovation of existing buildings, and then consider building new ones.*
Rec. 03	*Consider financial contribution and cost-sharing from the Government of Kyrgyzstan.*
Rec. 04	*Focus on increasing the public awareness and enhancing the fire safety literacy and engagement of the local actors.*
Rec. 05	*Reinforce information sharing between KOICA and UNDP and use joint approach throughout the entire project cycle management.*
Rec. 06	*Keep monitoring use of provided equipment and technical support and track the implementation challenges encountered by the firefighting units and changes in their services.*

I. INTRODUCTION

This report is prepared by the evaluation consultant following the outline provided in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the final evaluation of the *Improvement of fire safety of population by strengthening capacity of the Fire and Rescue Services in the Kyrgyz Republic* Project funded by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The report is prepared based on a review of the documents and field mission consultations and direct observations in the project sites of Kyrgyzstan. It provides a brief overview of the project, defines the overall evaluation approach and methodology, describes the main findings, conclusions and lessons learned and provides and manageable number of recommendations. The final evaluation was focused on the Component I of the project.

II. BACKGROUND

Kyrgyzstan is a highly vulnerable country prone to natural and man-made disasters and threats. Despite a number of measures taken by the government, according to the data of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, there has been a constantly increase in Kyrgyzstan's vulnerability to disasters over the past two decades. Thus, in the period 1991 - 2000, the average annual number of emergency situations equaled to 123, from 2001 to 2010 it had amounted to 235, and from 2011 to 2017 increased to 277.[1]

Map 1. *Kyrgyzstan and coverage of the project*

During 2006 - 2016 there were 41 269 fires registered with physical damage of over 4 378 528 318 soms[2], 844 people, including 101 children died, while 842 people received various types of burns and injuries[3]. The average number of incidents associated with fires per year equals to 4,126 cases, with an average damage constituting 437,852,8 thousand soms (over 6 million USD).[4]

The main problems in ensuring fire safety are the lack of compliance with security rules and requirements, issues related to timely response to incidents connected to fires, inadequate equipment and low awareness and responsibility level of population.

Another acute problem of ensuring fire safety is the radius of coverage of the fire-fighting and rescue units which is sometimes 8-10 times bigger than the established standards. This is due to the growth of population, the expansion of cities and villages, and at the same time, the slower pace of the creation of new fire services. The remoteness of settlements and unsatisfactory communication increases the response time required for fire departments to reach the place of emergency calls.

---

[1] Official statistics provided by MES. Project document.
[2] Som is the national currency of Kyrgyzstan. 1 som = 0,011 $
[3] Ibidem
[4] Ibidem

III. **BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The *'Improvement of fire safety of population by strengthening capacity of the Fire & Rescue Services in the Kyrgyz Republic'* Project funded by KOICA **aims** improving the quality of fire services and working conditions for firefighters and reducing vulnerability of the population of Kyrgyzstan to fires and create conditions for sustainable development in the four project sites: Osh, Bishkek, Suzak and Cholpan Ata. See map 1 above).

The aim of the project is achieved through two core components:

o *Component I:* Modernizing Fire and Rescue units, i.e. constructing new buildings for Fire and Rescue units and equipping them with the necessary materials and equipment, including fire-fighting and Rescue machinery and equipment;

o *Component II:* Carrying out joint partnership measures aimed at improving the regulatory framework of the Fire and Rescue Service on actions during disasters to protect the population, especially for most vulnerable groups, such as women and children.

The key performance indicators (KPIs) at the impact, outcomes and outputs levels are:

Impact KPIs are:
   o Reduction in human casualties;
   o Reduction in physical damages;

Outcomes KPIs are:
   o Reduction in the response time in the pilot areas of the project;
   o Reduction in the radius of coverage of the fire unit in the pilot areas of the project;

Outputs KPIs are:
   o Construction of 4 fire stations;
   o Completion of new guidelines
   o Number of employees covered by training programs;

The main national partner of the project is the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Kyrgyz Republic (MES).
The project budget: USD 8,051,600, including USD 7,700,000 allocated by KOICA and
USD 351,000 contribution of UNDP. Of the 7.7 million allocated by KOICA, 6.7 million was granted to UNDP for the implementation of Output 1.
Implementation timeframe of the project: December 2019 – June 2024.

IV. EVALUATION APPROACH

This section presents an overview on the structure and guiding principles informing the evaluation design and conduct. It also outlines the methodology and limitations encountered.

4.1 Evaluation purpose, objectives and users

The *purpose of the evaluation* is to assess performance of the project, potential impacts, sustainability of benefits and draw lessons that can inform future Disaster Risk Management (DRM) interventions to be further used and implemented by UNDP and other development partners. The evaluation also presents an opportunity to assess the project's added value to enhance emergency response capabilities to provide prompt aid to disaster victims and to reduce the damage from disasters.

The *key objectives of the evaluation* are to:

o Analyse the *relevance* of the project design, alignment to the national priorities (including on gender equality), its inclusiveness and adaptability;
o Assess *effectiveness of* implementation, final achievements and the key influencing factors;
o Assess *efficiency* of the use of resources, management arrangements and coordination mechanisms;
o Assess the *sustainability* prospects of the achievements;
o Identify and analyse lessons to be learned and good practices for replication;
o Provide evidenced-based manageable recommendations in line with the evaluation findings and conclusions.

It is *expected* that the evaluation will stimulate learning and further improvement and will contribute to effective programming by UNDP, MES and KOICA refining or reinforcement of the approaches, if any. The findings of the evaluation will be also used to further engage policy-makers and other 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 will contribute to overall accountability and learning processes of main users: UNDP, MES, local authorities, donor, other stakeholders.

4.2 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation adopted a participatory approach, engaging a wide and diverse range of stakeholders. Participation of the main partners is a necessary condition to ensure accountability, stimulate learning, promote inclusiveness and ownership, facilitate future buy-in and arrive at comprehensive recommendations for UNDP, MES, KOICA and other stakeholders.

The evaluation process was based on a *Human Rights Based Approach[5] (HRBA)* and *Leave No One Behind* (LNOB)[6] as well as gender equality principles[7]. The key evaluation questions were in line with those reflected in the ToR and are integrated in the Evaluation Matrix and tools.

---

[5] HRBA requires human rights principles to guide UN development cooperation, and focus on developing the capacities of both *'duty-bearers'* to meet their obligations, and *'rights-holders'* to claim their rights. https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/human-rights-based-approach

[6] LNOB entails reaching the poorest of the poor and requires combating discrimination and rising inequalities and their root causes. For additional information: https://open.unwomen.org/LNOB

[7] Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – towards UNEG Guidance: www.uneval.org/document/detail/980 UNEG Guidance Integrating Human Rights and Gender into Evaluation: www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616

The evaluator used the UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator[8] and evaluation was gender-responsive[9], which included two essential elements: what the evaluation examines and how it is undertaken. The evaluation used the utilization-focused evaluation approach (UFE)[10,] which is based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged according to how useful it is. This means identifying the primary users of an evaluation and ensuring that they are engaged in decision-making throughout the process. Therefore, the evaluator identified the expected users, which were engaged through the evaluation.

The following mixed data collection methods were applied:

- *Desk review* of the project documents and other written informational sources provided by UNDP background documentation, including project documents, progress reports, baseline studies, etc. (See Annex 3)
- *Individual interviews and focus group discussions* with the stakeholders. (See Annex 2);
- *Direct observation* during the field visit to the firefighting and rescue units from Bishkek, Osh and Suzak , as well as to MES.

Primary information was collected through the face-to-face semi-structured interviews and FGD. The final evaluation questions (Annex 1 – Evaluation Matrix) were tailored for each type of stakeholder, as mentioned in the inception report. The transparency of the evaluation process was ensured by the availability of and the agreement on the methodology (inception phase) and by clear communication through the process with the stakeholders, including project team.

The secondary information was gathered through a desk-review of written project documents, guiding documents, progress reports, feasibility studies and other documents provided by UNDP (See Annex 3).

The following methodologies in data analysis were used:

Table 1: *Analysis methodologies applied*

Method	Rationale
Change analysis	Collected data were systematized and compared against the achievements and expected changes described in the project document. This helped reaching conclusions on progress of the project towards the targets and most effective approaches and recommendations for the next similar actions.
Contribution analysis	Contribution analysis proved to be the most appropriate method used in understanding the causes of achieved results, results` chain, influencing factors, including both enablers and barriers. That enabled drawing conclusions around the identification of the main contributors or key driving forces.

