



EVALUATION REPORT
for the *final evaluation of the*
‘Civil Registry System Reform Project in
Tajikistan – Phase II’

October 2024

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Project information			
Project/outcome title	Civil Registry System Reform Project in Tajikistan – Phase II		
Atlas Project ID: 00102063	00085270		
Quantum ID	00092984)		
UNDCS Outcome and CPD Output	<p>CPD (2016-2022):</p> <p>Outcome 1. People in Tajikistan have their rights protected and benefit from improved access to justice and quality services delivered by accountable, transparent, and gender responsive legislative, executive and judicial institutions at all levels.</p> <p>Output 1.2. Justice sector institutions enabled to uphold rule of law in compliance with international commitments; promote and protect Human Rights and improve access to justice and civil registration of vulnerable population groups, especially women, youth and persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Indicative Output(s) with gender marker: GEN 2</p> <p>CPD (2023-2026):</p> <p>Outcome 2: No one left behind, centering on equitable access to opportunities and a rights-based approach to human agency and human development.</p> <p>Output 3.1.: Institutions at national and local levels have improved capacities and use innovative solutions to provide accessible, quality public services to the people and economic actors.</p>		
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List of abbreviations

AoS - Agency on Statistics
AWP - Annual Workplan
CA - Contribution Analysis
CR - Civil Registration/Civil Registry
CRO - Civil Registration Office
CROIS2 - Civil Registration Office Information System (version 2)
CRR - Civil Registry Reform
CRS - Civil Registration System
CSO - Civil Society Organization
DAC - Development Assistance Committee
DHS - Demographic and Health Surveys
DIM - Direct Implementation Modality
DRS - Districts of Republican Subordination
EC - Evaluation Consultant
EQ - Evaluation Question
ER - Evaluation Report
FE - Final Evaluation
GRES - UNDP Gender Results Effectiveness Scale
GoT – Government of Tajikistan
HRBA - Human Rights-Based Approach
IAPS - Improved Access to Public Services
IR - Inception Report
IT - Information Technology
JC - Judgement Criteria
KII - Key Informant Interviews
LNOB - Leave No One Behind
MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoHSPP - Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population
MoJ - Ministry of Justice
MTR - Mid-Term Review
OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OVI - Objectively Verifiable Indicator
PIN - Personal Identification Number
PMF - Performance Measurement Framework
ProDoc - Project Document
PSC - Project Steering Committee
RRF - Results and Resources Framework
RT - Republic of Tajikistan
SDC - Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG - Sustainable Development Goals
ToC - Theory of Change
TOR - Terms of Reference
UN - United Nations
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNEG - United Nations Evaluation Group
USD - United States Dollar
WG - Working Group
ZAGS - Civil Registration (in Russian)

Executive summary

The objectives and scope of evaluation

The evaluation of the Civil Registry System Reform Project - Phase II, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by UNDP in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) of Tajikistan, aimed to assess the project's alignment with its overarching goals, effectiveness, and contributions to national civil registration reforms. The primary objectives were to evaluate the project's impact on accessibility, affordability, and quality of civil registry services while also examining how well public awareness of civil registration had improved. The evaluation focused on two main outcomes: (1) the management and quality of the reformed civil registry system and (2) public awareness and timely registration of vital events. The evaluation aimed to document lessons learned and provide actionable recommendations for future programming.

Specific approach: Methodologically, the evaluation used a theory-based approach grounded in the Theory of Change, which allowed the Evaluation Team (ET) to examine the project's intervention logic and assess its success in achieving intended outcomes. This approach was complemented by contribution analysis to understand the plausible connections between the project activities and observed results, while also accounting for contextual factors in Tajikistan that may have influenced outcomes. The evaluation adopted a human rights-based framework with gender-sensitive principles, ensuring that the assessment considered the equitable impact on men and women, particularly those in vulnerable groups. The ET implemented a mixed-methods approach, gathering qualitative and quantitative data through desk reviews, key informant interviews, group discussions, and site visits. Data were triangulated from various sources to strengthen findings and validate results. Field visits to ZAGS (civil registration offices) in multiple regions provided direct insights into service delivery improvements and local experiences. Throughout the evaluation, stakeholder feedback was integrated into the analysis, allowing for iterative refinement of conclusions and recommendations. Despite some limitations, such as time constraints and limited access to certain beneficiary groups, the evaluation provided a comprehensive understanding of the project's achievements, challenges, and potential for sustainable impact.

Presentation of findings

Findings on relevance: The Project has demonstrated a high level of alignment with the development agenda of the Government of Tajikistan, addressing crucial national priorities around governance, digitalisation, and public administration reform. This alignment is evidenced in several strategic national frameworks, such as the National Development Strategy 2016-2030 and the Medium-Term Development Program 2021-2025, emphasising the need for improved infrastructure, service accessibility in remote areas, and modernisation of public administration. The project's interventions, particularly the transition to electronic civil registration, directly support these objectives by enhancing access to legal identity and essential services like healthcare, education, and social protection.

The project has also been consistent with Tajikistan's digitalisation priorities, as outlined in the Digital Economy Concept. Through initiatives like the upgraded Civil Registration Office Information System (CROIS2) and efforts to develop a web portal, the project contributes to Tajikistan's digital transformation agenda, improving service efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. Furthermore, the project's e-governance initiatives complement the Agency for Innovation and Digitalization's mandate, helping to strengthen data interoperability and connectivity across government platforms. However, some challenges were noted in coordinating with other national institutions, highlighting the need for a broader coalition to integrate these digital initiatives fully.

The project aligns with UNDP and SDC priorities, particularly in inclusive governance and digital transformation. By ensuring that marginalised populations, including rural communities and women, have access to civil registration services, the project contributes to the UNDP Country Programme Action Plan and the Leave No One Behind principle. Additionally, the project's gender-sensitive approach and focus on outreach to vulnerable groups reinforce its commitment to inclusivity. While the project has made significant strides in addressing Tajikistan's civil registration needs, ongoing challenges, particularly in implementing digital systems and harmonising national legislation, underscore the importance of continued efforts to sustain and expand these reforms.

Findings on coherence: The CRSR Phase II demonstrated strong internal coherence by aligning legislative reforms, capacity building, public awareness, and digitalization efforts toward enhancing Tajikistan’s civil registry system. However, the project’s ambitious goals—transforming the registry system entirely and ensuring universal access—are challenging given the country’s current institutional and infrastructure limitations. Without a strategic framework and enhanced coordination, particularly with local jamoats and across government levels, sustaining these reforms will remain difficult.

The project’s design logically connects activities to needed reforms, though achieving comprehensive behavioral shifts and a fully modernised system requires more time and intermediate outcomes. While outputs like modernising ZAGS offices are essential, they alone cannot fully realise the broader outcomes. Additional intermediate targets could offer a clearer path to sustainable impact.

Internationally, the project aligns with SDG 16.9 on legal identity and SDG 5 on gender equality, contributing to Tajikistan’s commitments to inclusivity and human rights. By addressing gender-specific barriers and increasing registration accessibility, the project reinforces these obligations.

Coordination mechanisms, especially through the Combined Steering Committee, ensured alignment with related initiatives and facilitated collaboration with UN agencies like UNICEF and UNHCR. However, the absence of a unified national e-governance strategy limited broader integration. While effective partnerships were formed, particularly with ZAGS offices, challenges in ensuring national ownership persist. Strengthening MoJ leadership and fostering strategic alignment with project partners will be crucial to fully embed these reforms.

Findings on effectiveness: The Civil Registry System Reform Project – Phase II has made notable progress in enhancing civil registration services in Tajikistan, particularly by implementing the One-Stop-Shop (OSS) model in select ZAGS offices. This model has improved service efficiency and accessibility, contributing to the project’s quality and affordable services objective. However, the limited scope—excluding local jamoat-level registration—and infrastructural challenges highlight the need for broader systemic reform to achieve sustainable impact nationwide.

Key achievements include successfully implementing the CROIS2 electronic system, which improved data management and reporting capabilities, and increased public access to timely birth registration. Yet, challenges still need to be addressed, such as service inefficiencies and a relatively low satisfaction rate, with only 35% satisfaction reported. The project also struggled to fully address systemic and cultural barriers that hinder timely registration, particularly in remote areas. These issues underscore the need for further coordination and a long-term strategy to drive behavioral change.

Progress toward legislative reform was achieved through efforts to update the Civil Registration Law and by-laws. However, institutional bottlenecks and stakeholders disagreements delayed the approval process, highlighting the need for earlier planning and better stakeholder alignment. Similarly, while new business processes and a digital registry system were established, full adoption could be improved by better infrastructure, more consistent internet access, and dealing with capacity gaps.

Efforts to raise public awareness faced limited success due to competing priorities within the Ministry of Justice, which deprioritized communication activities. This affected the project’s ability to engage the public effectively, limiting citizen awareness and participation improvements.

The project encountered implementation delays due to factors such as a lack of a clear reform strategy, infrastructural challenges, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The collaboration between key partners, including UNDP, SDC, and the Ministry of Justice, was effective at the operational level but would benefit from a shared strategic vision, stronger national ownership, and enhanced stakeholder alignment to ensure sustainable reform in the civil registry system.

Findings on efficiency: The evaluation team assessed the project’s efficiency by examining its adherence to timelines, cost-effectiveness, and management practices. The project experienced delays due to the complex institutional environment, management challenges, and external factors, leading to a no-cost extension through 2024. Key activities, including the digitalization of civil registry records and the development of a Civil Registration Portal, faced significant delays. The MoJ’s partial acceptance of the Project Steering Committee’s resolutions further hindered progress, underscoring the need for better communication, a comprehensive strategy, and strengthened partnerships.

The UNDP Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) streamlined project management, with a new team in 2023 enhancing implementation. However, the integration of responsibilities from the EU-funded initiative added strain to resources. While a dedicated technical team facilitated alignment with national goals, challenges persisted in adapting to evolving national priorities and institutional inertia. Despite operational achievements, the lack of a robust risk management mechanism and strategic direction limited overall efficiency.

The Project Steering Committee was essential in coordinating stakeholders and guiding the project. However, inconsistent decision-making and limited involvement from key national stakeholders delayed key activities, including public awareness initiatives and digitalisation. Management practices were generally sound, with results-oriented work planning and a high communication standard. Establishing a Learning Management System (LMS) for civil registration offices helped adapt to COVID-19 constraints and improve training, though sustainability issues remain.

Findings on Sustainability: The evaluation of the project's long-term sustainability emphasizes the foundation it has laid in building institutional capacities, forging relationships, and establishing enduring processes. With a robust exit strategy, the project has prepared for the handover of digital systems, such as CROIS2, to the MoJ and ZAGS, and assigned SUE "Qonuniyat" as the responsible entity for IT operations. These are positive steps and with further political commitment, financial resources and skilled personnel the reforms can move forward ensuring sustainability. . Strengthening the MoJ's ownership of the project outcomes, improving decision-making, and maintaining collaborative relationships with national partners will be critical to fully integrating the project's gains within Tajikistan's civil registration system.

In addition to these institutional changes, the project has contributed to the establishment of essential legal frameworks, including amendments to the Civil Registration Law, creating a solid foundation for sustaining civil registration improvements. The MoJ plays a central role in overseeing these efforts, with digital tools like CROIS2 now integrated into national governance structures. At the same time, for the project's benefits to be fully realized, further enhanced and sustained interagency coordination of MoJ, particularly with the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies, will ensure alignment with the country's broader e-governance strategy.

The project has garnered significant support from development partners, such as the SDC, EU, WB, and UN, who have been instrumental in implementing and planning for sustainability. However, inconsistent national ownership at the operational level, particularly within the MoJ, has posed challenges. SUE "Qonuniyat's" role in managing IT operations represents a constructive step toward enhancing national ownership, but further MoJ leadership is needed to integrate the project's outcomes with Tajikistan's digital transformation strategy. The project's success also depends on ongoing capacity development within institutions like ZAGS, yet challenges in retaining skilled personnel and sustaining capacity-building efforts persist. To address this, the MoJ needs to institutionalize these training programs to ensure that civil registration personnel are equipped to adapt to evolving demands.

The scalability and replicability of successful project components, such as the CROIS2 platform, the Front and Back Office operational model, and mobile ZAGS units, highlight additional opportunities for expanding civil registration services. Extending digitalization efforts to all ZAGS offices across the country and ensuring interoperability with systems from key ministries could significantly improve service delivery and data sharing. By deploying remote registration options, the MoJ could further broaden public access to services, especially in rural areas, advancing the government's commitment to equitable access.

Findings on Impact: The project has already made a measurable impact on the quality and accessibility of civil registration services, which has improved ZAGS office structures and processes and streamlined service delivery. Direct beneficiaries, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, are now better able to access vital legal documentation, particularly in targeted regions. Women, for instance, have benefitted from improved awareness around registering marriages and births, with new services reducing bureaucratic barriers and facilitating inheritance claims, social service access, and child rights protection. On a systemic level, the project has advanced policy development through amendments to the Civil Registration Law and the introduction of a unique identification number for all citizens from birth. This reform is essential for ensuring that legal identity supports access to healthcare, education, and other services. Other initiatives, such as mobile ZAGS units and analytical dashboards in CROIS2, contribute to evidence-based policymaking and efficient service delivery. As Tajikistan continues its journey toward digital transformation, these tools

lay the groundwork for integrating civil registration data across multiple sectors, thereby enhancing governance and public service efficiency.