The evaluation was carried out according to the UNEG norms and standards[11], and Code of Conduct for Evaluation.[12]

o *Independence, Impartiality and Incorruptibility.* These three interdependent elements were necessary for credibility and prevention of conflicts of interest, bias or influence of others, which may compromise the evaluation. The evaluator remained independent from UNDP, donor and other stakeholders at all times. Clear reasons for evaluative judgments, and the acceptance or rejection of comments on the deliverables were given.

---

[8] See: https://elearning.un.org/CONT/GEN/CS/I_Know_Gender_(English)/story_content/external_files/M03_S16_16_17_UN_SWAP_brochure.pdf
[9] See: *How to manage gender responsive evaluation* . UN Women Independent Evaluation Office.
[10] See: https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation
[11] United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for evaluation can be found at: = http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914
[12] UNEG Code of Conduct to Evaluations in the UN system: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

The evaluation report is making clear that it is the view of the evaluation consultant, and not necessarily that of UNDP, MIA, GPI, donor or other stakeholders, which may articulate their voice through a Management Response.

o *Respect and accessibility.* The evaluator provided access to the evaluation process and deliverables[13] to UNDP without any discrimination based on sex, race, language, religion, ability etc. To secure the accessibility, the data collection was done in Romanian language and were held in easy accessible locations and at an adequate and previously agreed time.

o *Anonymity and confidentiality*. The evaluation respected the rights of individuals who provided information, ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality. The evaluator informed the stakeholders about the principles of the evaluation at the beginning of the consultations and asked orally the permission for notes taking.

o *Responsibility and validity of information.* The evaluator is responsible for the accuracy of the information collected and presented in the evaluation report.

4.3 Limitations

Diverse sources of information were used, and types of information gathered during the assignment. The data obtained from the desk-review of documentation and face-to-face interviews and FGDs ensured sufficient information for triangulation and synthesis of objective conclusions about the project implementation.

Still, the questions regarding the impact level changes generated by the project were difficult to be assessed, because of the unavailability of the data given the fact that the firefighting units only some months ago became operational, while in some cases the firefighting trucks are not yet used to their full potential. As a mitigation measure, the evaluation consultant attempted to assess the early signs of potential impact.

V. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This part of the report presents the findings and analysis of the final evaluation organized to highlight the *Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency*, *Impact* and *Sustainability* of the component 1 of the KOICA funded project as required in the ToR and specified in the inception report.

5.1 RELEVANCE

The relevance is assessed mostly by the extent to which the project is in line with the priorities of the Kyrgyz Republic. It takes into account the degree to which the project is aligned to the needs of MES, and the degree to which the logic of intervention is results-oriented and consistent for achieving the expected results. The HRBA, cross-cutting issues particularly gender and disability inclusion and the LNOB Principle are also analyzed.

---

[13] Inception report, draft and final evaluation report.

5.1.1 Consistency between the project and national strategic priorities and needs.

Overall, *the evaluation found that the project is strongly aligned to the civil protection, DRR priorities and national development strategies of Kyrgyzstan*.

Relevance is one of the key strengths of the project. Thus, the project directly contributes to the implementation of the Concept of Comprehensive Protection of the Population and Territories of the Kyrgyz Republic from Emergency Situations (2018-2030)[14] or so called "DRR Strategy 2030', which aims ensuring the safety of the population and territories of the country from emergencies and disasters.

The project is also fully in line with the Prospective Strategic Development Plan of the Ministry of Emergency Situations the Kyrgyz Republic[15] on disaster preparedness and strengthening of emergency response to enable provision of timely assistance to victims of disasters and reduction of damage from disasters.

The project directly contributes to building the resilience of the national institutions and local communities to disaster risks in line with the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction - DRR (2015-2030), which calls for enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and strengthening disaster preparedness in terms of response, proactive prevention measures, integration of DRR with preparedness and response into local and development planning and enhancing capacity to enable effective response, recovery, and accessibility to the fire- fighting services.

The key national partner, MES was actively involved in the project's conceptualization process and the project widely meets the developmental needs of the firefighting service, in general. All the interviewed stakeholders remarked the need for and importance of the functional fire-fighting and rescue service in the country and the tangible contribution of the project.

" *We very much need such projects and we are thankful to KOICA and UNDP for support. This is the only project in Kyrgyzstan (except the government's actions), which builds and equips the fire-fighting and rescue facilities from the scratch.*"[16] – Interviewed stakeholder.

The interviewed stakeholders also appreciated that the project had a complex approach focusing both on infrastructure development and technical support ('hard' component) and enhancing thematic expertise /capacity development and regulatory and policy framework of the fire - fighters ('soft' component).

---

[14] The concept has been approved by the Decree Nr 58 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on January 29, 2018. For additional information: https://cesdrr.org/en/the-action-plan-for-2023-2026-on-the-implementation-of-the-national-concept-of-comprehensive-protection

[15] Approved by the Order Nr 31 of the Ministry of Emergency Situations on January 15, 2018
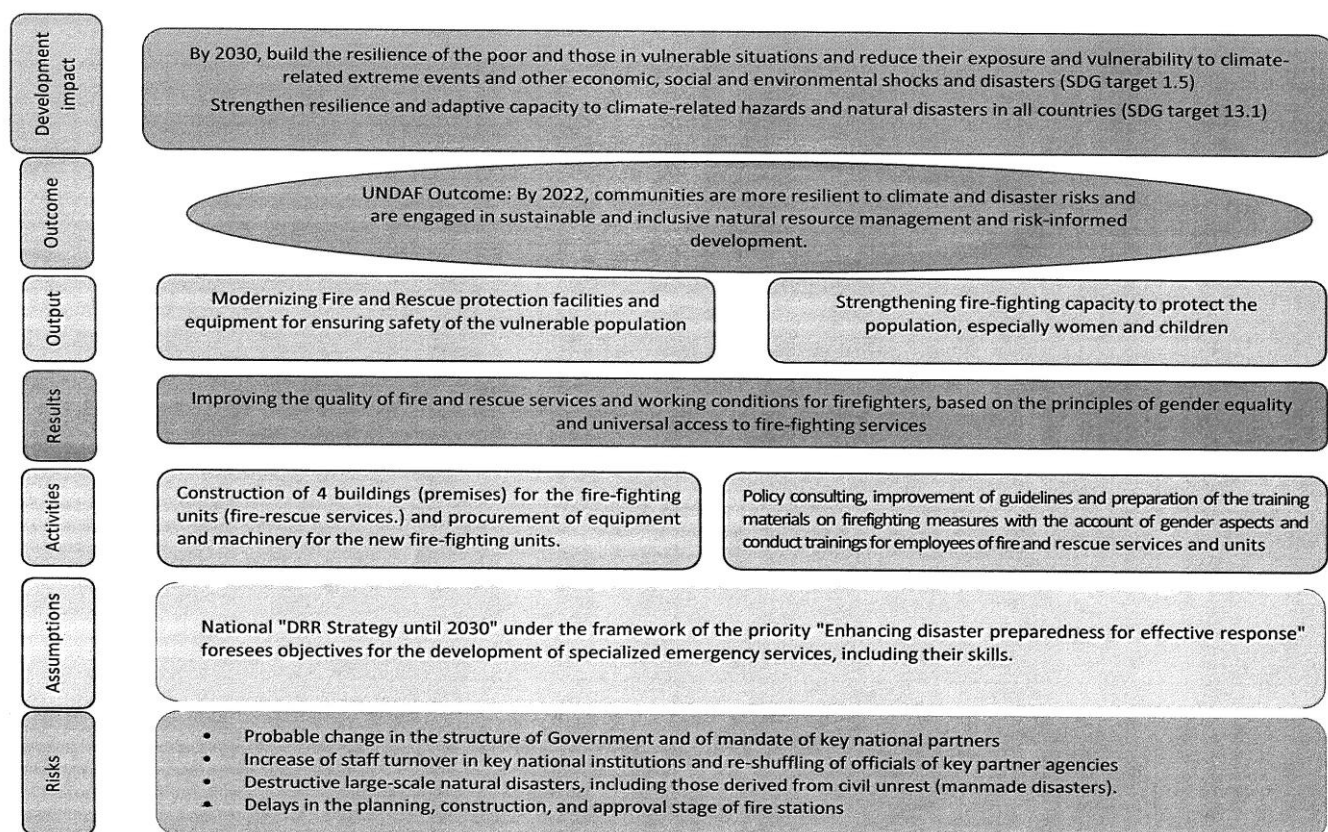
[16] Key informants' interviews.

5.1.2 Consistence of the project design and intervention logic.

The template of the project document does not use a Theory of Change (ToC) approach and, subsequently, the project has no a ToC, as such.

However, as illustrated in the Figure 1 below, in terms of the Results-Based Management (RBM) and the intervention logic, the project has well-defined and inter-connected results' chain, which includes results – outputs – outcome - impact and the respective sets of risks and assumptions.

Figure 1: *Intervention Logic of the project*

| Development impact | 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 (SDG target 1.5) Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries (SDG target 13.1) |
Outcome	UNDAF Outcome: By 2022, communities are more resilient to climate and disaster risks and are engaged in sustainable and inclusive natural resource management and risk-informed development.
Output	Modernizing Fire and Rescue protection facilities and equipment for ensuring safety of the vulnerable population / Strengthening fire-fighting capacity to protect the population, especially women and children
Results	Improving the quality of fire and rescue services and working conditions for firefighters, based on the principles of gender equality and universal access to fire-fighting services
Activities	Construction of 4 buildings (premises) for the fire-fighting units (fire-rescue services.) and procurement of equipment and machinery for the new fire-fighting units. / Policy consulting, improvement of guidelines and preparation of the training materials on firefighting measures with the account of gender aspects and conduct trainings for employees of fire and rescue services and units
Assumptions	National "DRR Strategy until 2030" under the framework of the priority "Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response" foresees objectives for the development of specialized emergency services, including their skills.
Risks	• Probable change in the structure of Government and of mandate of key national partners • Increase of staff turnover in key national institutions and re-shuffling of officials of key partner agencies • Destructive large-scale natural disasters, including those derived from civil unrest (manmade disasters). • Delays in the planning, construction, and approval stage of fire stations

Analysis of the key performance indicators (KPI) reveals that the KPIs are logically linked to the project results (outputs, outcomes and impact) without the major gaps.

From the HRBA[17] perspectives, as reflected in the figure 2, the project is exclusively focused on the increasing the functional and thematic capacities and creating enabling environment (infrastructure development, capacity enhancement, regulatory framework) of the *„duty*

---

[17] HRBA is one of the six Guiding Principles of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework of human development. HRBA has two dimensions: 1) it contributes to the strengthening of the capacities of 'duty-bearers' to meet their obligations and 2) of 'rights-holders' to claim their rights. See: https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/human-rights-based-approach

bearers", particularly MES and firefighting and rescue units from the targeted project sites of Kyrgyzstan, particularly: Bishkek, Osh, Suzak and Cholpan- Ata.

Figure 2: The core concept of HRBA
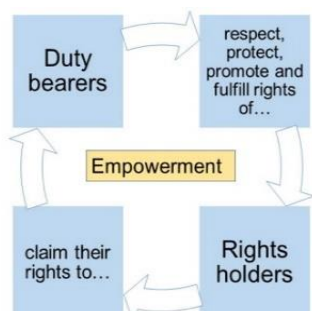
In other words, the *„rights holders"*, i.e. population of the targeted four project sites of Kyrgyzstan, are perceived as the end-beneficiaries, who are expected to benefit from the improved civic protection, particularly fire-fighting and rescue services.

The project overall incorporated the *Leave No One Behind*[18] (LNOB) Principle targeting the most vulnerable people, especially children and women. The gender considerations are integrated in the results' chain of the project at the outcome level ('Strengthening fire-fighting capacity to protect the population especially women and children') and impact level ('Improving the quality of fire-fighting services and improving working conditions of firefighters, based on the principles of gender equality and universal access to fire services'). The gender issues were also reflected during the project implementation at the activity level, particularly in the intervention 'Policy consulting, improvement of guidelines and preparation of the training materials on firefighting measures with the account of gender aspects.'

Given the project's logic of intervention related to the infrastructure development of the fire-fighting and rescue stations , the gender aspects are not applicable to the Component /Outcome 1 envisaged by this evaluation.

One remark regarding the design and using the terms. The project documents and informational sources (reports) use the terms „*capacity building"* and „*capacity development"* as similar, but they are not. Thus, the first term means building the capacity from the scratch, because we assume that there are no any knowledge and capacities, i.e. the baseline is "0"; while the second one recognizes that there are some knowledge and capacities already, i.e. the baseline is not "0" and it is about enhancing the knowledge and development of the capacities, which already exist.[19]

5.2 COHERENCE

The evaluation assessed two dimensions of the coherence *external*[20] and *internal*[21].

Both dimensions of the coherence are strong and the project exhibits good complementarity and synergetic effects with other similar initiatives focused on increasing the firefighting and rescue capacities funded by the governments of China and Russian Federation.

---

[18] LNOB is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for SDGs to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole. https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind
[19] See: www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/capacity-building/capacity-development-a-undp-primer.html
[20] *External coherence* considers alignment with projects/programmes implemented by other actors. See: Ibidem. For additional information: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/543e84ed-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/543e84ed-en&_csp_=535d2f2a848b7727d35502d7f36e4885&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book#section-d1e2935
[21] *Internal coherence* considers alignment with other interventions implemented by the entity, as well as the consistency of the programme with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres. For additional information: Ibidem.

In terms of external coherence, on the justified request of the MES, the project adjusted the technical support and provided slightly different fire-fighting trucks with smaller tanks for water and, a previously unplanned, 50-meter fire ladder to respond to the ongoing tendencies of construction of high multi-floor buildings in the urban area of Bishkek. These adjustments increased the access of the firefighters to the difficult sites and improved their maneuverability given the smaller fire trucks. This is important especially in the case of narrow streets and difficult to access residential areas and was repeatedly mentioned by the interviewed firefighters from the visited firefighting and rescue stations.

The internal coherence is also consistent and is evidenced by the fact that the project is aligned to the strategic priorities of the United Nations (UN) in Kyrgyzstan.
Thus, the project is linked to UNDAF Outcome - 'By 2022, communities are more resilient to climate and disaster risks and are engaged in sustainable and inclusive natural resource management and risk-informed development' and UNDP Strategic Plan, which sets one of the core directions for change: 'Building resilience: strengthening countries and institutions to prevent, mitigate and respond to crisis, confl ict, natural disasters, climate and social and economic shocks.'[22]
It also reflects the UNDP Kyrgyzstan Country Programme, which states that: "UNDP will contribute to the implementation of national disaster risk reduction plans, focusing on strengthening resilience to multi-hazard, climate-aggravated disasters by strengthening early warning, preparedness, emergency response and recovery capacities at national and local levels. UNDP will promote the integration of risks into development strategies and plans and facilitate investments into national and local disaster and crisis preparedness and response programmes to strengthen the protection of vulnerable communities."[23]

5.3 EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness of the project was assessed preponderantly by analysis of its achievements and progress towards the planned targets of the expected results.
The key supportive factors and challenges, which influenced the achievements of the results and the project adaptability are also analyzed.

Despite numerous factors, which influenced implementation, overall *the project reached its objective within Component I and improved the fire-fighting and rescue facilities in the four targeted sites of Kyrgyzstan, which positively influenced the operational capacity[24] of the fire-fighting and rescue units and the quality of the respective services.*

Before analyzing the achievements of the 'hard' component, it worth mentioning that, as found by the baseline study[25], the Kyrgyz Republic's national fire policy does not specify the necessary fire-fighting equipment in a fire-fighting and rescue station or the regulations for the respective equipment management. The checklist only takes into account the quantitative features of the firefighting equipment without the qualitative ones. Therefore, the evaluation findings were supported by data gathered through qualitative techniques like tailored interviews with the project stakeholders and on-site observations.

---

[22] See: https://www.undp.org/kyrgyzstan/publications/strategic-plan-2022-2025
[23] Country programme document for the Kyrgyz Republic (2023-2027)
https://www.undp.org/kyrgyzstan/publications/kyrgyzstan-country-programme-document-2023-2027
[24] The capacity development was envisaged by the component II implemented by KOICA, still the component I also contributes to operational capacity of the fire-fighting and rescue units, buy providing the necessary specialized equipment and building necessary facilities.
[25] Improvement of fire safety of population by strengthening capacity of the Fire and Rescue Services in the Kyrgyz Republic. Baseline Study Report. Korea Fire Institute Consortium. 2022.