Findings on cross-cutting: The Civil Registry System Reform Phase II (CRSR II) effectively integrated inclusivity and gender equality, prioritizing support for marginalized groups like women, ethnic minorities, and stateless populations. Through capacity-building initiatives, ZAGS employees were trained to deliver gender-sensitive and inclusive services, streamlining civil registration processes and increasing access, particularly in remote areas. Mobile ZAGS units and the One-Stop-Shop (OSS) model reduced bureaucratic obstacles, enabling easier access to services for vulnerable communities.

Gender equality was central to CRSR II, with a special focus on providing women—especially those in rural areas—improved access to legal identity for themselves and their children. The CROIS2 digital system further simplified registration, empowering women to navigate civil registration processes independently. However, cultural norms in some regions limited women’s involvement, and the focus on women sometimes shifted resources away from other vulnerable groups.

Overall, CRSR II’s initiatives effectively advanced gender equality and social inclusion. Addressing cultural barriers and maintaining outreach for all marginalized groups will enhance the project’s impact on social inclusion and human rights in Tajikistan.

Conclusions

The Civil Registry System Reform Project Phase II (CRSR II) was well-aligned with Tajikistan’s national strategies, addressing key needs in modernizing civil registration and enhancing access to essential services. However, the Project faced scope limitations, particularly in rural areas where jamoats play a crucial role. Although the Project’s design effectively tackled systemic weaknesses in civil registration, the absence of a comprehensive reform agenda and coordination challenges, particularly with newer entities, limited its full potential.

The Project maintained relevance by adapting to changes, especially with new civil registration laws and ZAGS office improvements. There is a place for further improvement of decision-making process and ownership issues, that will positively affect projects’ progress. Internally coherent, the Project’s long-term goals, including digitalisation, were ambitious given the country’s institutional capacity constraints, indicating a need for intermediate targets and refined indicators. External coherence was evident through alignment with national and international commitments, particularly on SDGs related to legal identity and gender equality. However, interagency coordination and a unified digital strategy were lacking.

Regarding effectiveness, CRSR II improved ZAGS service efficiency and public awareness of registration’s importance but was limited in remote areas where geographical barriers persist. The digital CROIS2 system and new standardised procedures advanced civil registration, though interagency and infrastructural challenges slowed full implementation. Project management faced obstacles, including shifting priorities and insufficient coordination, hampering timely progress.

Sustainability prospects are promising, with an exit strategy ensuring SUE "Qonuniyat" will manage IT infrastructure post-project. However, long-term success depends on consistent political support, funding, and skill retention. Legal frameworks and digital systems introduced offer a strong foundation, and sustainability can be further enhanced by addressing currently weak interagency collaboration and MoJ leadership.

CRSR II’s impact on civil registration and service accessibility is emerging, especially for women and marginalised groups. However, expanding mobile ZAGS units and raising public awareness are essential to maximise reach. The Project set a foundation for scalable national reforms, with tools like SOPs and the Analytical Dashboard. However, implementing legal amendments and improving digital infrastructure will be crucial for broader, sustained impact.

Lastly, the Project demonstrated commitment to inclusivity and gender equality by incorporating LNOB and HRBA principles and promoting gender-sensitive service delivery. While mobile ZAGS units reduced access barriers, further scaling of digital services is needed. The Project made strides in women’s empowerment, though cultural norms still limit autonomy in certain areas, highlighting the need for community outreach and continuous civil servant training to sustain progress.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the CRSR II Project

R1. Request for No-Cost Extension: Given delays in procurement and essential activities like the Civil Registration Portal and archive digitalization, a no-cost extension is advised. This extension would allow sufficient time to complete digital infrastructure tasks, finalize training for ZAGS staff, and conduct a public awareness campaign focused on rural and marginalized communities, thereby ensuring better accessibility and awareness of civil registration benefits (C9, C11).

R2. Civil Registration Reform Platform and Roadmap: If extended, the CRSR II Project should establish a comprehensive reform platform in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and stakeholders. This platform should provide strategic direction for civil registration aligned with national modernization goals. A detailed roadmap would further delineate outcomes and outputs into actionable steps with specific timelines and responsibilities, ensuring alignment with the broader national agenda and project adaptability (C1, C2, C4, C10).

R3. Strengthen Interagency Coordination: The project team should enhance interagency collaboration by including key ministries and agencies, such as the Ministry of Health and the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies, in the Project Steering Committee. This approach will foster integration of civil registration reforms within broader e-governance and public health initiatives, supporting improved data-sharing and service delivery (C6, C8).

Recommendations for the Ministry of Justice and other development partners

R4. Enhanced Strategic Management and Risk Mitigation: Ongoing and future civil registration reforms require a comprehensive risk management framework to mitigate risks related to political shifts, institutional resistance, and budgetary constraints. Additionally, establishing a communication platform with MoJ and stakeholders would enable continuous collaboration, supporting legislative reforms and digital infrastructure initiatives (C3, C6, C9, C10).

R5. Capacity-Building Program with Institutional Ownership: Development partners should continue to strengthen the MoJ's capacity through tailored training for ZAGS staff, fostering leadership, and building technical expertise. It is crucial for MoJ to assume responsibility for ongoing training and human resource development, including modernizing training methodologies to support sustained digital system management (C7, C11, C12).

R6. Financial Sustainability Strategy: For long-term sustainability, a national M&E framework should be developed, aligned with the CROIS2 system, to track performance indicators. MoJ must secure budget provisions to maintain IT infrastructure and operational costs, ensuring civil registration reforms continue beyond project completion (C11, C12, C14, C19).

R7. Robust M&E Approach for Future Interventions: To improve impact and resilience, it is recommended that a robust M&E framework be integrated into the design of future interventions. This should include refined intervention logic and measurable indicators to enable proactive monitoring, risk mitigation, and early detection of challenges, ensuring the project stays aligned with its objectives (C4, C5).

These recommendations provide a strategic roadmap for enhancing civil registration reforms in Tajikistan, ensuring sustainable improvements and alignment with the country's digitalization and governance priorities.

Introduction

This document presents the results of the final evaluation of the Civil Registry System Reform (CRSR) Phase II Project, a strategic initiative designed to modernise and improve the civil registration system in Tajikistan. The project aimed to strengthen civil registration services, enhance accessibility and inclusivity, and ensure that all citizens, especially vulnerable groups, can exercise their legal rights through timely and efficient registration of vital events. The CRSR II has worked closely with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies, and other key stakeholders to achieve these goals.

The project has reached the end of its implementation cycle, prompting the partners (UNDP, SDC, and national stakeholders) to agree on conducting a final evaluation to assess the progress made during the project's implementation. The final evaluation was designed to provide an objective assessment of the project's outcomes, processes, and overall impact and offer recommendations for future interventions.

The structure of this evaluation report is as follows: The background chapter outlines the main contextual information about the civil registration system in Tajikistan, addressing the needs and priorities of key national institutions, including ZAGS offices and other relevant entities. The subsequent chapter details the CRSR II Project's strategic focus, its outcomes, and the specific outputs achieved during its implementation.

The second chapter explains the evaluation's purpose and objectives. It also identifies the primary users of the evaluation and clarifies how the results are expected to inform future actions and decision-making processes. Chapter three describes the evaluation's design and methodology. It elaborates on the approach used, including the evaluation matrix that guided the process. The matrix incorporates core evaluation questions that assess the project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability while considering cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle. The complete matrix is provided in the report annex. Chapter four explains how the data was collected and analysed during the evaluation. It also discusses the limitations and risks encountered during the evaluation process and the mitigation strategies applied to address these challenges.

Chapter five presents the findings of the final evaluation. This section is organized according to the evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions, offering the consultant's responses supported by the data gathered during the evaluation.

Chapters six and seven present the conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation's findings. The recommendations are intended to provide actionable guidance for stakeholders to enhance the sustainability and future success of civil registration reforms in Tajikistan.

The report's annexes contain supplementary information, including the detailed methodology used by the Final Evaluation Consultant, the evaluation matrix, the project's results framework, and the consultant's biodata. These annexes are provided to ensure transparency and to facilitate a deeper understanding of the evaluation process.

1 Context and background

1.1 *Civil Registration in Tajikistan- overview and challenges*

Tajikistan, a landlocked country in Central Asia, has faced significant challenges in its journey toward modernizing its public administration and civil registration systems since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The country's transition from a centrally planned economy to a more open and market-oriented system has been gradual and complex, impacting various aspects of governance, including civil registration and public service delivery.

Public administration reforms in Tajikistan have aimed to enhance government institutions' efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness. However, limited resources, outdated infrastructure, and a lack of technical expertise have often hampered these efforts. The civil registry system, vital for documenting vital events such as births, marriages, and deaths, has been particularly affected by these challenges.

Tajikistan's civil registration system has historically relied on manual, paper-based processes that are prone to inefficiencies, inaccuracies, and delays. The lack of a modernised system has made it difficult for citizens, especially those in rural and remote areas, to access civil registration services. Limited public awareness about the importance of civil registration exacerbates this situation, leading to significant gaps in registration coverage.

The country's efforts to reform and modernize the civil registry system began with the approval of the National Development Strategy and the Development Program of Civil Registration Bodies for 2014-2019. These initiatives laid the groundwork for transitioning from manual to electronic registration processes, aiming to improve the accuracy, accessibility, and efficiency of civil registration services.

Digitalisation efforts are critical to these reforms. Introducing the "Electronic Civil Registry Office" system is a key step toward addressing the challenges posed by the outdated, paper-based system. This new system is designed to automate the storage, retrieval, and management of civil registration records, significantly reducing the time required to process registrations and improving the overall quality of service delivery. The digitisation of over 188,000 civil registration records is one of the milestones in this ongoing transformation, providing a more accessible and efficient service for the population.

Despite these efforts, several challenges remain. The civil registration system's infrastructure is still underdeveloped in many regions, particularly rural areas with limited access to digital services. Public awareness campaigns have not fully bridged the knowledge gap among citizens about registering vital events. This has led to continued under-registration, especially among vulnerable groups such as women and children in remote areas.

Interagency coordination and data interoperability are also significant issues. The fragmentation of information systems across different government agencies has resulted in data inconsistencies, duplication of efforts, and delays in service delivery. These problems hinder the government's ability to use civil registration data effectively for policy-making and resource allocation.

Furthermore, Tajikistan's public administration reform process is still evolving. The civil service in Tajikistan has undergone various reforms to improve governance and public service delivery. Further elimination of bureaucratic challenges coupled with strong coordination among government is essential for the success of the reform and overall effectiveness of civil registration services and the broader public administration system.

The ongoing efforts to reform Tajikistan's civil registration system are part of a broader strategy to modernise public administration and enhance the delivery of essential services to the population. While significant progress has been made, particularly in digitising records and improving service delivery, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited public awareness, and issues of interagency coordination must be addressed to fully realise these reforms' benefits. Continued investment in digitalisation, capacity building, and public outreach, combined with stronger coordination among government agencies, will be crucial for successfully modernising the civil registry system and the broader public administration framework in Tajikistan.

1.2 Overview of the Civil Registry System Reform Project in Tajikistan – Phase II

The Civil Registry System Reform Project in Tajikistan – Phase II, initiated by UNDP Tajikistan with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), was designed to enhance the civil registration system in the country. The project built on the lessons learned from its first phase (2016-2019). It aimed to improve the accessibility, affordability, and quality of civil registry services across Tajikistan, focusing on the inclusion of all citizens, especially vulnerable groups.

The project adopted a human rights-based approach (HRBA), ensuring that every citizen could exercise their right to legal identity and access related entitlements, regardless of socio-economic status. This approach was integral to achieving the overarching goal of improving civil registration services for the entire population and facilitating access to critical public services

The Project's intervention logic was grounded in the theory of change, which posited that if the civil registry system were reformed to be more effective, efficient, and accessible, and if the population were adequately informed and motivated to register vital events, then the human rights of men, women, and children in Tajikistan would be better protected. This was to be achieved through improved civil registration services and increased public access to the system.

The project operated on two main outcomes, and each was addressing different aspects of the civil registry system:

Outcome 1: The reformed civil registry system of Tajikistan is effectively managed and provides quality and affordable services to the population and qualitative vital statistical data for the State.

This outcome focused on the supply side, aiming to reform and manage the civil registry system effectively. This involves several key outputs:

- *Output 1.* Newly adopted civil registry legislation is implemented and interagency coordination is effectively ensured.
- *Output 2.* New quality business processes are developed and effectively applied in the civil registry.
- *Output 3.* Electronic civil registry system and digitalized archives are handed over and effectively managed by MoJ.

Outcome 2: The population of Tajikistan know how to and timely have their vital events recorded in the civil registry system.

Under this **outcome 2, the Project** addressed the demand side, ensuring that the population is aware of the importance of civil registration and have access to these services. It envisaged one output:

- *Output 4.* Population is aware of timely registration benefits through MoJ communication strategy and supported by selected CSO to bolster civil registration, and the public contributes to improving the quality of the system through enhanced feedback mechanisms.