The interventions within the Component I included three core actions:

1. Development and approval of construction documents (design of constuction specifications and estimates) for construction of premises of the fire-fighting unit;
2. Construction of four buildings (premises) for the fire-fighting and rescue units;
3. Procurement of equipment and machinery for the new fire-fighting and rescue units.

Below in the Table 2 are briefly illustrated the final achievements of the component 1.

Table 2: Project achievements

Result	Activity/Indicator	Baseline	Target	Achievement
Outcome 1 Improved fire and rescue facilities and equipment.	Indicator 1.1. Acquisition rate of essential firefighting equipment (%)	21.4	100	N/A
Output 1.1 Modernizing fire and rescue protection facilities and equipment for ensuring safety of vulnerable population.	*Activity 1.1.1* Development & approval of construction documents for construction of premises of the fire and rescue units *Indicator: 1.1.1* # approved document	0	4	4
	Activity 1.1.2 Construction of 4 buildings of fire-fighting units *Indicator: 1.1.2* # buildings constructed	0	4	4
	Activity 1.1.3 Procurement of equipment & machinery for the fire-fighting and rescue units *Indicator:* 1.1.2 # fire station with procured equipment	0	4	4

Analysis of the achievements shows that the project performed well, despite implementation difficulties encountered during the infrastructural works of the fire-fighting units.

The project successfully completed construction works in three out of four fire-fighting units, which were equipped with the fire-fighting and rescue equipment and tools as well as trucks, cars and specialized furniture. All three fire-fighting units were inaugurated in Cholpan Ata – (December 2023), Osh – (January 2024) and Suzak rayon (March 2024).

Picture 1. Rescue car and equipment in Osh.   Source: Evaluation mission

The field visits to the project sites in Osh and Suzak and consultations with the stakeholders revealed that the units are equipped and functional and the fire fighters enjoy modern working conditions and facilities for working and recovering. The rescue cars and the respective equipment is regularly used by the rescue teams from the envisaged units.

The interviewed rescue teams are highly satisfied with the quantity and quality of the tools and equipment and as mentioned one of them: *"We are fully and adequately equipped and this increased the quality of our rescue interventions, which is very important for saving the lives of the people in need from Kyrgyzstan".*[26]

---

[26] Key informants' interviews.

As for the effects of the use of the firefighting trucks, it is premature to conclude because the trucks still are not fully used by the respective units from Osh and Suzak. Thus, in Osh firefighting unit (see the Picture 2) the truck is regularly used for firefighting (18 times during 2024). The interviewed firefighters of the unit are highly satisfied with the technical characteristics and maneuverability of the truck.

Picture 2. Firefighting truck in Osh.   Source: Evaluation mission

However, the firefighting truck is not yet used to its full potential, because of lack of some adaptors for using the original fire hoses of the truck as illustrated in the picture 3 below.

It worth noting that the firefighters of the unit found a temporary technical solution, which allows using two old fire hoses (instead of 15 envisaged by the truck manufacturer) with the similar diameters.
The unit is expecting to get the adapters by the end of June 2024.

Picture 3. Firefighting truck in Osh.   Source: Evaluation mission

The fire-fighting truck (unlike the rescue car) from Suzak unit is not yet registered due to some administrative bureaucratic procedures and, therefore, is not yet used by the unit.
Both units are operational and are fully using the firefighting trucks (two in each unit) provided by the governments of China and Russia. This, as mentioned above in the Coherence part of the evaluation report, illustrates good complementarity.

Construction of the fourth fire-fighting and rescue facility in Bishkek city (see picture 4 below) it's in its final stage (according to the construction specialist about 85% readiness).
The construction works, installation of the necessary equipment and adjacent landscaping are expected to be completed by the end of June - beginning of July 2024.

UNDP Kyrgyzstan and the contractor are committed to complete the process. All procurements (firefighting and rescue tools and equipment, as well as furniture, truck, car) are completed and handed over to MES and the unit in Bishkek.

Picture 4. Firefighting & rescue unit in Bishkek.   Source: Evaluation mission

Modernization of the Fire and Rescue units increased their functionality (Cholpan Ata, Osh and Suzak), as the firefighting and rescue facilities, tools and equipment (except trucks) are regularly used to their full potential by the firefighters and rescue teams.

At the moment of the final evaluation (June 2024) of the project there is still no available concluding information and evidences about the reduced response time of the firefighters in the piloted areas. Still, some of the firefighters mentioned that the maneuverability of the service improved and they can access difficult to outreach areas, which increases the promptness.

Picture 5. Verifying response time & coverage in Osh.   Source: Evaluation mission

Picture 6. Verifying response time & coverage in Suzak.
Source: Evaluation mission

In terms of reducing coverage area of the firefighting units the picture is mixed: in Bishkek and Osh establishment of the new units contributed (will contribute in the case of Bishkek) to reducing the coverage because of the reshaping, which will is positively influence the promptness of the firefighting service; while in Cholpan Ata and Suzak the coverage remained the same, because the firefighters moved from one old facility to the newly one constructed by the project remaining responsible for the same geographical area and population.

The project did not introduce innovations or innovative approaches, as such. Still, it contributed to modernization of the fire and rescue units in the piloted sites and setting some high infrastructural standards, which improved the operational environment of the firefighting services. Some stakeholders consider that some elements funded by the project, namely purchasing of a 50-m ladder/lift for the firefighting unit from Bishkek or building a training center in Bishkek can be perceived to a certain extent as innovative.

Factors, which influenced project implementation.

There are at least four key factors identified by the evaluator, which heavily influenced project delivery and its performance as such.

- o The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions interactions between the stakeholders (constructors, MES, firefighters, rescue teams, LSG) and the UNDP project affected the supply chain and suspended implementation and construction works. The adaptation measures used by the project included non-monetary and monetary adjustments. The pandemic restrictions partially changed the *modus operandi* to the online interaction (non-monetary adjustments), which affected the effectiveness of the actions and interaction between the stakeholders during infrastructural works.
- o The pandemic and post-pandemic consequences generated increase in the costs of construction materials, much higher than initially anticipated.
- o Another factor which influenced the implementation dynamic was the fact that some construction materials (e.g. metal/armature) were imported from abroad, especially from Russia. This explains some slow delivery and bottlenecks in the supply chain (in the case of the Bishkek firefighting unit), which became even greater after Russia's invasion of Ukraine (February 2022).
- o The Russian-Ukraine war generated increase of the construction materials costs again, having Russia as core supplier.

All these factors contributed to some effective adjustments described below (See Efficiency), which culminated with the cost extension, i.e. additional funds provided by KOICA and extension of the project duration.

5.4 EFFICIENCY

The efficiency was examined in terms of the implementation of the major project activities and timeliness of the achievements, steering and response mechanisms, delivery methods and use of available resources. The aspects of project management, monitoring and evaluation system were also considered along the evaluation process.

The project exhibits a good adaptability and, overall, managed to reach its targets within the extended duration and budget. The project was adequately staffed and the financial resources were used for the budget lines as planned without significant deviations.
No information was found about misuse of financial resources or contra-productive partnerships. The evaluation also did not find any alternative solutions, which could be provided at fewer expenses and/or would be more economical for the project.

One of the core strengths of the project can be considered its flexibility and adaptability as a management response to the influencing factors. The following types of adaptation were undertaken:

- o *Duration* – the project was extended twice till December 2023 and June 2024.

- *Funding* – additional funding (700,000 USD) was provided by KOICA as illustrated in the table 3 below.
- *Type of firefighting equipment* - firefighting trucks with smaller water tanks, but more maneuverable and a 50-meter firefighting ladder/lift.
- *COVID -19 response support to MES* – which included personal protection equipment, surgical masks, video conferencing equipment and tools.

Table 3. *Allocation of additional funds for construction and completion rate*

Site	Initial contract amount, $	Increased amount, $	Revised contract amount, $	Completion rate
Bishkek	1,186,254.81	369,500.74	1,555,755.55	71[27] %
Osh	475,524.58	175,366.30	650,890.88	100 %
Suzak	474,567.47	187,961.00	662,528.47	100 %
Cholpon-Ata	594,773.07	83,003.61	677,736.68	100 %
Total	2,731,119.93	815,831.65	3,546,911.58	

Source: Quarterly report, January – March 2024

All these adjustments increased project adaptability to the changed context, enhanced efficiency of use of available inputs and maintained relevance of the interventions given their needs-based nature. As mentioned, the project has some delays in the construction and inauguration of the firefighting unit in Bishkek, because of the reasons described above, but UNDP and constructor (which involved about 40 workers) are strongly committed to complete the task by end of June-beginning of July 2024.

The management of the Component/Outcome I of the project was performed by UNDP and it was preponderantly proactive and receptive with adequate communication and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. Evaluation noted a well communication and interaction of UNDP with KOICA, which included: regular updates regarding the project progress timely progress and financial reporting, joint monitoring missions to the project sites, strategic steering and monitoring within the Steering Committee, which was functional. The same is valid regarding the interaction with the national key partner MES and the local firefighting units.

Evaluation also identified some areas for improvement in terms of sharing the information and some deliverables/reports by KOICA with UNDP regarding the component II, for instance: baseline assessment report performed by Korea Fire Institute Consortium; policy review conclusions and recommendations, capacity development reports.

The M&E system mostly facilitated timely tracking of the progress, identification of the risks and adjustments and well-informed project management decisions. The key M&E elements were:

- Regular communication and three-lateral (quite often bi-lateral) consultations between the UNDP - MES - KOICA;
- Strategic monitoring by the Steering Committee during the periodical meetings;
- Technical and quality assurance support provided by the project experts;
- Operational monitoring undertaken by the UNDP project team;

---

[27] As mentioned, at the moment of the evaluation the completion rate was estimated up 85%.

o Independent final evaluations undertaken by KOICA mostly regarding Component II and UNDP on Component I.

The Steering Committee (SC) included representatives of UNDP, KOICA and MES. The SC was functional and contributed to well steering, strategic decision-making evidenced by the respective minutes. The project management arrangements were adequate and the M&E facilitated timely tracking of the progress, periodical identification of the risks, challenges and opportunities reflected in the progress reports and well-informed decisions as management response integrated in the annual working plans.

5.5 IMPACT

The project document included two impact level indicators: % reduction in human casualties and % reduction in physical damage caused by fires.
Generation and identification of the impact-level changes require a longer implementation and tracking period, therefore *the changes against the above indicators are premature to assess given the fact that three firefighting units became operational only a few months ago, while the last one in Bishkek was still under construction finalization phase*. The evaluation was unable to find relevant data regarding the dynamics of human casualties and physical damage caused by fires in the piloted sites and projects' contribution to reducing those values.

However, the evaluator attempted to assess the very early potential sings of impact in the first quarter of 2024, when all three fire units were operational. See table 4.

Table 4. *Fires , damages and human casualties*

Region	2023		Q1 2024				Number of deaths		
	Fire	Damage (som)	Fire	% to 2023	Damage (som)	% to 2023	2023	2024	% to 2023
Bishkek city	659	82,3800,739	108	16%	34,859,104	4%	7	3	43%
Jalal-Abad, incl. Suzak	401	82,378,666	119	30%	25,379,390	31%	8	5	62%
Issyk-Kul, incl. Cholpan Ata	484	183,761,748	75	15%	38,008,834	21%	3	0	0%
Osh city	67	66,221,555	10	7%	4,889,456	7%	0	0	0%

Source: MES

The data provided by the MES and reflected in the table are only partially relevant, because the data are cumulative per region and is not disaggregated per firefighting unit covered by the project. Still, analysis of the data regarding the last three regions (Bishkek is not considered because the project supported unit is not operational yet) reveal some general tendencies. Thus, in the Jalal-Abad region, which includes Suzak rayon the number of fires and the level of material damage in the first quarter of 2024 is about 30% of the cumulative values of the previous year, which overall keeps more or less the tendency. As for the number of deaths, the tendency is increasing given the 62% in the first quarter of 2024 in relation to the cumulative value of 2023.

In two other regions, namely Issyk-Kul, which includes Cholpan Ata and Osh city, the tendency regarding the number of fires, physical damages and nr of human casualties is significantly decreasing ranging from just 7% in Osh city to respectively 15% and 21% in Issyk-Kul.
It is difficult to identify a link between the project contribution and these figures, still these statistics illustrate the overall development tendencies in the envisaged regions.

5.6 SUSTAINABILITY

In terms of the likelihood of sustaining the benefits of the project and the ownership perspectives, the achievements at the final evaluation are particularly important.

The evaluation found some *positive and promising sustainability perspectives, which evidences existence of the political will and commitment of the national and local authorities and civic engagement.*

Thus, the operational firefighting and rescue units, the specialized equipment, cars and trucks have consistent ownership perspective and are representing the national propriety of MES being maintained, technically serviced and utilized accordingly to their destination, which shows sustainability perspectives.

The government institutionalized the firefighting and rescue unit type promoted by the project, which somehow became a benchmark for the MES of Kyrgyzstan. This illustrates highly promising institutionalization and sustainability perspectives. Field mission consultations also revealed some positive examples of integration in the national regulatory framework of some policy recommendations provided by the Korean experts, which reveals policy sustainability perspectives. There are also promising prospects regarding the sustainability of the capacity development achievements. Thus, as specified the interviewed stakeholders, the majority of the capacitated firefighters and thematic specialists are continuing their activity within the MES and firefighting units and the staff turnover did not affect significantly the sustainability of the capacity development achievements.

Local Public Administration from Suzak rayon of Jalal Abad oblast provided funding from the local budget (about 10,000 USD) to the new firefighting and rescue unit, which was used for purchasing electric generators, additional clothes etc.

Red Crescent Organization provides some trainings and informational campaigns especially for youth from 9 rural areas on fire safety and civil protection, which were not specifically targeted by the project, but which directly influences the thematic statistics regarding the fires, damages and human casualties. Engagement of the local authorities and Red Crescent highlights local ownership perspectives, resources mobilization capacity and some early signs of financial sustainability.

The project was designed as environmentally friendly intervention. The final evaluation did not remark any actions, which would produce harm or affect the environment, on contrary it stimulated environmentally friendly action, for instance in the firefighting unit in Suzak, which arranged some green spaces around the unit.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

This chapter of the final evaluation report summarizes key conclusions and lessons learnt based on the analyses of collected data and elaborations along the evaluation criteria.

6.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. **The project was highly relevant to the national capacities needs of the MES and firefighting and rescue units and was strongly aligned to the civil protection and DRM priorities and policies of Kyrgyzstan.**

The project is needs-based and its design is consistent with interlinked results-chain and without the major gaps between the objectives-indicators-activities-targets. The intervention logic combines *hard* (infrastructural) and *soft* (capacity development and policy revision) interventions, which are complementarily and contribute to the main goal of the project namely - building the resilience of the national institutions and local communities to disaster risks for upholding the right of a human being to live in a fire-safe environment and achievement of a safe and secure society in Kyrgyzstan.

The project is rights-based focused on the *„duty bearers"* or supply side (MES and firefighting units) or supply side)*,* while the *„rights holders"* or demand side (people of Kyrgyzstan, especially women and children) are final beneficiaries. The gender aspects are mostly integrated in the project design, especially in relation to the component II. The project contributes to implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) and national DRR 2030 Strategy.

Conclusion 2. **The project was internally and externally coherent and illustrates good complementarity and synergetic effects with other similar initiatives focused on increasing the firefighting and rescue capacities of Kyrgyzstan.**

The project was responsive to the changing national emergency needs and requests of the national partner, MES, and promptly adjusted its delivery and type of assistance taking into consideration the firefighting assistance provided by other international actors and existing further infrastructural development gaps.

The project is also coherent and aligned to the strategic priorities of the UN in Kyrgyzstan, UNDAF and UNDP Kyrgyzstan Country Programme.

Conclusion 3. Despite several influencing factors, which affected its implementation dynamics and timely performance, **the project was mostly effective and reached its objective within Component I and improved the fire-fighting and rescue facilities in the four targeted sites of Kyrgyzstan, which positively influenced the operational capacity of the fire-fighting and rescue units and the quality of the respective services.**

The project was heavily influenced by mostly external factors, but overall performed well. It successfully constructed and equipped the envisaged firefighting facilities on the four targeted sites, three of which are operational and regularly use the firefighting and rescue equipment, tools and trucks/cars with some exceptions.