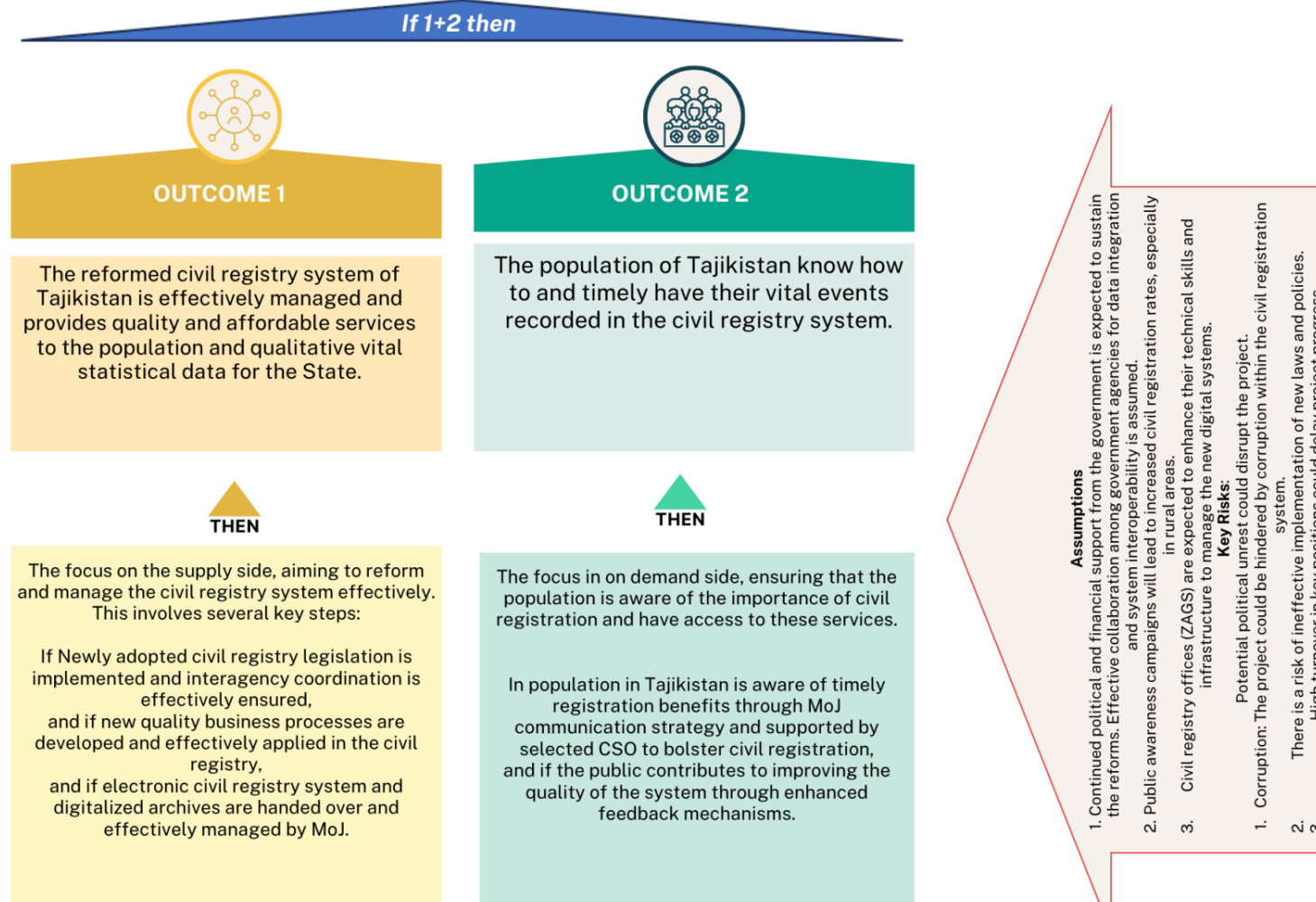
The project's intervention logic was underpinned by a comprehensive approach that combined supply-side reforms with demand-side awareness-raising, all within a framework that prioritized human rights, gender equality, and sustainable development. By the end of the project, Tajikistan was expected to have a civil registry system that would be more efficient, accessible, and capable of protecting the rights of all its citizens, thereby contributing to the country's long-term development goals.

The project was deeply embedded in the national context, aligning with key national strategies such as the National ZAGS Reform Programme (2014-2019) and the broader National Development Strategy 2030. Internationally, it aligned with Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy, the Swiss Cooperation Programme for Central Asia, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2026. These frameworks emphasized the protection of human rights, the improvement of access to justice, and the provision of quality public services, all of which were central to the project's goals. The project's design reflected a shift from the first phase, where the focus was predominantly on the supply side—strengthening the legislative framework and building the capacities of duty bearers. In this second phase, there was a more balanced approach, with increased attention to the demand side—raising knowledge and awareness among rights holders about the importance of civil registration. This dual focus was expected to create a more robust and sustainable civil registry system to meet the population's needs more effectively.

Gender considerations were integral to the project's design, with efforts made to address gender inequalities in accessing civil registration services. For instance, the project included gender-disaggregated indicators and applied a gender approach to identify and address specific challenges women and girls faced in the registration process. This focus ensured that the project contributed to women's empowerment and promoted gender equality.

Figure 1 Civil Registry Phase II Theory of Change

Women’s, men’s and children’s human rights (civil, social, political and economic) are better protected through the strengthened provision of civil registration services and increased public access to the system



Partnerships played a crucial role in the project's implementation. UNDP executed the project in close collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, while also engaging a broad range of stakeholders at all levels. These included other government ministries (such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection), civil society organizations, and the general public. These partnerships were vital for building the capacity of key institutions and stakeholders, simplifying and standardizing procedures, and integrating the civil registry system with other public services.

Insights from the first and second phases of the project also influenced the design of related initiatives, such as the EU-funded "Improved Access to Public Services through Civil Registry Reform" project. This EU project, which ran parallel to the SDC-funded initiative, aimed to further enhance access to public services through digitalization and integration, thereby complementing the efforts of the Civil Registry System Reform Project.

2 Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope

2.1 Purpose of the final evaluation

The evaluation conducted an assessment of the effects associated with the "Civil Registry System Reform Project - Phase II" by examining its alignment with the established goals, outcomes, and outputs throughout the five-year intervention period commencing in 2020. In addition to assessing the project's effectiveness, the evaluation documented critical lessons learned and provided recommendations for future programming. Furthermore, it identified and analyzed the issues and challenges that influenced the effective and efficient implementation of outputs, as well as their overall contribution to the project's outcomes and impact.

2.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objective was to evaluate the Civil Registry Reform Project's efforts to enhance the accessibility, cost-efficiency, and quality of civil registration services in Tajikistan while also increasing public awareness. Operationally, the evaluation focused on two key outcomes: a) Outcome 1: Assessed how effectively the reformed civil registry system of Tajikistan was managed and whether it delivered quality and affordable services to the population while providing reliable vital statistical data for the state; and b) Outcome 2: Evaluated the extent to which the population of Tajikistan was informed and able to record their vital events in the civil registry system promptly.

In addition, the final evaluation focused on the following inter-linked elements:

Assess Project Progress: Evaluated the progress made toward achieving the objectives, expected outputs, and outcomes outlined in the Project Document. This included comparing planned outputs with actual results, evaluating the relevance of the objectives, and identifying indicators of project success or failure. The goal was to determine necessary adjustments to ensure that project activities met the evolving needs of government partners by the project's end. This also involved reviewing the project's strategy and assessing potential risks to its sustainability.

Review Indicators and Targets: Examined the relevance and feasibility of the progress indicators and targets set within the project's logical framework, considering the specific country context. Feedback on the achievement of these targets was provided.

Document Lessons Learned: Identified lessons learned that could enhance the sustainability of the project's benefits and help UNDP better align its response to the needs and priorities of project beneficiaries.

Provide Recommendations: Offered clear and actionable recommendations to improve project implementation for the remainder of its duration, ensuring that the project could adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities.

2.3 Scope of the final evaluation

The Project, with a total budget of 5,740,000 USD (UNDP TRAC 1,000,000 USD), was initiated on 1 January 2020 and planned until 31 December 2023—with an extension until 31 December 2024. The scope of the final

evaluation covered the period from the project start until the end of September 2024, also analysing commitments and expected deliverables until its end.

This final evaluation encompassed a comprehensive review of its deliverables, processes and interactions to ensure a thorough understanding of its multifaceted elements.

2.4 Target Groups and Beneficiaries

The ET ensured participation from stakeholders, including men and women- the ET used a human-rights-based approach to identify these stakeholders (Annex X)

Here is a more concise version of the text, maintaining the key ideas:

- **Duty-Bearers with Decision-Making Authority:** The MoJ led the civil registry reforms, ensuring alignment with national and international standards. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection played key roles in integrating these reforms into broader government services. The Project Steering Committee, with representatives from these ministries, UNDP, and SDC, provided strategic oversight and decision-making support.
- **Duty-Bearers with Direct Responsibility:** UNDP, as the implementing partner, worked closely with the MoJ and other stakeholders. SDC provided financial support and guidance. Local Civil Registry Offices (CROs) managed daily civil registration services, while the MoJ oversaw policy consistency. Local authorities supported regional and local implementation, focusing on outreach and service delivery.
- **Secondary Duty-Bearers:** CSOs raised awareness about civil registration, particularly for vulnerable groups, while health workers and educators promoted birth registration. Community and religious leaders encouraged participation and compliance with registration requirements.
- **Rights-Holders Benefiting from the Project:** Women, girls, children, and people with disabilities were key beneficiaries, with improved access to civil registration. Ethnic minorities, rural communities, and economically disadvantaged individuals received support to overcome barriers. The project also targeted stateless persons to ensure they gained legal documentation and protection of their rights.

3 Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The final evaluation will comprehensively assess the Civil Registry Reform Project's overall effectiveness and efficiency, focusing on both technical and operational aspects. This evaluation will review the results produced, their impact, and how well the project's interventions align with national priorities and stakeholder expectations.

3.1 Evaluation Criteria

Key evaluation criteria included:

Relevance: The evaluation examined how well the project activities and outcomes aligned with the broader goals of improving civil registration services and enhancing access to rights for all Tajik citizens. This assessment considered alignment with national priorities, as well as strategic frameworks from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and UNDP. The goal was to determine whether the project remained relevant in addressing the evolving needs and priorities within the civil registration system.

Effectiveness: The evaluation assessed the extent to which the project's interventions achieved their intended results. This included evaluating improvements in civil registry system management, increased public access to services, and heightened awareness and registration of critical life events. The project's effectiveness was measured against the objectives set out in its design, identifying areas of success and potential gaps.

Coherence: The evaluation analyzed the project's internal coherence, focusing on how well the various components—such as legislative changes, capacity-building initiatives, communication strategies, and technical enhancements—were integrated to achieve the project's goals. This included an assessment of the consistency of the project's approach with other relevant initiatives and policies, ensuring that all elements worked together to strengthen civil registration services.

Efficiency: The evaluation reviewed how efficiently the project utilized its resources, adhered to implementation timelines, and coordinated activities. This included an analysis of cost-effectiveness, the timeliness of project execution, and the overall management of resources. The evaluation also documented lessons learned regarding efficiency and identified areas where processes could be improved for future interventions.

Impact: The evaluation assessed the broader impact of the project on various stakeholders, including the target population, government institutions, civil society, and other relevant actors. This assessment focused on improvements in service delivery, the quality of civil registration data, and public participation in the civil registration system. The goal was to understand the project's long-term effects on the civil registry system and its users.

Sustainability: The evaluation examined the long-term sustainability of the project's outcomes, focusing on the durability of institutional capacities developed, relationships formed, and processes established. This included an assessment of how well the project's achievements would likely be maintained after the project ended, particularly in the context of ongoing digitalization and integration efforts supported by the EU. The evaluation also identified potential risks and opportunities related to resource mobilization and the harmonization of future interventions.

Gender Equality: The evaluation reviewed the project's efforts to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion. This included analyzing how the project addressed gender-specific challenges and promoted equitable access to civil registration services for all, including marginalized groups.

Lessons and Recommendations: The evaluation documented the key lessons learned throughout the project, highlighting best practices, challenges encountered, and specific recommendations for future actions. These insights provided actionable guidance for UNDP and other stakeholders involved in similar initiatives, helping to refine and improve future civil registry reform efforts in Tajikistan.

Additionally, the evaluation considered external factors beyond the project's control that may have influenced its outcomes, whether positively or negatively. It also reviewed the management and quality assurance mechanisms employed during the intervention, as well as the effectiveness of coordination among stakeholders.

This comprehensive evaluation aimed to provide a clear understanding of the project's achievements, areas for improvement, and the potential for sustaining and building upon its successes in the future

3.2 Key Evaluation Questions

The TOR and the UNDP guidelines on evaluation provided the basis for the evaluation questions. The EC analysed and proposed main evaluation questions, introducing additional sub-questions to ensure that all areas indicated under the TOR are considered and covered. The FE report answered these questions using specific, objectively verifiable indicators (OVI) generated for each EQ to assess the situation, delivery of outputs and progress towards the intended outcomes. Detailed overview of the evaluation questions and sub-questions is presented in the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 1 to this report)

4 Evaluation approach and methodology

4.1 Specific approach to this evaluation

The framework for this ex-post evaluation has been set in the ToR, and following its provisions, the EC has developed a tailor-made methodology. The main references for the evaluation methodology were the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2021)¹ and OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria². The EC will adhere to UN Evaluation Group

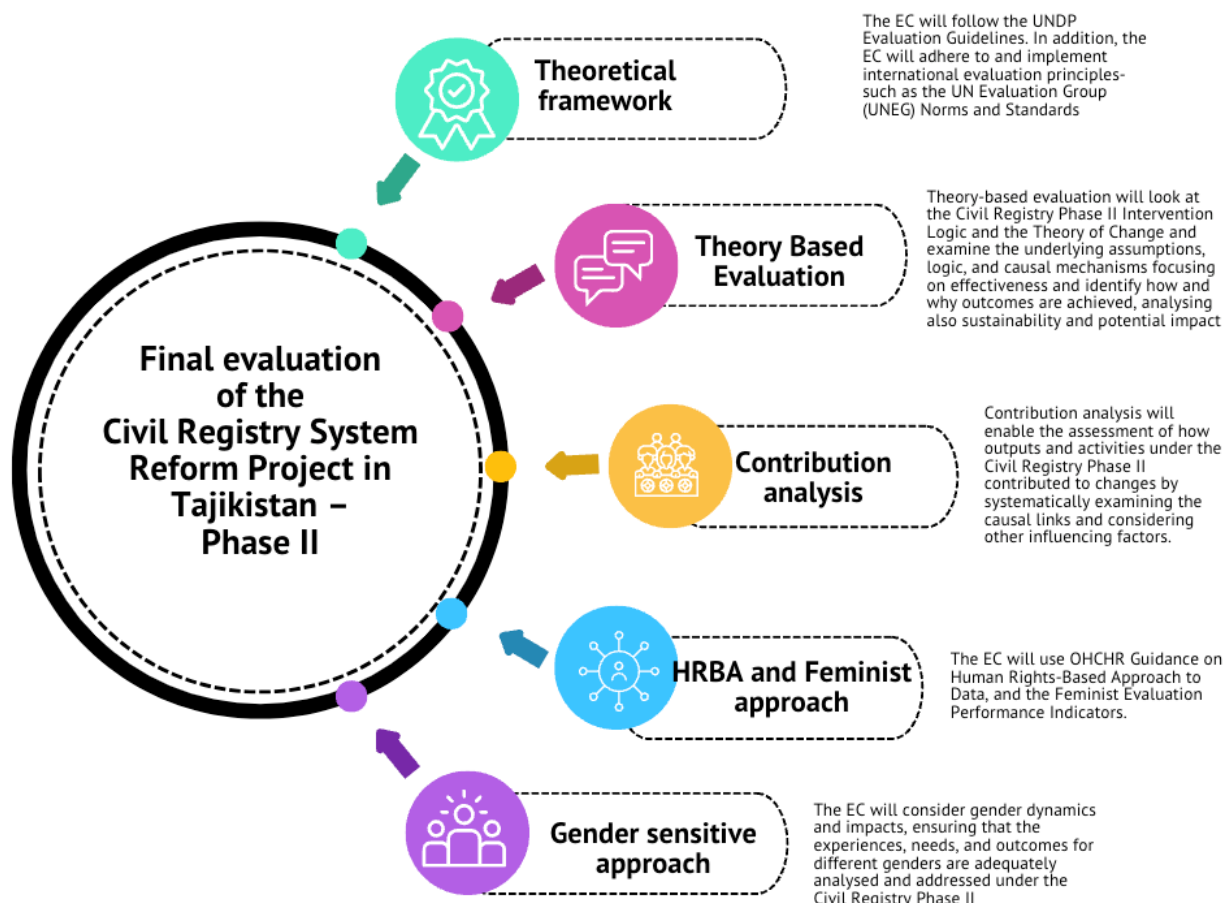
¹ https://erc.undp.org/pdf/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf

² Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), Network on Development Evaluation, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, 2019, available at: <https://web.archive.org/temp/2024-05-13/81829-dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

(UNEG) Norms and Standards³ and UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation⁴.

Building upon this foundation, the ET implemented a theory-based evaluation approach⁵ utilizing the Theory of Change. Additionally, the evaluation incorporates contribution analysis, reflects gender-responsive principles, and adheres to a human rights-based framework. The subsequent paragraphs delineate the emergence of a distinctive methodology that amalgamates these approaches for the Project’s evaluation.

Figure 2: Overview of the evaluation methodology



A **theory-based evaluation provided** a comprehensive and structured framework for examining the intervention logic and the Theory of Change. These serve as roadmaps that delineate the intended sequence of events and causal pathways leading to the desired outcomes and objectives of the Civil Registry Phase II Project. The lucid articulation of assumptions and risks, alongside barriers to achieving expected outcomes and the principal objective, enabled the European Commission (EC) to systematically assess whether and how the Civil Registry Phase II Project organized this process.

This approach facilitated the identification of critical components and variables within the chain of results, forming the basis for measurement and analysis. This was particularly significant in the case of the Civil Registry Phase II Project, given that multiple interrelated factors contributed to the outcomes.

The ET advocated for theory-based evaluation to enhance adaptability and learning, as it permitted comparison between the actual achievement of outputs and outcomes against those delineated in the

³ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2787>

⁴ <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/1294>

⁵ Centre of Excellence for Evaluation (2012). Theory-Based Approaches to Evaluation: Concepts and Practices. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

Theory of Change. This comparison illuminated discrepancies, revealing aspects of the Project that did not perform as anticipated.

Moreover, this iterative process of testing the Theory of Change fostered a deeper comprehension of the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that influenced the delivery of outputs and progress towards outcomes.

Contribution analysis: The EC supplemented this theory-based approach with contribution analysis. At its core, this method concentrated on disentangling and examining the plausible connections between the Project's initiatives and the observed outcomes, striving to understand the mechanisms and reasons behind the changes observed. The EC established a causal chain within the Theory of Change, detailing the expected sequence of events from the Project's activities to its ultimate achievements at the overall objective level. This process revealed how the Theory of Change envisioned the intervention's success, necessitating the gathering of meticulous evidence to validate each step within the logic, Theory of Change, or causal chain. For evaluating the CRSR II Project, this meant verifying whether the planned activities were executed, whether they achieved immediate outputs, progressed towards outcomes, and ultimately culminated in the Project's overall objective.

The strength of contribution analysis resided in thoroughly considering alternative explanations for the observed outcomes; hence, evaluating the Project involved critically examining external influences or other interventions that might have impacted it. By excluding or integrating these other factors, the EC could more convincingly attribute the observed changes to the Project itself.

Additionally, contribution analysis recognized the critical role of context, particularly relevant for the Civil Registry Phase II Project in Tajikistan, where the political, economic, and social landscape, regional context, and security situation significantly shaped the overall circumstances.

Furthermore, the ET incorporated *gender-sensitive and feminist evaluation* approaches at each process stage.

4.2 Data Collection Methods, Instruments, and Data Analysis

The CRSR II Project's final evaluation incorporated both *summative and formative* approaches:

- The summative component aimed to encapsulate and critically assess the lessons learned, evaluating the achievement of visible results at both output and outcome levels.
- The formative aspect focused on evaluating whether these results could be adapted for future phases and potential expansions of the Civil Registry Phase II Project.

In this context, the evaluation utilised several information sources and employed different data-gathering tools to understand the Project's rollout and impact.

The ET proposed a comprehensive methodology, applying a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques.

While qualitative data methods dominated the approach—employing tools such as key informant interviews, group discussions, and reflective sessions—quantitative data, derived from sources such as the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), its Civil Registry Department, and other Tajikistani institutions, complemented the findings. Participatory data-gathering methods formed the foundation, validating the expertise of the Project's affiliates, particularly those from diverse national institutions.

Fully aware of potential research biases, the ET ensured immersion and ongoing self-reflection on any power disparities between evaluators and subjects. To mitigate these biases, the EC ensured data triangulation, gathering insights from various sources to authenticate findings and highlight points of consensus and divergence.

This methodological approach, built upon the EC's extensive experience in similar settings, ensured the Project's evaluation was relevant, applicable, and methodologically sound.

4.2.1 Analysis of Project Records and Secondary Literature

The evaluative process began with an in-depth analysis of the Civil Registry Phase II Project's inputs and deliverables, alongside a review of national and sector-specific strategic documents. This process incorporated various governance, digitalisation, and civil registry-related aspects presented in regional and country-specific reports, aligned with the Project's overarching strategic objectives. These sources provided insights into the country's context and the relevance of the Civil Registry Project.

In addition to the primary project documentation, the EC conducted a thorough review of external factors affecting governance in Tajikistan. This broadened the evaluation's scope, allowing for a clearer understanding of the context within which the Project was implemented and highlighting operational details that emerged during the process.

The EC's desk review also integrated insights from various national reports, refining evaluation questions and ensuring alignment with the evaluation's objectives. As the evaluation progressed, the EC further enriched its findings, revisiting documents and strengthening partnerships with key participating institutions.

4.2.2 Primary data collection

This evaluation followed a human rights-based approach, combined with gender-sensitive and feminist methods that ensure stakeholders' participation in interviews and group interviews, including men and women from the national institutions participating in the Project's activities. The HRBA ensured that transparency, equality, and non-discrimination principles were integrated.

For evaluating the Project, the ET employed a purposive sampling technique, focusing on the key informants' selection influenced by their level and nature of engagement ("purpose"). This approach encompassed critical areas, such as formulation, decision-making, implementation, and benefiting.

The in-country mission for the final Project evaluation took place over structured meetings and on-site visits (from 23 September until 02 October 2024- Annex 2), involving key stakeholders such as UNDP, the MoJ, SDC, and other relevant government agencies. The mission began with planning and coordination meetings at the UNDP Country Office to finalize the evaluation agenda, followed by detailed discussions with project partners, including SDC and the European Union, to review project progress and contributions.

Throughout the mission, the evaluation team consulted with senior representatives from the MoJ, the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies, and other ministries to assess the project's alignment with national strategies and effectiveness in achieving its objectives. The ET conducted several field visits to ZAGS offices across different regions, including visits to ZAGS offices in Sino, Firdavsi, Varzob, Vahdat, Rudaki, Istaravshan, and Shahrison. These visits allowed the evaluation team to observe service delivery improvements and gather feedback from beneficiaries and local staff.

In addition to assessing project performance, the evaluation included interviews with other stakeholders from national and sub-national levels to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact on various regions and population groups. The mission concluded with data consolidation and a presentation of preliminary findings to UNDP leadership, offering actionable insights and recommendations for the project's future sustainability. The EC organised semi-structured interviews⁶ (Annex 3 Interview Guides) with them to extract in-depth insights from stakeholders integrally involved in varying stages of the Project, ensuring a multi-faceted perspective on its accomplishments and challenges.

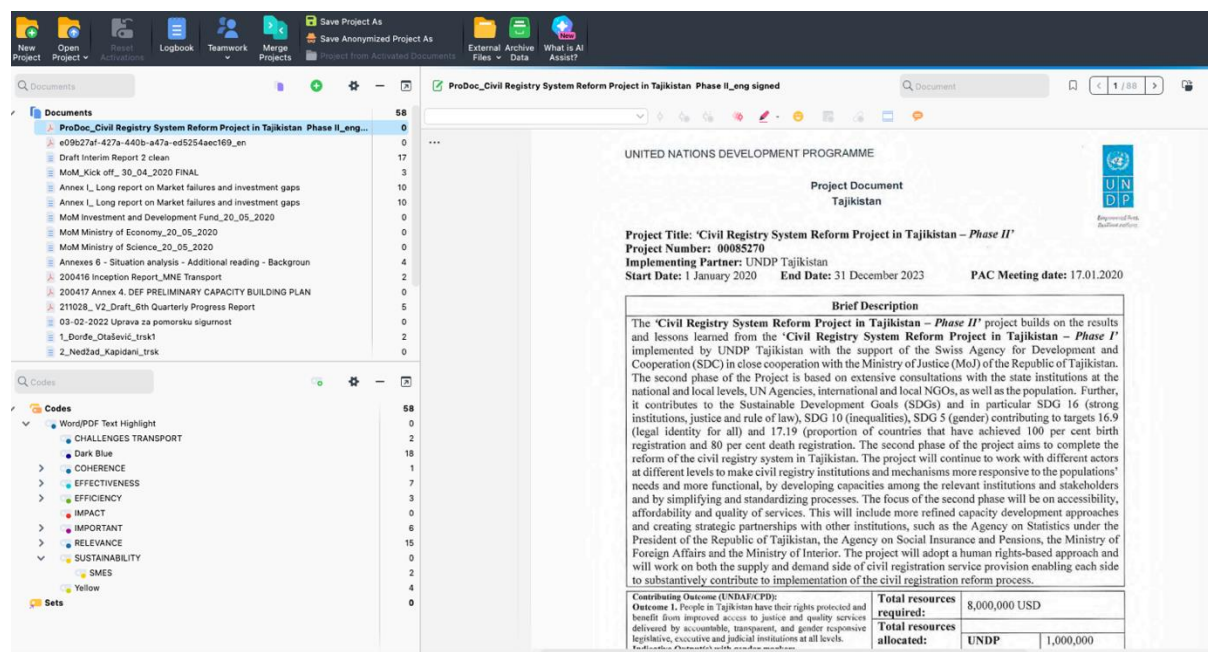
4.3 Data analysis

The EC analysed data to facilitate the preparation of the evaluation report, using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA to upload completed data collection instruments⁷.

⁶ The semi-structured interview approach will ensure consistent data collection on predetermined themes and offer the latitude to delve into spontaneously emerging insights, challenges, and success narratives.

⁷ Such instruments include document review templates, semi-structured interview guides (individual and group), and discussion or reflection guides.

Figure 3 MAXQDA features for data analysis



The ET prepared codes and classifications based on the evaluation matrix and its elements- the sub-questions, judgement criteria and indicators. In parallel, the EC will add classifications or other attributes⁸ to facilitate data analysis tailored to the evaluation purpose. The responses will be grouped according to the evaluation matrix and respondent categories, and interview notes will be coded against the evaluation matrix (as indicated in the previous paragraph for direct alignment with the judgement criteria and indicators).