The consolidated data regarding the qualitative changes (reducing response time) regarding the firefighting services is still premature and therefore missing, but the project modernized the infrastructure and created enabling environment including well and qualitatively equipped

facilities necessary for improving the quality and promptness of the firefighting and rescue interventions in this regard.

Conclusion 4. Analyzing the project fulfillment versus time consumed and use of financial resources, it can be concluded that, ***overall, the project management was flexible and adaptive and the project operated mostly in an efficient manner reaching the majority of the targets within the extended project duration and budget.***

The project was adequately staffed and the financial resources were used for the budget lines as planned without the significant deviations, except the approved reallocations and extensions.

No information was found about misuse of financial resources or contra-productive partnerships. On contrary, the project promoted partnerships between the emergency departments of the South Korea and Kyrgyzstan, as well as regional platforms/forums in the field of disaster risk reduction. The project was implemented by UNDP in regular communication and close partnership with KOICA through joining of efforts aimed at increasing the fire-fighting capacity and, at the same time, raising awareness of the public and especially among women and children on critical safety measures that they need to acquire to properly act during emergency situations.

The evaluation did not find any alternative solutions, which could be provided at fewer expenses and/ or would be more economical for the project.

Conclusion 5. ***The long-term changes generated with the project contribution, i.e. the impact of the infrastructural related achievements is premature to be assessed, although some positive early sings of potential impact.***

Given the fact that three firefighting units became operational only a few months ago, while the last one in Bishkek was still under construction finalization phase, the evaluation was unable to find relevant data regarding the dynamics of human casualties and physical damage caused by fires in the piloted sites and projects' contribution to reducing those values. Still there is some proxy data, which apparently illustrate some positive tendencies in decreasing the statistics of fires, human casualties and damages in Issyk-Kul oblast, including Cholpan Ata and Osh city, unlike Jalal-Abad oblast, which includes Suzak rayon.

Conclusion 6. Generally, ***the sustainability perspectives of the achievements are mostly promising with strong national and local ownership of the Government and LSG to sustaining the results and continuing similar DRM and civil protection initiatives.***

The project enhanced country's sustainability to disasters, including man-made ones. The promising sustainability of the project results are supported by the explicit political will of the Government regarding the implementation of the current DRR Strategy and engagement of the local communities in increasing DRM literacy by other actors.

Overall, the project performed in internalization of the '*hard*' interventions results, particularly infrastructure development and special firefighting and rescue equipment. There is an open commitment of the MES to take over the project achievements and deliverables in relation to administrative and financial management, thus ensuring the "shared responsibility" of national partners.

6.2 Lessons Learnt

Based on the above-described findings, evaluator suggests two lessons that may be of value for UNDP, KOICA and eventually MES and envisaged firefighting units:

o *After provision of the firefighting equipment, including trucks, it is necessary to track the use of it.* Formally, the task is getting completed once the equipment is officially provided to the MES. However, from the performance management perspectives, there is a need to monitor the functionality and use of the equipment as well as the changes generated by the technical support and or the respective bottlenecks/difficulties. The issues with the registration of the track from firefighting unit of Suzak and adaptors for the truck from Osh are illustrative and provide valuable lessons in this regard.

o *Joint implementation approach involves well communication and information/report sharing between UNDP and KOICA, but also vice versa from KOICA to UNDP* as well, because both partners are contributing to the same long-term expected changes, i.e. impact. This is valid regarding sharing the baseline study reports, capacity development reports, policy reviewing findings and recommendations as well as monitoring reports.

The evaluator recognizes that it might be some additional specific lessons. Nonetheless, the evaluator has restricted himself to three overarching lessons. As "basic" the lessons learned may be, their application offers the opportunity to increase the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the interventions in other future similar actions.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

This part provides a manageable number of six recommendations based on the conclusions and lessons learned. The recommendations are explained by the evaluator to his best professional judgment following analysis of the gathered data, field visits and consultations.

7.1 General framework of the recommendations

The table presents the general framework of the final evaluation recommendations.

N	Recommendations	Priority	Time frame
Rec. 01	*Capitalize on the achievements and keep further supporting enhancement of the national fire-fighting capacity for improvement of the fire safety of the population of Kyrgyzstan.*	High	Immediate
Rec. 02	*Prioritize providing much-needed technical equipment and tools to a larger number of firefighting and rescue units as well as renovation of existing buildings, and then consider building new ones.*	High	Immediate
Rec. 03	*Consider financial contribution and cost-sharing from the Government of Kyrgyzstan.*	Medium	Mid-term
Rec. 04	*Focus on increasing the public awareness and enhancing the fire safety literacy and engagement of the local actors.*	High	Immediate
Rec. 05	*Reinforce information sharing between KOICA and UNDP and use joint approach throughout the entire project cycle management.*	Medium	Mid-term
Rec. 06	*Keep monitoring use of provided equipment and technical support and track the implementation challenges encountered by the firefighting units and changes in their services.*	Medium	Mid-term

7.2 Detailed recommendations

Rec. 01	*Capitalize[28] on the achievements and keep further supporting enhancement of the national fire-fighting capacity for improvement of the fire safety of the population of Kyrgyzstan.*

This is a high priority strategic recommendation for UNDP (and KOICA) to continue supporting strengthening of the civil protection, DRM and particularly firefighting capacity of Kyrgyzstan. UNDP established effective partnerships with MES, and gained valuable, specific and well-grounded experience on infrastructural development of the firefighting and rescue, which continues to yearly affect lives of thousands of people, including children, women and elderly and causes multi-million damages.[29] It learned important implementation-related lessons on what and how works and what and why affect the work.

Therefore, there is a need to ensure that this was not a standalone project. UNDP is advised to make sure that those achievements in the piloting areas are maximized and learnings are used during the next follow up initiatives. There is a need for a sustained effort to capitalize on the achievements and to continue supporting implementation of the national commitments reflected in the policy documents, including in the *DRR 2030 Strategy*.   The below described recommendations might be useful in this regard.

Rec. 02	*Prioritize providing much- needed technical equipment and tools to a larger number of firefighting and rescue units as well as renovation of existing buildings, and then consider building new ones.*

The consistent infrastructural development support and construction of the modern firefighting buildings from the scratch is highly appreciated by the interviewed representatives of MES, local authorities, firefighters and rescue teams.

However, it is important to remark that this is the slowest, most time consuming and expensive way of supporting modernization of the firefighting service of the country. As revealed field consultations and in line with the DRR 2030 Strategy, there is still a high need for specialized firefighting and rescue equipment and tools in other sites of the country, especially those with high density of population. This type of assistance can be provided much faster than construction the new buildings and can generate some quick but still sustainable wins in terms of increasing the quality and promptness of the firefighting and rescue services and, subsequently, reducing the level of human casualties and physical damages caused by the fires.

Rec. 03	*Consider financial contribution and cost-sharing from the Government of Kyrgyzstan.*

Again, this recommendation is for UNDP, KOICA , but also other potential donor of future similar initiatives. It is important to promote the principles working with the government and helping the government, but not doing the things instead of the government.

---

[28] The term "Capitalization" is not clearly defined in the international development. Still, according to subject-related guidelines, capitalization is a building and knowledge management process aimed at consolidation the capital (approaches, learnings, good practices, achievements) and making it accessible through the benchmarking, using the acquired knowledge, tools and experiences in future programming. For additional information: *Capitalization Management Guide. In the context of the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes*. January 2020

[29] See official statistics in the 'Project Description' part of the report.

For a sustainable development it is insufficient to get the political will to modernize the firefighting infrastructure and equipment, it is needed to ask for public funding and cost-sharing of the projects, which directly contribute to implementation of the national strategies.

This would change the existing paradigm and the ownership perspectives, because the Government and the MES will be the co-founder, not only beneficiary and implementing partner of the project.

Rec. 04	***Focus on increasing the public awareness and enhancing the fire safety literacy and engagement of the local actors.***

The project was focused on capacitation and building enabling environment of the 'duty bearers', particularly MES and territorial firefighting and rescue units for decreasing the percentage of human casualties and physical damages caused by the fire.
However, the decrease in the fire-related human casualties and physical damages is depending not only on the promptness and quality of the intervention of the fire-fighting and rescue services, but also on the number and frequency of the fires, which, as mentioned the interviewed stakeholders, are depending on the fire-safety awareness and literacy and responsibility of the population, who in most of the cases generate those fires.