The ET applied a **cross-validation approach**⁹ for information from various sources and collection methods to ensure the accuracy of findings. In parallel, the ET will examine multiple sources to confirm the internal validity of the findings. This **triangulation**, involving various sources, ensured the confirmation and cross-checking of major trends while establishing a pattern through the convergence of data from different sources¹⁰.

Key steps included:

a) Analyzing Findings & Drawing Conclusions: The ET reviewed all findings from various sources, established links between project strategies and outcomes, compared these with the project's original objectives, and engaged stakeholders to validate the conclusions.

b) Formulating Recommendations: Recommendations were evidence-based, prioritized by impact and feasibility, and clearly defined with specific actions and responsibilities. They were developed inclusively with stakeholder input, ensuring relevance and focusing on both past challenges and future improvements.

c) Feedback and Iteration: Draft recommendations were shared for stakeholder feedback, ensuring they were practical and aligned with expectations. Flexibility was maintained to revise recommendations based on new insights.

This structured approach ensured the recommendations were well-grounded, actionable, and aligned with the project's realities.

4.4 Limitations

The final evaluation of the CRSR II Project included a primary data collection phase, comprising in-country interviews and field visits, to gather comprehensive information on the project's outcomes and outputs. This

⁸ Some examples could be duty bearer, rightsholder, and implementation partners

⁹ Morras-Imas and Rist define triangulation of methods as "Collection of the same information using different methods in order to increase the accuracy of data", p. 300. Morra Imas, L. G., & Rist, R. C. (2009). The Road to Results: Designing and Conducting Effective Development Evaluations. Washington, D.C., World Bank.

¹⁰ Morras- Imas and Rist, p. 376.

phase aimed to complement the desk review by exploring links between various issues affecting the achievement of CRSR II objectives and the broader progress towards civil registration reform in Tajikistan. However, several factors limited the evaluation. The limited time for in-country mission affected visits to some field locations, limiting in-person consultations with local ZAGS offices. However, the ET could not meet with vulnerable groups or large numbers of beneficiaries. Despite engaging with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Justice, UNDP, SDC, and other relevant ministries, some staff members of ZAGS Offices could not provide detailed feedback on project cooperation and outcomes, often distinguishing CRSR II-related support from other ongoing government activities.

A notable challenge in the evaluation was assessing the precise extent of CRSR II's contribution to the broader civil registration reforms in the country. Although the project indicators were relevant, they provided only limited insight into the larger transformational changes envisioned. Some national reports and data sources, while available, presented different perspectives on the progress of civil registration reform, with certain government officials expressing concerns over the interpretation of findings. As a result, the evaluation team had to rely on analyzing progress at the output level and making assumptions about the project's contribution to national-level outcomes.

The efficiency assessment focused primarily on the management structures and coordination mechanisms established under CRSR II, such as the Project Steering Committee. The evaluation used documentation such as meeting minutes, project reports, and interviews with key members of these bodies to assess how efficiently resources were managed and decisions were made.

Assessing the sustainability of CRSR II outcomes also posed challenges. Sustainability, which is ideally assessed after a project has concluded and time has passed to measure long-term impact, is difficult to evaluate during the final stages of project implementation. While the evaluation team conducted a context analysis to forecast the sustainability of CRSR II's results, it is difficult to fully anticipate possible future priorities, the time required to complete legislative reforms, and other external factors. These factors could significantly influence the long-term success of the civil registration reforms introduced under the project.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

The Evaluation Team (ET) adhered to OECD DAC ethical considerations for development evaluations¹¹ and followed the United Nations Ethical Guidelines¹². The Evaluation Consultant (EC) observed ethical protocols while selecting interviewees and maintained respect for their personal and institutional rights. Informed consent was obtained from stakeholders before interviews, with a brief explanation of the evaluation's objectives and the scope of questions. Stakeholders retained the right to decline participation or withdraw at any point.

The ET ensured respondent privacy and confidentiality, understanding that disclosing confidential information could jeopardize the evaluation's efficiency and credibility. Discretion was exercised throughout the evaluation process, and confidential information was not disclosed without authorization. The EC respected the informants' right to provide information confidentially, ensuring sensitive data could not be traced back to its source and protecting key informants from any potential repercussions. Interview records and notes were kept confidential until the evaluation's completion. The ET maintained full independence throughout the evaluation, with no conflicts of interest. Impartiality, credibility, and accountability were the guiding principles throughout the process.

¹¹ <https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>

¹² United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation- UNEG/CoC, 2020. Ref to <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

5 Presentation of findings

5.1 Findings on Relevance

The evaluation rigorously examined the extent to which project activities and outcomes were congruent with the overarching objectives of improving civil registration services and guaranteeing access to rights for all citizens of Tajikistan. This assessment considered the alignment with national priorities and strategic frameworks established by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The objective was to ascertain whether the project continued to address the evolving needs and priorities of the civil registration system.

EQ1.1. To what extent has the Project been relevant in responding to the needs of Tajikistan in reforming the overall civil registry system?

The Civil Registry System Reform Project – Phase II exhibited a high degree of alignment with the development agenda of the Government of Tajikistan (GoT), as delineated in several pivotal national strategic documents. The Project maintained its relevance throughout its implementation by addressing stated governance objectives and emergent priorities concerning digitalisation and public administration reform.

- **JC1.1.1. The extent to which the Project responded to the Tajikistan's priorities concerning reform of civil registry (and broader, public administration reform and digitalization)**
- **JC1.1.2. The extent to which the Project aligned with government priorities**

The Project is highly relevant (JC1.1.1) for the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2030¹³, which articulates Tajikistan's aspiration to attain good governance, ensure the rule of law, and facilitate inclusive access to public services. It recognised that the civil registry system is a fundamental component of this framework, aimed at guaranteeing legal identity for all citizens and enhancing their access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and social protection. Furthermore, the NDS underscored the necessity of fortifying public administration to serve citizens more effectively, especially through infrastructure modernisation and service accessibility in rural and remote regions, where such services have historically been inadequate. The CRSR II responded to these objectives by concentrating on reforming the civil registry system, its institutional and legislative reforms, thereby augmenting equity and efficiency under a transparent and reliable civil registry system.

Additionally, the Project has been relevant in expanding the vision of the previous Program for the Development of Civil Registry Offices (2014-2019). Continuing efforts from the first implementation period (January 2016 until December 2019), this phase ensured the government's long-term aspirations for upgrading infrastructure and streamlining registration processes are expanded and sustained. In addition, the Medium-Term Development Program (2021-2025) further accentuates the modernisation of public administration, identifying the digitalisation of public services as a key priority. The interventions undertaken within this Project to enhance civil registry processes and implement electronic systems are consistent with this objective, thereby supporting the Government of Tajikistan's broader aims of fostering a more effective, citizen-centred governance system.

Concerning digitalisation priorities (JC1.1.2) the Project closely aligns with the Digital Economy Concept of Tajikistan¹⁴, which underscores the government's dedication to integrating digital technologies into public administration to enhance service delivery and bolster economic competitiveness. Key digital initiatives that the Project introduced, including the upgraded Civil Registration Office Information System (CROIS2), the planned civil registration web portal and work on digitisation of civil registry records, contribute to the

¹³ National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030, Dushanbe 2016, available at: http://nafaka.tj/images/zakoni/new/strategiya_2030_en.pdf

¹⁴ Digital Economy in Tajikistan- Concept; Approved- Government decree Tajikistan from "30" December 2019, No.642

government's objectives of improving accessibility, transparency, and efficiency within public services. In conjunction with this, the Project's efforts to modernise civil registration processes through more responsive and equitable services at ZAGS offices addressed the need to enhance data management and mitigate bureaucratic inefficiencies

These endeavors have also supported the broader goals of the Agency for Innovation and Digitalization, a pivotal organisation in Tajikistan's digital transformation agenda. Practically, the e-governance solutions within civil registration services (that the Project supports) complement the Agency's mandate to foster interoperability and connectivity across governmental platforms. This alignment reinforces the government's initiative toward technology-driven public services, as articulated in Tajikistan's national development strategies¹⁵. Still, the key informants highlighted that implementing the Project's digital initiatives requires a broader coalition for alignment with the national e-governance platform that can be developed under the leadership of the Agency for Innovation and Digitalization. In addition, collaborating with ministries like the Ministry of Health, which is developing its information platform, is critical¹⁶.

▪ **JC1.1.3. The extent to which the Project is relevant to UNDP and SDC priorities**

The Project aligns with the UNDP and UN strategic priorities defined jointly with the national partners- as it directly supports the UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) by addressing the imperative for inclusive governance, human rights, and public administration reform. A principal focus of the Project is to ensure that marginalised groups, including rural populations and women, have access to essential services and legal identity, thereby contributing to the CPAP goal of improving access to public services. In addition, the CRSR II emphasis on digital transformation is consistent with UNDP's broader objectives of utilising digital governance to enhance service delivery, transparency, and accountability.

Following the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2023-2026, the Project also prioritised inclusive development and good governance, highlighting the priority that no individual is left behind. The efforts to strengthen Tajikistan's civil registry system are relevant to the UNSDCF outcomes intended to promote inclusive human development and the establishment of robust public institutions.

Moreover, the Project is relevant to the priorities of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), as delineated in the Swiss Cooperation Programme for Central Asia (2022-2025). The Project's objective to improve Tajikistan's civil registry system, enhance public administration, and ensure legal identity for all citizens contribute to SDC's focus on governance reform concerning access to public services for marginalised populations.

Furthermore, the Project adheres to the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle and inclusive governance priorities that SDC mainstreams across all activities. The Project's focus on ensuring that vulnerable groups benefit from modernised and accessible civil registration services directly supports these priorities. Additionally, the Project endorses SDC's emphasis on digital transformation by leveraging technology to improve governance and public service delivery while mitigating bureaucratic barriers.

EQ 1.2. To what extent has the Project design been consistent and based on problem analysis?

- **JC1.2.1. The extent to which the Project design reflected problem analysis (political, legal and institutional level) in formulation of its intervention logic**

The CRSR II design comprehensively analyses political, legal, and institutional challenges- the ET finds that a problem analysis was central to shaping the Project's intervention logic to address the systemic issues within Tajikistan's civil registration system.

As indicated in the previous paragraphs (JC1.1.1 and 1.1.2), the Project aligns with national priorities, recognising civil registration as a fundamental public service critical for ensuring legal identity, a basic human

¹⁵ The advocacy from the President and the Executive Office for digital transformation further emphasises the significance of these initiatives, situating the modernisation of civil registration as a fundamental component within the country's overarching e-governance framework.

¹⁶ This ensures the civil registration web portal supported by the Project (currently in procurement) becomes part of Tajikistan's e-governance framework.

right¹⁷. The phased implementation approach (starting from the initial considerations from 2016, when the partners launched its first phase) underscored the Project's understanding that civil registration reform is a long-term political process requiring ongoing political commitment. Therefore, the Project involved the MoJ and other key stakeholders, including the Executive Office of the President (EOP), to push reforms and build institutional ownership. However, the absence of a clear civil registration reform strategy¹⁸ and digitalisation roadmap with elaborated milestones affected the agreed scope, as competing priorities within the Project Steering Committee (PSC) emerged (hence, highlighting the importance of communication between the project team and key partners, alongside documenting agreements to ensure smooth progress calling for more effective communication).

The Project identified critical gaps in Tajikistan's legislative framework for civil registration, recognising that "existing laws were outdated and did not align with international standards¹⁹". Furthermore, the legal responsibilities of various institutions involved in civil registration—such as the MoJ, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), and local jamoats (village councils) require further clarifications. The Project planned to address these challenges focusing on harmonising national legislation with international best practices, developing revised civil registration laws and supporting regulations. Still, the Project did not realistically assess law-making process in Tajikistan, hence, the whole component on legislative reform was based on realistic assumption that the amendments will be adopted swiftly and timely.

Institutionally, the Project identified capacity gaps within Tajikistan's civil registration system, particularly in ZAGS offices (Civil Registration Offices). Many of these offices needed critical infrastructure, including electricity, internet, and modern equipment to enhance delivery of services. The Project responded by focusing on capacity building, including i) developing standardised business processes for civil registration (Output 2), ii) digitising archives and implementing the CROIS2 electronic civil registration system (Output 3), and iii) training ZAGS staff to effectively use these new systems. The Project also provided technical assistance in analysing and streamlining processes within ZAGS offices.

Another institutional challenge was limited interagency coordination, which the Project aimed to address through the Project Steering Committee (PSC). While the PSC facilitated communication with key stakeholders, it emerged that the involvement of other national institutions was limited despite their critical importance for the civil registration reform²⁰.

However, the Project's limited scope focused investments primarily to city and district-level ZAGS offices (throughout the two phases of the initiative). Although most of the country's population resides in rural areas, where local jamoats²¹ are responsible for registering four out of seven significant events, these jamoats were not under the Project's framework. Consequently, they did not participate in capacity-building activities or benefit from technical support. Although the national stakeholders commented that the role of the jamaots in civil registration is under review (as part of the system reform), they also recommended that UNDP (and the Project) monitor developments and integrate changes into its civil registry reform approach. The informants noted that future initiatives should consider these changes and expand partnerships to include additional state institutions that work closely with jamoats.

- ***JC1.2.2. The extent to which the project responded to the needs and demands of the beneficiaries in a gender-disaggregated manner (i.e., for men and women, girls and boys, LNOB or non-LNOB).***

The ET finds that the Project considered several critical issues pertaining to gender disparities and the inclusivity of vulnerable groups within the civil registration process, particularly regarding their access to

¹⁷ The reference is made to the National Development Strategy (2016-2030) and sectoral strategies such as the Program for the Development of Civil Registry Authorities (2014-2019), prioritised civil registration reform.

¹⁸ A civil registration reform strategy is a comprehensive plan aimed at modernizing and improving the efficiency, accessibility, and accuracy of a country's civil registration system, ensuring legal identity for all citizens while enhancing public service delivery through digitalization, capacity-building, and institutional reforms; it should include well-elaborated objectives, strategic priorities, and a clear pathway for achieving these goals.

¹⁹ CRSR II Project document and problem analysis

²⁰ The key informants recognized the need for broader involvement, especially with the newly established Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies, which could significantly improve digital coordination. Other critical stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Health and the Agency on Statistics, should also be part of the PSC to ensure a more cohesive and integrated civil registry system.

²¹ Jamoats in Tajikistan implement delegated civil registration functions and are not part of the MoJ jurisdiction.

services (more details are presented under the Cross-cutting criteria). For instance, the analysis from the design stage indicated that women and girls encountered barriers in accessing civil registration services, particularly in rural and remote areas²². Cultural norms exacerbated this issue, frequently impeding women's mobility and participation in legal processes. Additionally, the situation analysis demonstrated that logistical and financial constraints disproportionately impacted these vulnerable groups, hindering their ability to travel to ZAGS. Moreover, it was revealed that marginalized and vulnerable groups—especially women, who are often not the principal decision-makers within households—require increased awareness regarding the importance of timely registration.

The Project's design reflected these challenges, incorporating detailed activities such as gender-sensitive awareness campaigns aimed at reaching women in rural areas. It proposed partnerships with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) experienced in engaging with women's groups to ensure that messaging was both accessible and culturally appropriate (Output 4).

The Project was also committed to monitoring gender-disaggregated indicators to assess access to services, ensuring responsiveness to the distinct needs of men, women, boys, and girls. Acknowledging the logistical challenges women and populations face in remote areas, the Project assisted the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in deploying mobile ZAGS services to provide civil registration directly to individuals unable to travel to formal offices. The objective was to reach women, persons with disabilities, and communities situated in geographically isolated regions, thereby reducing barriers to access (Output 3). In pursuit of inclusivity, the Project aimed to enhance the physical accessibility of ZAGS offices and to develop communication strategies addressing language and cultural barriers for ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities (Output 2 and Output 4).

EQ1.3: Has the Project remained relevant during the implementation and beyond?

▪ JC1.3.1: The Extent to Which the Project Incorporated Lessons from the Mid-Term Review

The ET analysed the CRSR II Mid-term Review Report (MTR) 21, which highlighted key areas for improvement, focusing on strengthening the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) project ownership and enhancing stakeholder coordination to accelerate decision-making and address delays caused by differing institutional priorities. It also emphasised the need to advance digitalisation, specifically by improving the CROIS2 system and expanding digital infrastructure, which was delayed by procurement and administrative challenges. Additionally, the MTR recommended expanding outreach to vulnerable populations, particularly in rural and remote areas, to ensure equitable access to civil registration services. The recommended activities included building the capacity of ZAGS staff to manage new digital systems effectively. It also stressed the importance of strengthening the monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress better and adjust the project's strategy as needed²³.

However, despite the UNDP's readiness and efforts to implement these recommendations, the ET noted limited progress. This is largely due to insufficient ownership and different views on strategic leadership, which caused delays in decision-making and sometimes conflicting perceptions about agreed priorities. A major issue was the difference in strategic vision between the MoJ, which operated on annual work plans and favoured short-term priorities, perceiving the term "Strategy" differently due to the related regulation. UNDP preferred sticking to the original project plan but lacked a broader strategic vision to link these activities and guide the overall implementation while monitoring risks and following a flexible approach. This misalignment led to misunderstandings that delayed key activities (like the digitalisation of archives, procurement of a new civil registration web portal and engagement of technical experts). Although the MoJ later clarified that digitalisation was a national priority at the 2024 Project Steering Committee meeting²⁴, the earlier confusion had already impacted the project's timeline²⁵. Similarly, the Project accepted

²² Problem analysis from the design stage- The CRSR II Project document

²³ Generally, the ET finds that these recommendations underscored the need for enhanced institutional engagement, digitalisation, and inclusiveness to ensure the project's continued relevance and effectiveness.

²⁴ MINUTES of the Combined Steering Committee meeting of 4 Projects- 28 March 2024-

²⁵ For example, the triangulation of the primary and secondary data indicated different views of eligible Project-related costs and expenses- as requests were clearly elaborated for the payment of the ZAGZ employees for digitalization of archives.

recommendations to enhance the CROIS2 system, procurement for the CR-portal was slow, leading to only partial implementation. Moreover, requests to modify components such as public awareness and outreach activities further slowed progress.

On the inclusiveness front, the project took steps to improve civil registration services for vulnerable groups by procuring four mobile ZAGS stations. However, implementation faced delays due to a need for a coherent plan. This component is highly relevant, but actual implementation has been stopped.

Capacity-building for ZAGS staff has been partially implemented, but further efforts are needed to ensure they are fully equipped to manage new digital systems and improve service delivery effectively.

The ET finds Improved communication between stakeholders essential to addressing these challenges. Clear documentation, formal communication of revisions and decisions, and follow-up negotiations can help prevent misunderstandings and enhance collaboration.

- **JC1.3.2: The Extent to Which the Project Has Been Responsive to Political, Legal, and Institutional Changes**

The Project's relevance to Tajikistan's political, legal, and institutional landscape was largely driven by its alignment with national digital transformation and public administration reform goals. During the Project's implementation, Tajikistan's government increasingly prioritised digitalisation, as outlined in mentioned strategic documents (JC 1.1.1 and JC1.1.2.). However, despite the alignment, the Project struggled with delays in digital infrastructure development including integrating e-governance systems and developing the CR Portal.

On the legal front, the amendments to the Civil Registry Law have yet to be adopted, and actions need to be taken to institutionalise the projects' digital reform-related achievements. Nevertheless, the project remains responsive to legal changes and is committed to the full realisation of its potential. Initiating the Civil Registry Law review at earlier stages of the reform could have helped in this regard.

Institutionally, the Project was required to navigate a dynamic environment, which included the establishment of the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies, a pivotal entity in Tajikistan's digital transformation. By aligning its objectives with the agency's mandate, the Project maintained its relevance to the evolving governance structure within the country. Still, challenges persisted in achieving effective coordination with various governmental bodies, particularly concerning the interoperability of digital systems and the inclusion of stakeholders in project steering committees.

5.2 Findings on coherence

The evaluation conducted an examination of the project's internal coherence, placing particular emphasis on the integration of various components, including legislative changes, capacity-building initiatives, communication strategies, and technical improvements, in order to achieve the project's objectives. Furthermore, this assessment included an evaluation of the extent to which the project consistently aligned with other pertinent initiatives and policies, thereby ensuring that all elements collaborated effectively to enhance civil registration services.

EQ2.1. To what extent did the Project ensure its internal coherence and logical connection and consistency within its intervention logic?
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- **JC2.1.1. The extent to which the objectives of the project clear, realistic, and feasible in the current country context?**

The objectives of CRSR II are well-articulated and fit within broader government strategies. However, framing the Project's outcomes at an impact level—such as the complete reform of the civil registry system and providing quality, affordable services to all citizens—raises concerns about their feasibility within the Project's timeframe, especially considering the current country context.

The ET finds that attaining these long-term objectives is contingent upon various factors, including institutional capacity and financial sustainability, all of which pose considerable challenges within the current

context of Tajikistan. Still, the national partners highlighted the need for a comprehensive reform of the Civil Registry to involve all main stakeholders through enhanced cooperation (and coordination), and, most critically, a cohesive strategy²⁶ to streamline processes at all tiers, including the Jamoats that are in charge of some civil registration services. Although the project timeline and resources proved inadequate for the initiation and complete implementation of a thorough reform of the entire civil registry system, the absence of a clear strategic framework significantly hampered project execution and could ultimately jeopardise the initiative's long-term success.

Moreover, the key informants highlighted additional contextual challenges that affect the feasibility of the Project's objectives. Significant gaps in infrastructure, particularly in digitizing services, internet access, and electricity supply, are critical obstacles. The ET finds that frequent issues the informants highlighted included the slow pace of technological adoption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and limited capacity within key institutions, such as ZAGS offices. According to the informants, these challenges further complicate the envisioned systemic reforms. They conclude that ensuring timely registration of vital events, especially in remote and underserved areas, is ambitious given these constraints, alongside the need for cultural and behavioural shifts in how citizens engage with civil registration services.

Although the Project aligns with Tajikistan's long-term development vision, the current institutional and operational landscape suggests that achieving its full scope may be overly ambitious without extending timelines and increasing resources. Therefore, while the objectives remain strategically important, they must be adjusted to realistically account for Tajikistan's institutional capacity to implement these complex reforms.

- **JC2.1.2. The extent to which the objectives of the project design (inputs, activities, outputs and their indicators) and its theory of change logical and coherent**

The Project's intervention logic is generally solid, especially in aligning activities and outputs with the required institutional reforms and efforts to modernise the civil registry system. The design assumes that capacity building, digital infrastructure improvements, and legislative reforms will lead to a system that delivers quality, affordable services. Furthermore, activities to raise public awareness and increase citizen engagement were included to ensure the system's reach.

However, the outcomes outlined in the Project's design introduce challenges in demonstrating a clear, measurable link between its outputs and the long-term systemic changes implied by the outcomes. For example, Outcome 1—“The reformed civil registry system of Tajikistan is effectively managed and provides quality and affordable services”—presupposes that the entire system has been reformed. While the outputs focus on capacity building, digitalisation, and improving management practices, these alone are insufficient to achieve such broad reforms. Successful long-term outcomes require policy changes, institutional overhauls, and large resource allocation. Additionally, the lack of involvement from local jamoats and the need for broader partnerships to resolve complex issues²⁷, further complicate the achievement of this outcome.

Similarly, Outcome 2—“The population of Tajikistan knows how to and timely records their vital events in the civil registry system”—implies a long-term societal shift in behaviour and awareness. While public awareness campaigns are essential, sustained efforts over time are necessary to change behaviors and ensure service accessibility, particularly in remote areas. The mid-term activities implemented in the Project are crucial but insufficient on their own to achieve the cultural and behavioural changes expected by this outcome.

The ET finds that the gap between output-level results and impact-level outcomes creates a disconnect in the intervention logic. It is difficult to measure how the incremental outputs directly contribute to realising the ambitious outcomes (as already highlighted- set at the impact level).

²⁶ The effective execution of such a strategy demands a shared vision and prioritization, meticulous planning, adaptability to evolving circumstances, emerging demands, substantial financial resources, coordinated efforts, and ownership.

²⁷ Such as for example statelessness

The indicators in the Project's logical framework track mid-term progress, such as the number of ZAGS offices equipped with modern tools or the generation of reports using electronic civil registry data. However, these indicators do not capture the broader systemic changes needed to meet high-level outcomes. For instance, measuring population satisfaction with civil registration services does not fully reflect whether services are affordable and of high quality, as implied by the outcome.

To address this gap, the Project would benefit from incorporating intermediate outcomes or more nuanced indicators. For example, an outcome that are focused on institutional strengthening or improved management practices would be more realistic and measurable while still contributing to the long-term transformation of the civil registry system.

EQ2.2. To what extent were the project design and delivery coherent with international obligations? Has the Project contributed to the progress under specific SDGs?

- **JC2.2.1. Existence of the Project's alignment with international obligations**
- **JC2.2.2. The degree to which the Project contributed to SDGs and planned targets**

The Project was aligned with numerous international commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and frameworks pertaining to international human rights, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantees the right to legal identity. The Project's efforts to enhance civil registration services and ensure equitable access to legal identity for all citizens, particularly marginalised and vulnerable groups, contributed to the fulfilment of these international obligations.

In addition, the Project's focus on fostering accountable and transparent public institutions is following international commitments to governance and the rule of law, as delineated in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It further aids in the realization of SDG 16, specifically Target 16.9, which aims to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration. The Project's initiatives to modernise civil registry services, improve accessibility, and increase public awareness regarding the significance of civil registration represent critical advancements towards achieving this target. Additionally, the Project supports SDG 5 concerning gender equality by promoting equal access to legal identity services for women and girls while addressing the specific barriers they encounter. The Project's dedication to minimizing inequalities, particularly for rural populations and vulnerable groups, further contributes to SDG 10, which seeks to reduce inequality both within and among countries.

EQ2.3. To what extent the Project cooperated and coordinated with other initiatives in the civil registry area and broader public administration, digitalization and access to services?

- **JC 2.3.1. The extent to which the project complemented work among different entities- state partners (i.e., ministries and departments), development partners and civil society, with similar interventions**
- **JC2.3.2. The extent to which other or similar interventions or policies support or undermine the project**

The mechanism for coordination within the Project was meticulously established, mainly through the Combined Steering Committee, which oversaw four interrelated projects financed by various international donors²⁸. The partners articulated that this governance structure fostered alignment across these initiatives and facilitated collaborative decision-making processes. Moreover, they acknowledged these efforts as crucial for ensuring a more cohesive approach from the development partners regarding governance reform in Tajikistan. Nonetheless, a broader representation of pertinent partners would enhance project coordination and partnerships.