Therefore, it is important to focus on increasing the public awareness and fire safety literacy and responsibility of the population. A more active involvement of the CSOs, media outlets and LSG is needed. Wide nad well targeted public information campaigns can be a valuable solution.
The grass-roots level experience of the Red Crescent described in the report, may be relevant in this regard. Implementation of this recommendation would contribute also to a more balanced HRBA, because would continue to further capacitate the national capacities of the 'duty bearers' (MES and firefighting units), but would increase awareness and responsibility of the 'rights holders' as well.

Rec. 05	***Reinforce information sharing between KOICA and UNDP and use joint approach throughout the entire project cycle management.***

This recommendation is deducted from the corresponding lesson learnt described above. See *Lessons Learnt* part of the report. UNDP and KOICA cooperated very well and regularly shared information regarding project planning, implementation, steering and progress and financial reporting, which is commendable. However, as revealed the field consultations, besides operational communication, there is a need to share (by KOICA) the informational outputs (reports, policy recommendations, etc) produced within the component II, as well, just like the similar deliverables on component I were shared by UNDP, because the components/outcomes are complementarily and are directly contributing to the same expected long-term impact.

UNDP and KOICA are also advised to further consolidate the "mechanism of jointness" using joint approach throughout the entire project cycle management, particularly: joint needs assessment and planning, joint implementation, joint operational and strategic monitoring, joint evaluation (mixed team of evaluators one appointed by KOICA and one appointed by UNDP) and joint reporting (sharing the reports per each component and having consolidated progress/final reports).

Rec. 06	*Keep monitoring use of provided equipment and technical support and track the implementation challenges encountered by the firefighting units and changes in their services.*

Just like the previous recommendation, this recommendation is deducted from the lesson learnt. See *Lessons Learnt* part of the report.

Provision of the specialized equipment is not one of the last steps of the project, it should be the first step followed by the tracking of the expected progress in the service delivery of the firefighting units for the targeted population as the end-beneficiaries. The project during its implementation should monitor whether the equipment is smoothly used and provide additional support or even pushing (if needed) to overcome bottlenecks or any difficulties, which may appear especially at the inception phase of the operationalization.

VIII. ANNEXES

Annex 8.1 Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Key evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Type of Indicators	Indicators related to EQs	Sources of data	Data collection Tools/Methods
Relevance	To what extent was the *project aligned* with the national development strategies and supported the Kyrgyz Republic in achieving the development goals ?	How the project contributed to 2030 Agenda? To what extent the project reflected the national priorities?	Mainly qualitative Partially quantitative	Alignment of the project with the national priorities.	Written project and thematic policy documents. UNDP, MES, LSG, donor, others (referred as project stakeholders)	Desk review, progress reports , thematic documents on the development priorities. KII, FGD.
		To what extent did the UNDP project promote SSC/ Triangular cooperation?	Mainly qualitative	The level of cooperation approach of the project.	Project and national strategic documents.	
	To what extent was the *project relevant* to the needs and priorities of the target groups?	Was the project relevant in addressing key challenges of enhancing fire safety as identified in the prodoc? To what extent the activities were in line with the needs of the target groups ?	Mainly qualitative Partially quantitative	Evidences of integrated needs in programing; Evidences of the causality between the actions and changes generated.	Project documents. Target groups of the project.	Mostly KII and FGD with project stakeholders.
	To what extent was the overall *project design* consistent and adequate?	How the results` chain is interconnected with the baselines- targets -indicators? Are there any major gaps?	Qualitative Quantitative	Linkage of the result`s chain/performance framework. Use of RBM approach.	Mostly project documents. Thematic guidelines on RBM.	Desk review. KII with the programme team.
	To what extent the *cross -cutting issues* were considered?	To what extent gender, human rights, and, vulnerable people and environmental aspects were integrated in PMC in DRM?	Qualitatively Quantitatively	Inclusiveness of the project and implementation approach, as well as DRM.	Project document, logframe, results` framework, reports. Guidelines on LNOB Principle.	Mostly desk review.
		To what extent the project targets *duty bearers* and *rights holders*?	Mainly qualitative	Consistency and focus of the project approach in terms of HRBA.	Project document, logframe, results` framework, progress reports. Guidelines on HRBA.	Desk review. KII, FGD.
Coherence	To what extent has the project been coherent?	To what extent did the project complement work with different entities and have a strategic coherence of approach?	Mainly qualitative	Complementarity and coherence of the project.	Project document, logframe, results` framework, progress reports. Project stakeholders.	Desk review. KII, FGD.
	To what extent did the *project achieve* its intended objectives and contribute to the project's strategic vision?	To what extent has modernization of Fire and Rescue units (buildings and equipment) increased their functionality and reduced the response time in the piloted areas?	Quantitative Qualitative	Programme fulfilment – Component I. Performance according the KPIs. Evidences of the achievements.	Progress reports. Informational materials/ documents. Key stakeholders, especially those contributing to Outcome I.	KII, FGD. Desk review Field mission observations.

Effectiveness	The what extent was the project flexible and innovative?	What were the key external and internal factors, which influenced project delivery ? How did the project adapt to those factors?	Mostly Qualitative	Degree of influence of the internal / external factors . Degree of adaptability of the project.	Project documents, Key stakeholders.	KII and FGD with the stakeholders Desk review.
		What -if any- types of innovations have been introduced for achievement the targets?	Mostly Qualitative	Innovativeness of the project approach	Project documents, Key stakeholders.	KII and FGD with the stakeholders. Desk review. Field mission observations
	How effective have the selected strategies/ approaches been in achieving the results?	To what extent were women and men equally involved in delivery and benefitted from the achievements?	Mostly qualitative	Appropriateness and gender sensitiveness of the project.	Project documents, Key stakeholders.	KII and FGD with the project stakeholders Desk review.
	What are the key recommendations for increasing performance?	What should be adjusted, dropped off or reinforced for future projects?	Qualitative Quantitative	Recommendations for increasing effectiveness of the project.	Key stakeholders.	KII and FGD with the stakeholders.
Efficiency	To what extent were the results delivered in a timely manner in line with the working plans?	Were resources (financial, human, technical) used as planned? Did the project provide value for money?	Qualitative Quantitative	Timeliness and adequacy of the delivery. Benefits of the project and project/financial management.	Work plans, financial documents versus project achievements. Progress reports. Key stakeholders	Desk review. KII and FGD with the UNDP, KOICA and other stakeholders.
	How efficient were the steering and the project's response mechanisms?	To what extent the Steering Committee (SC) was functional and contributed to steering, strategic decision -making?	Mostly Qualitative	Functionality of the SC and efficiency of the strategic steering.	SC minutes, progress reports, SC members.	Desk review. KII with UNDP, MES, KOICA.
	To what extent were the project management and M&E system efficient?	To what extent the project management arrangements were adequate and efficient?	Mostly Qualitative	The level of efficiency of the management arrangements.	Project documents. Stakeholders of the project.	Desk review KII with UNDP, KOICA.
		To what extent have M&E facilitated timely tracking of the progress, identification of the risks and opportunities, and well-informed decisions?	Qualitative Quantitative	Efficiency of the M&E system.	Project documents. incl. M&E plans. UNDP project team.	Desk review. KII with stakeholders.

Impact	To what extent is reduced human casualties?	To what extent is reduced physical damage caused by fires?	Quantitative	The level of damage and human casualties caused by the fires.	Official and/or administrative statistics. Project documents. Stakeholders of the project.	Desk review. KII with stakeholders.
Sustainability & Ownership	To what extent are the benefits of a project likely to be sustained (nationally and locally) after the completion?	What are the sustainability perspectives of the achievements on enabled environment/developed infrastructure?	Mostly Qualitative Partially Quantitative	Long-lasting character of the generated changes with the project support. Evidences of the sustainability signs.	Progress reports, visual adds. Financial plans, decisions or other commitments. Stakeholders of the project.	Desk review. KII, FGD with the stakeholders. Field mission observations.
	How strong is the national/local ownership to sustaining the results and continuing initiatives?	To what extent have national partners committed to providing continuing support (financial, staff, aspirational, etc.)?	Mostly Qualitative Partially Quantitative	Degree of national and local ownership perspectives and commitments	Financial plans, decisions/polices on commitments of the national and local partners. Stakeholders of the project.	
	What are the major factors, which influence the sustainability?	How and why those factors influence the sustainability prospects? What are the key lessons learned for improving sustainability prospects?	Quantitative Qualitative	Type and complexity of the factors Project replicability and scale up perspectives.	Project reports, MoU, Agreements and key stakeholders.	Desk review. KII, FGD with the stakeholders.