²⁸ Combines Steering Committee Meeting was organized on 28 March 2024, and covered the following projects: 1. Civil Registry System Reform Project in Tajikistan – Phase II, funded by Government of Switzerland; 2. Improved Access to Public Services through Civil Registry Reform, funded by EU; 3. Access to Justice, Phase III, funded by Government of Switzerland and 4. Strengthening Rule of Law and Human Rights in Tajikistan, Phase III, funded by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland

The ET finds that the implementation management model—wherein the same project team was tasked with executing both SDC- and EU-funded initiatives—contributed to coherence and joint efforts to advance an integrated system for service delivery and modernising civil registration.

Additionally, the ET observes that the Project cultivated robust cooperation with other United Nations Agencies—namely, UNICEF and UNHCR—to promote joint advocacy for adopting the new Civil Registry Law. Representatives from these UN Agencies remarked on the Project’s close collaboration and highly positive experience. These collective efforts successfully propelled critical legislative amendments in the draft law and accompanying by-laws, serving as foundational elements of the overall system reform.

The Project engaged various governmental entities to enhance complementarity. The exchange of information and communication with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, and, more recently, the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies (under the Executive Office of the President) proved instrumental in integrating civil registration with broader public administration and service delivery reforms. The partners acknowledged the pivotal work of the Project and its significance in advancing the interoperability of digital platforms, as the anticipated web portal for the new civil registration operational information system will facilitate the connection of civil registration datasets with other information and data systems pertinent to e-governance and citizen services.

The ET finds that interagency and inter-institutional coordination functioned effectively at the technical level, particularly regarding digitalisation initiatives. However, the absence of a clear national e-governance/digitalisation strategy (with the expected reference to the digitalisation of the civil registry) poses a potential hindrance to integrating the civil registry system with other public services. For instance, the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies was still in its developmental phase during the Project’s implementation. If not engaged in the planning and follow-up activities, it may result in a fragmented approach to e-governance.

▪ **JC2.3.3. Evidence that the Project established appropriate and effective partnerships at various levels**

Despite a well-established coordination structure, the ET observed several challenges in the Project’s implementation. Analysis of project records, minutes, and interviews with key informants revealed divergent and sometimes conflicting views regarding the project’s role relative to the core responsibilities of the MoJ and ZAGS offices. In addition, the ET finds varied interpretations of the Project (by the national partners)—sometimes viewed as a flexible funding mechanism rather than a binding commitment. Furthermore, the ET noted that the absence of clearly defined priorities, such as a coordinated e-governance strategy and a strategic platform for the digitalisation of civil registration (including the digitalisation of civil registry archives) is one of the main problems²⁹. These issues have resulted in inconsistencies in implementing the Project’s objectives, with the MoJ prioritising short-term goals. At the same time, the Project did not have a well-established strategic plan for achieving its objectives apart from a set of activities under each outcome.

Still, the ET identified examples of the Project’s effective partnerships with the MoJ, particularly at the local level, notably through engagement with civil registration offices (ZAGS) throughout Tajikistan. These partnerships have successfully piloted and implemented the One-Stop-Shop (OSS) service delivery model, incorporating Front and Back Offices. Representatives from the ZAGS have emphasised that the Project is addressing their capacity development needs and noted that its efforts in providing technical equipment have contributed to more effective operations.

On a positive note, stakeholders acknowledged opportunities for improvement, particularly in enhancing national ownership of the process and the Project’s accomplishments. The Project—UNDP and other development partners could facilitate more effective communication, joint planning, and closer collaboration for setting objectives between the Project and the MoJ/ ZAGS offices. Increased engagement and leadership from the MoJ and other national partners are critical milestones in enhancing national ownership of the civil registration reform. At the same time, UNDP needs to be more flexible in addressing emerging needs from the Government (related to reform) and aligning efforts with evolving priorities,

²⁹ Practically, delivering, maintaining and integrating Project’s results within the broader national reform context remains challenging without clearly elaborated mid- and short-term (public management system reform) priorities.

ensuring that relevant short-term objectives and long-term reform goals are met effectively and simultaneously

5.3 Findings on effectiveness

The ET assessed the Project's effectiveness by examining the extent to which its primary objectives were achieved, based on the original activities, outputs, and performance indicators. This analysis included evaluating whether the planned goals (outputs and outcomes) were met as outlined in the results framework.

The ET analysed the effectiveness of Tajikistan's civil registry system in providing quality and affordable services (Outcome 1) and the population's awareness and timely registration of vital events (Outcome 2). The ET reflected on progress in the adoption and implementation of civil registry legislation, along with interagency coordination (Output 1). Additionally, the ET reviewed the development of quality business processes, the management of the electronic civil registry system, and the effectiveness of public awareness campaigns supported by the MoJ(Outputs 2–4)

5.3.1 Progress towards outcomes

Outcome 1: By 2025, people have access to more effective, innovative, and transparent public administration based upon the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, labor rights, and quality data.

The analysis of indicators shows that the Project has made progress, particularly in implementing the Front and Back Offices (One-Stop-Shop model) and enhancing civil registration services across Tajikistan. Despite these achievements, ongoing challenges must be addressed to sustain reforms and ensure long-term impacts.

Cumulative Progress and Key Achievements: The Front and Back Offices model has largely improved the operational efficiency of civil registration services. Originally aiming to establish 10 ZAGS offices using this model, the Project exceeded its target by renovating and equipping nine ZAGS offices and expanding its goal to reach 16 by the end of 2024. This expansion reflects the Project's effectiveness in enhancing ZAGS's technical and operational capacity. The model has streamlined service delivery by creating separate front offices for public-facing services and back offices for administrative processes, making interactions faster and more user-friendly. These infrastructure improvements align with the Project's broader objective of strengthening the overall management and efficiency of the civil registry system. However, despite this progress, these renovations only cover a small portion of the country's total ZAGS offices, and the jamoat-level registration, which represents the more localised, community-level administration, was not included in the Project's scope. This highlights the ongoing need for a long-term, systemic reform commitment supported by a broader coalition to ensure comprehensive coverage and sustainable impact across the entire civil registration system.

Improving citizen satisfaction with civil registration services is another Project's core goal. Aiming to increase satisfaction to 70% by 2024, the Project employed the Net Promoter Score (NPS)³⁰ system to assess current levels of satisfaction, which stood at 35% as of 2022³¹. This figure underscores the significant work still needed to meet public expectations. The NPS survey identified several areas for improvement, with service efficiency being a primary concern³². These findings suggest that further reforms are needed to enhance public perception and user experience despite the Project's operational successes. Stakeholders acknowledged these challenges and identified key areas for future improvement, such as improving communication channels, streamlining service processes, and implementing the One-Stop-Shop model more effectively.

³⁰ The assessment used a 5-point scale, where respondents rated their satisfaction, with those rating a 5 considered "Satisfied," 4 as "Neutrals," and 3 or below as "Critics." The NPS result was -19, indicating a higher proportion of dissatisfied or neutral customers.

³¹ Report "On the Assessment of Satisfaction Level of the Population with the Civil Registration Services", Prepared by the LLC "Tahlil va mashvarat" (Zerkalo – Analytics Group) for UNDP project "Civil Registration System Reform in Tajikistan", Dushanbe, 2022

³² Many citizens expressed dissatisfaction with the time required to receive documents, along with inadequate communication regarding the status of their applications. Issues related to **accessibility** and **cost** were also flagged, as many respondents had to travel long distances to make payments, while the cost of services was considered high.

A key achievement of the Project has been the successful implementation of the CROIS2 electronic system, which has improved the digitalization of civil registration services and data management. The Project met its target by generating seven types of reports based on electronic civil registration data. These reports track critical metrics such as birth registrations and civil status records; it also produces data on users' activity within the system, including their roles and work hours, enhancing the ability to monitor and optimise service delivery. The partners stated that availability of this data has enabled them to adopt more data-driven management- they perceive these advancements as the groundwork for a more transparent and efficient system, with the ability to track challenges and areas for improvement.

Outcome 2: The population of Tajikistan know how to and timely have their vital events recorded in the civil registry system.

Progress was made toward Outcome 2, ensuring that Tajikistan's population knows how to record their vital events in the civil registry system in a timely manner. The data shows that in 2024, 94% of children under five possess birth certificates, moving closer to the 95% target, and 85% of births are registered on time, though this remains short of the 95% target. These achievements reflect improvements in coverage and timeliness, supported by data from the CROIS2 system and UAGS annual reports.

Cumulative Progress and Key Achievements: While the Project has contributed to improved registration rates, much of the progress is also attributable to broader governmental initiatives and efforts by development partners like UNICEF and UNHCR, which targeted similar populations during the same period. This broader context limits the Project's direct influence over the outcomes, as achieving widespread and timely registration requires systemic changes, institutional commitment, and consistent resource allocation beyond the scope of the Project.

However, despite these positive trends, challenges persist. The most recent data shows a decline in timely birth registrations, down to 82%, highlighting ongoing barriers such as geographical limitations in remote areas and a lack of awareness in certain communities about the need and benefits of timely registration. Additional obstacles stem from resource limitations and difficult access to sites, systemic inefficiencies in ZAGS offices, and a delegation of civil registration functions to jamoats, which struggle with capacity constraints. The incomplete digitalisation of services further exacerbates these challenges, impeding efforts to streamline registration processes³³.

The need for a more systemic approach is clear, one that integrates risk management, enhanced cooperation with stakeholders, and both supply and demand-side interventions to address gaps in public awareness and service delivery.

5.3.2 Project outputs- overview of effectiveness

Output 1. Newly adopted civil registry legislation is implemented and interagency coordination is effectively ensured. Gender marker: GEN 2

As indicated in the previous paragraphs of this document, the Project has progressed in the refining of the Civil Registration Law, proposing to introduce a Unique Identification Number (UIN) at birth. This initiative will ensure all individuals are registered from birth and access essential services, including healthcare, education, and social protection³⁴. Furthermore, the Project has developed the requisite by-laws and secondary regulations that would facilitate the comprehensive implementation of the new legislation. These by-laws encompass detailed procedures for civil status registrations within Tajikistan and at consular offices abroad, guiding the establishment of the forthcoming Civil Registration Portal (CR Portal).

The CR Portal will digitise essential civil registry processes and enable real-time data sharing among government institutions, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Tax Committee. The ET finds that the CR Portal concept has been thoroughly developed, and the tendering process for its design and implementation has commenced; however, the complete operationalisation of

³³ These issues underline the need for infrastructure improvements and better support for civil registration staff to ensure that services are accessible and efficient.

³⁴ The partners recognized that the "legal reform is pivotal in modernising Tajikistan's civil registration system, enhancing population tracking, and aligning the nation with international standards".

the Portal will necessitate more time than the current Project timeframe permits. The Portal is intended to function as the central hub for automating the registration of vital events, integrating civil registration with other governmental systems, and facilitating real-time data exchange, thereby significantly enhancing the functionality and accessibility of civil registration services.

Despite the accomplishments, advancement is impeded by institutional bottlenecks, delays in legal amendments, and challenges associated with aligning new legislation with pre-existing statutes. Prolonged consultations and divergent priorities among stakeholders have additionally contributed to the delays in approving reforms despite the lobbying efforts of the UNDP and other development partners (UNHCR, UNICEF, UNHCR, SDC, EU and the World bank) to expedite progress. The legislative reform process is inherently complex, necessitating multiple approvals; hence, initiating this process at an early stage is paramount. The partners, including UNDP and MoJ, should have started with these efforts even during the first- initial Project's phase - which would have provided a robust foundation to bolster subsequent law adoption and legal reform initiatives.

The ET finds that there is still a place for more effective interoperability and coordination mechanisms among key relevant ministries and stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of the CR Portal and progress under e-governance. The key ministries, such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, and the Agency for Innovations and Digital Technologies, are assuming an increasingly pivotal role in the civil registration reform. However, they have yet to be fully integrated into the Project's strategic framework, highlighting the need for a cohesive strategy (for the Project) to link all activities under the dynamic governance context.

Output 2: New quality business processes are developed and effectively applied in the civil registry

The Project has worked to enhance the efficiency and quality of civil registry services in the pilot ZAGS offices. A key initiative has been implementing the OSS service delivery model through the Front and Back Office in several ZAGS, where front-office and back-office functions are separated to streamline citizen interactions and the processing of civil status records. This model has been successfully implemented in all pilot offices (with impressive progress in some offices- for example ZAGS in Rudaki).

Still, most offices have encountered challenges in fully adopting the OSS model due to infrastructure issues, frequent power outages, poor internet connection and frequent errors in printing certificates, all of which affect the consistent application of the model.

Additionally, the queue management system, which was introduced to reduce wait times and improve service delivery, has not been fully functional in the large majority of offices- it was working in only one out of six offices that the ET visited offices. This issue is further affecting the efficiency of the new processes. The ET finds the need to enhance the use of the Analytics Dashboard for daily monitoring of QMS and staff activities to improve the situation.

The Project has contributed to developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for civil registration processes. Still, these procedures need to be formalised and institutionalized to ensure their sustainability after the Project concludes. The ET emphasises that the Project should align with the Government of Tajikistan's plans for public service reform, continuing efforts to standardize the new business processes introduced through the One-Stop-Shop (OSS) model. These processes should prioritise citizen-centred services by streamlining and optimising civil registration.

However, the long-term success and widespread adoption of these reforms will require ongoing commitment and support from the Ministry of Justice, as well as necessary infrastructure improvements. Currently, SOPs have only been implemented in a few civil registry offices as pilot models, rather than being rolled out nationwide. A more precise output formulation would clarify the Project's role and contributions, setting clearer expectations for scaling these processes nationwide.

Output 3: Electronic civil registry system and digitalized archives are handed over and effectively managed by the MoJ.