Annex 8.2 List of consulted stakeholders

N	Name	Organisation/ Locality	Position/ Role in Project
1.	Marat Abdrakhmanov	UNDP, Bishkek	DRM Project coordinator
2.	Adilet Sekimov		DRM Project analyst
3.	Monica Rijal		Deputy Resident Representative
4.	Lira Zholdubaeva		Team leader of "Environment, Climate Change and Energy" cluster
5.	Aidai Ashiralieva		Programme associate
6.	Akylai Tazabekova	Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Bishkek	Project coordinator
7.	Ahn Gayoung		Program coordinator
8.	Kanat Karybai uulu	Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES) of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek	Head of International cooperation department
9.	Aibek Omurov		Senior Officer of the Logistics Department
10.	Akyl Rasulov		Head of the Fire Fighting and Fire Prevention Department
11.	Abylaev Altynbek	MES, Osh city	Head of department
12.	Bektur Shamshiev	Fire and Rescue Station, Osh city	Officer
13.	Myrzaev Rashit	Fire and Rescue Station, Suzak	Guard Chief
14.	Abdulnasir Makhmadaliev		Senior Driver
15.	Kalbaev Tynychbek	District Administration, Suzak	Head of Structural Department of Economic Development

Annex 8.3 The list of documents and sources reviewed

1. Project Document *Improvement of fire safety of population by strengthening capacity of the Fire and Rescue Services in the Kyrgyz Republic,* 31.12. 2018 – 13.09.2022, ENG
2. Project Document *Improvement of fire safety of population by strengthening capacity of the Fire and Rescue Services in the Kyrgyz Republic,* 31 Dec. 2018, RUS.
3. Amendment to project document No.1, 13 Sept. 2022.
4. Amendment to project document No.2, 21 Nov. 2023.
5. Minutes of the Board Meeting for 2020-2021, 29 Apr. 2021, EN, RUS.
6. PPP prepared for the Project Board Meeting, 23 Aug. 2022.
7. Agenda for Project Board Meeting, 23 Aug. 2022.
8. Minutes of Project Board Meeting, 23 Aug. 2022.
9. Agenda for Project Board Meeting, 11 Aug. 2023.
10. Minutes of Project Board Meeting, 11 Aug. 2023.
11. PPP prepared for the Project Board Meeting, 11 Aug. 2023.
12. Annual Report January-December 2020, 29 Jan. 2021.
13. Annual Report January -December 2022, 28 Feb. 2022.
14. Annual Report January-December 2023, 20 Mar. 2024.
15. Quarterly report January – March 2024, April 2024.

Annex 8.4 Evaluation Tools

The outlined evaluation tools will be used by the evaluator during the data collection. The evaluation will be guided by the questions and will probe and follow up with consultations in a fluid manner in response to answers. In the triangulation purpose some of the questions will be addressed to more than one type of the stakeholder. The following logic of consultations will be used:

Intro/ Informed consent	Purpose of the evaluation. Condition for cooperation with evaluator: anonymity, free to reject any answer, welcome to ask questions to evaluator. Clarification if there any time limitations that should be observed.
Scope clarification	In what ways have a person engaged with the project? Pay attention to components/activities.
Recollection/ Actualization of experience	Ask respondent to share the story of her/his engagement. Allow a person to talk, but manage the process. When necessary – support with questions to ensure that he/she covers key areas.
Guided reflection	Solicit open reflections-related to evaluation questions.
Wrap up	Acknowledge value of respondent's contribution to evaluation. Remind when and how information about evaluation results will be made available, if any. Ask if respondent has any questions to the evaluator.

Annex 8.4.1: Semi-structured interview guide
for UNDP (project team and senior management)

Relevance
o To what extent was the project consistent with national priorities and reflected the needs of the target groups?
o What innovative approaches were used by the project?
o To what extent were gender and human rights principles integrated into the project cycle management (PCM)?

Coherence

- To what extent project was complementary and synergetic with other projects?
- What is the comparative advantage of the project? What is the added value of brought by UNDP?

Effectiveness
- To what extent were the expected results achieved? To what extent has project contributed towards an improvement in national government capacity, including MES institutional strengthening?
- To what extent has modernization of Fire and Rescue units (buildings and equipment) increased their functionality and reduced the response time in the piloted areas? (Component I)
- What were the key external/internal factors, which influenced project? How did the project adapt to them?

Efficiency
- To what extent were the results delivered in a timely manner in line with the working plans?
- How appropriate were the project budget and human resources to achieve the final results?
- How efficient were/are the programme's response mechanisms in case of C-19 and refugees/crisis?
- To what extent the SC was functional and contributed to steering and strategic decision -making?
- To what extent M&E system was consistent and facilitated timely tracking of the progress, identification of the risks and opportunities and well-informed decisions?

Impact
To what extent are reduced human casualties and damages caused by fires?

Sustainability
- To what extent the benefits from the project will be maintained after the completion?
- To what extent have national partners committed to providing support (financial, staff, aspirational, etc.)?
- What are the sustainability prospects of the achievements?
- How has the project generated national/local ownership? What are the factors, which influence the sustainability?
- What are the key lessons learned for improving sustainability prospects?

Annex 8.4.2: Semi-structured interview
for MES and Fire and Rescue Stations

Relevance
- What is your general impression about the KOICA funded project?
- What was the role of your institution/organization within the project?
- Have you been consulted during the planning phase? If *yes*, to what extent your suggestions were incorporated?
- To what extent was the project aligned to the needs of your institution?

Coherence
- Did your institutions benefit from other projects? If yes, to what extent were they coordinated?
- What is the comparative advantage (uniqueness) in this project in comparison with other projects?

Effectiveness
- What type of support your institution benefitted from?
- What has been changed as the result of that support?
- To what extent has project contributed towards the improvement in national government capacity, including MES' institutional strengthening?
    - To what extent has modernization increased the functionality of Fire and Rescue units and reduced the response time in the piloted areas? (Component I)
- What would you recommend to be adjusted, dropped off or reinforced for future projects?

Efficiency
- Do you consider the planned time and resources adequate for reaching the expected results?
- What factors influenced your (project-related) commitments or supported activities?

Impact
- To what extent are reduced human casualties and damages caused by fires?

Sustainability
- How the equipment, other facilities and competencies acquired and developed during the project will be used?
- To what extent is the maintenance ensured?

o To what extent have public authorities (national and local) committed to providing continuing support?
o What are your good practices and lessons learned from the partnership with UNDP?

Annex 8.4.3: Semi-structured interview
for LSGs

Relevance
o What is your general impression about the KOICA-funded project?
o What was the role of the LSG within the project?
o To what extent the project meets the needs? Please provide some examples.

Effectiveness
o What has been changed within the community/district as the result of the support provided by this project?
o To what extent the quality and promptness of the civil service protection has improved?

Efficiency
o How would you describe the communication and interaction with the UNDP during the project delivery?

Impact
What is the most significant change generated by this project? Why you consider it as the most significant?

Sustainability
o To what extent is LSG committed to providing continuing support?
o What types of commitment LSG assumed or is going to assume?
o What would you recommend for future similar projects?

Annex 8.4.4 Donor

Introduction
o Can you share your overall impressions of the UNDP implemented project?

Coherence
o Can you identify any unique features or strengths of this project compared to other (KOICA-funded) projects? Are there any weaknesses?
o To what degree do you think this project is synergized with other similar projects, if any?

Efficiency
o Do you think the project's timeline and resources were sufficient to reach expected results?
o How would you describe your experience with management and communication/information sharing with UNDP?
o Please comment on the flexibility of the project in responding to changes or unforeseen circumstances.
o How do you perceive the quality of reporting and the functionality of the program's M&E system?

Effectiveness
o How successful do you think the project has been to date?
o From your perspective, what are the key achievements of the project?
o How would you assess the visibility of the project?

Sustainability
o What is the national/local ownership prospects or concerns for the project?
o Are there any project approaches or best practices that you believe might be replicated?
o What lessons do you think UNDP can learn from this project?