The Project has contributed to modernising the civil registry system, and the stakeholders referred to timely entry into the electronic system: considering the baseline of 60%, it reached 85% of civil registry records

entered into the electronic system (CROIS2) on time. The target is 100% timely data entry, although this is particularly challenging in jamoats. Key informants from ZAGS offices indicated that the delays are primarily due to jamoat staff having to perform manual registrations, after which ZAGS employees are responsible for entering the data electronically into the system. Additionally, registration certificates from jamoats are submitted at the end of each month across the country, leading to a surge in data entries during the last week. This overload causes CROIS2 to slow down significantly, compounded by the already slow internet speeds in some regions. These factors are creating bottlenecks and affecting the efficiency of the registration process.

The Project has achieved some progress with the digitalisation of nearly 200,000 civil registry records. The initial target of 278,000 has been increased to 1,35 million (a total of 2.5 mil jointly with the EU-funded initiative on improving services). The ET has already elaborated on changing priorities and delays in decision-on digitalisation. Still, the Project has initiated procurement of services for the digitalisation of Civil Registration Archives in Tajikistan, covering seven vital event categories: births, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, paternity recognition, and name changes. The digitalisation will occur across 74 civil registration offices and regional archives, with the records to be uploaded into the Archive Management System (AMS) to modernise and streamline access to historical data³⁵.

The Project has strengthened the MoJ's capacity to deliver information and technology services by providing technical support through SUE 'Qonuniyat'. It has developed an Exit Strategy for the IT component and sustainability of SUE 'Qonuniyat' to support ongoing IT products related to the civil registration system³⁶. A key aspect of the strategy is securing human and financial resources to maintain and enhance existing systems, including the CROIS2 system and the new CR IT Portal/Population Registry. It highlights the need for skilled IT personnel and funding for operational needs like IT staff salaries, hardware replacements, and software updates, ensuring uninterrupted IT services crucial for civil registration improvements. Additionally, the strategy emphasizes MoJ ownership of IT components, including network management and infrastructure maintenance. It outlines resource needs for IT systems, including phased hardware upgrades and staff training. The SUE 'Qonuniyat' will manage these operations, ensuring ongoing IT support for civil registration offices and including cost estimates for future equipment needs and data center services, providing a financial roadmap for the IT component's sustainability.

Notwithstanding the Project's endeavours, Qonuniyat has experienced a considerable loss of its technical personnel as a consequence of insufficient funding. Nevertheless, the Executive Team has been apprised that commencing in 2025, the national budget through the Ministry of Justice will assign approximately 500,000 USD to finance Qonuniyat's essential operations comprehensively. This resolution signifies a constructive advancement towards ensuring the sustainability of the IT support framework.

The ET identifies further challenges. The CROIS2 system, though operational, is restricted by its monolithic architecture, which complicates updates and enhancements. Plans are in motion to transition towards a more contemporary microservice architecture, thereby facilitating improved modularity and more accessible updates and guaranteeing the system's sustainability and scalability. Addressing these infrastructural challenges and refining data entry processes at the local level will be imperative for fulfilling the project's long-term objectives.

Output 4: Population is aware of timely registration benefits through MoJ communication strategy and supported by selected CSO to bolster civil registration, and the public contributes to improving the quality of the system through enhanced feedback mechanisms.

³⁵ The scope of work includes methodology development, inventory management, and scanning paper-based CR records. In addition, the selected company will deliver training and capacity building for 300 civil registry staff to ensure they are proficient in the digitalisation process, including data entry, scanning, and quality control. It also includes post-project support to ensure the long-term sustainability of the digitalisation process. Close collaboration with the MoJ and, a focus on overcoming these logistical challenges and technical issues (ensuring data privacy and confidentiality and managing the diversity of record formats), will be essential for the success of this process.

³⁶ Ensuring sustainable development of the IT component of the Civil Registration system of the Republic of Tajikistan- EXIT STRATEGY, Dushanbe 2023- Annex 32 to 2023 Annual Progress Report

The progress under Output 4 has been mixed, but the perspective is associated with high uncertainty. The Project aimed to increase public awareness of timely registration of vital events through communication campaigns and engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs). This component also sought to establish feedback mechanisms to gather citizen input to improve the quality of civil registration services. The Project implemented some public awareness activities and outreach campaigns in 2023- covering various regions (through CSO “Jahon”- more details under the status of indicator 3.1.).

These efforts were part of the broader Communication Strategy³⁷ designed to raise public awareness and improve understanding of the importance of timely registration of vital events. This document underscores the advantages of civil registration in establishing legal identity, accessing public services, and safeguarding citizen rights. It advocates for targeted initiatives aimed at diverse demographic groups to mitigate registration delays and guarantee precise data reporting. A comprehensive multi-channel media campaigns have been cornerstones of the Strategy, employing both traditional and digital platforms. This includes the planned development of videos, infographics, articles and interviews across television, radio, and social media outlets. Targeted SMS campaigns have been planned to convey essential information regarding the registration of births, marriages, and deaths. Workshops and training sessions for ZAGS staff, civil society organizations (CSOs), and relevant stakeholders, including healthcare professionals, were included to empower them in assisting the public with civil registration processes. Furthermore, community and religious leaders have been pivotal in enhancing rural outreach efforts. Feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and hotlines, were included in the Strategy to collect public input on civil registration services, facilitating continuous improvement.

However, the project did not achieve a conclusive agreement with the MoJ regarding implementation of communication-related activities. , as the Ministry's primary focus remained on the technical and infrastructural dimensions of the civil registration system. There is limited progress in raising public awareness and engaging citizens in feedback mechanisms. The absence of consensus with the Ministry has presented a significant challenge, as they have expressed reservations about the value of allocating resources towards communication and public outreach, perceiving it as secondary to improvements to the system itself.

Evidence from project reports indicates that this lack of consensus has adversely impacted the effectiveness of public awareness campaigns. For instance, although CSOs conducted outreach in targeted areas, the overall reach was limited, resulting in lower public participation than anticipated. Similarly, initiatives aimed at implementing feedback systems to enhance service quality were not fully actualised due to the absence of agreement on the necessary support.

EQ3.2. What factors have contributed or impeded Project’s performance and achievement of outputs?

- **JC3.2.1. Existence of factors and the extent to which these factors positively or negatively affected the Project**
- **JC3.2.2. The extent to which COVID-19 pandemic has affected project implementation and delivery.**

The primary factor impacting the implementation of CRSR II has been the deficiency of a robust strategy that precisely delineates the priorities for civil registration reform. The challenges encountered by the Project in adapting to the evolving context underscored the necessity for an enhanced communication and planning mechanism to guarantee a unified vision, facilitate effective negotiation of differing opinions, and strengthen risk management—thus minimizing ad hoc decision-making and favouring strategic mid- and long-term planning.

From its inception, including Phase I, the Project was predominantly conceived as a series of activities rather than a comprehensive Civil Registry Reform strategy, a framework more fitting for a project with such ambitious objectives. These activities have not been scheduled coherently, lack appropriate prioritisation of

³⁷ CRSR II COMMUNICATION STRATEGY- Strengthening Civil Registration in Tajikistan: Making the Invisible Visible- Dushanbe, 2023 (Annex 6 to 2023 Annual Progress Report)

critical elements, and demonstrate insufficient integration between the supply and demand components of the reform. The absence of a thorough strategy has resulted in challenges in aligning the vision for reform, which in turn has led to misunderstandings and divergent priorities within the Project Steering Committee.

Furthermore, the Project's risk management strategy required more substantial adjustments to anticipate emerging challenges adequately. The Project did not fully align itself with the changing context, nor did it conduct the necessary analytical work to foresee and respond to new developments- (within the MoJ and broader, such as the creation of the Agency on Innovation and Digital Technologies and its pivotal role in digitalisation and e-governance). This lack of foresight resulted in differing opinions regarding which reform elements were essential, causing delays in addressing government demands and impeding the progression of the reforms.

Moreover, delays in decision-making were exacerbated by ineffective communication mechanisms within the strategy. For example, the review and potential amendments to civil registration legislation should have been initiated earlier in the reform process, ideally during the initial phase. Legislative changes are intrinsically intricate and necessitate extensive reviews and discussions across various government bodies, rendering it unrealistic to anticipate quick progress within a constrained time frame. Coupled with external factors beyond the project's control, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and internal management issues, including the temporary suspension of SDC funding, the primary reason for delays in project implementation—and consequently civil registration reform—was the absence of a systemic approach supported by a clearly articulated and mutually shared strategy.

Infrastructural challenges have increasingly impeded the Project, particularly regarding the renovation of local ZAGS offices. While nine offices underwent successful renovations, several others experienced delays attributable to factors, such as inadequate electricity supply, poor internet connectivity, and limited capacity within ZAGS offices. The protracted procurement process for essential furniture and equipment further obstructed the project's execution of the Front and Back Office model, which was intended to enhance civil registration processes. Technical obstacles—most notably unstable internet connections in remote areas—also contributed to delays in the digitalization of civil registration records and the timely data input into the system. The development of the Civil Registration Portal and the digitalisation of archives, fundamental components of the project, faced setbacks due to extended approval and tender processes.

Enhancing digital infrastructure and ensuring dependable internet access in remote areas remains a pivotal step toward realising the project's long-term objective of fully digitalising civil registration records. The involvement of key institutions, such as the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies, and other national stakeholders in the civil registry reform, will be essential for bolstering inter-agency cooperation. As the primary implementing agency and SDC contractor, UNDP is responsible for formulating a clear strategy. A well-structured and managed strategy could have yielded more robust results, cultivated a more cohesive coalition, and strengthened the capacity and ownership of national partners. This would ensure that by the conclusion of the second phase, UNDP could effectively withdraw, leaving behind a sustainable and impactful civil registry system.

In addition to the mentioned challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the implementation of CRSR II.

Quarantine measures necessitated the postponement of project activities or adaptation to restrictions. For example, the Interagency Working Group on Civil Registration reforms encountered delays, thereby disrupting decision-making processes and impeding legislative amendments. Capacity-building initiatives, such as workshops for ZAGS personnel, were likewise delayed due to limitations on public gatherings, which hindered the enhancement of capabilities associated with civil registry modernisation. The pandemic had a significant impact on civil registration services. Movement restrictions resulted in a dramatic decrease in visits to Civil Registration Offices (CROs), leading to a 26% decline in the registrations of births and marriages from April to June 2020 compared to the previous year. Economic challenges further restricted families' capacity to prioritize registration.

The ET acknowledged the project's efforts to develop online services and mobile applications for civil registration, alleviating some of the adverse effects; nonetheless, overall progress remained slower than anticipated.

EQ3.3. Was the cooperation with Project beneficiaries and key Project partners, including but not limited to the MoJ successfully achieved and contributed to the achievement of the Project's goals?

- **JC3.3.1. The form and effectiveness of cooperation with Project beneficiaries and key Project partners, that contributed to the achievement of the Project's goals**

Collaboration among key stakeholders—UNDP, SDC, and MoJ—was formally established during the formulation and implementation of the initial phase of the Tajikistan civil registration system reform. This initiative was based on mutual agreements regarding priorities and needs identified during the problem analysis and needs assessment. During the first phase, the Project achieved significant progress in establishing the technical infrastructure of the civil registry system. However, this phase was met with challenges due to a limited and generic vision for the reform, necessitating a comprehensive and well-elaborated strategy with clear objectives to transform the civil registration system into an integrated and sustainable framework.

These deficiencies became increasingly evident during the second phase, wherein collaboration faced obstacles, particularly in critical areas requiring enhanced levels of institutional commitment. While tangible outputs, such as digitalisation and IT support, demonstrated the partnership's value, strategic gaps aligned with evolving priorities, particularly as digitalisation emerged as a national focus. Divergent opinions and disagreements regarding priorities further hindered progress, as the relevance of previously approved project activities was contested, leading to prolonged decision-making processes. Moreover, the lack of effective communication mechanisms and proper formal follow-up on Steering Committee decisions created barriers to advancing core activities, thereby stalling broader project goals and diminishing the efficacy of cooperation.

Looking ahead, the MoJ and development partners should manage cooperation mechanisms adaptively, emphasising national participation, ownership, leadership, strategic alignment, and joint planning within a coherent strategy shared among key partners. Establishing and nurturing stronger partnerships, characterised by a shared commitment to common priorities, is paramount to maximising the effectiveness of these collaborations, particularly in complex reform processes that demand systemic change.

- **JC3.3.2. The extent to which the role of the state partners in the project has been well-defined and clear**

The roles of state partners were initially delineated within the project document, emphasizing leadership in legal reforms, oversight, and sustainability assurance regarding project achievements.

However, the country's circumstances have evolved, with digitalisation emerging as a national priority. This transition necessitates modifying the project's framework, rendering new partners essential for its success. Key stakeholders now include the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose contributions to the digital transformation of civil registration processes have become increasingly significant. Furthermore, the involvement of additional development partners, such as the World Bank, facilitating broader digitalization initiatives, has proven vital. The stakeholders indicated that these transformations necessitate reevaluating and enhancing roles, while coordination mechanisms must be revised to align with emerging digital priorities. This expanded partnership framework presents an opportunity to foster a more integrated approach to digital transformation, which could substantially bolster the long-term sustainability of the civil registration system.

5.4 Findings on efficiency

The ET assessed efficiency by measuring the extent to which the implementation followed plans, focusing on the timely delivery of activities and the cost-effectiveness of resource use. This included analyzing whether project funds and delivery methods were adequate and appropriate and identifying any factors or

constraints that affected implementation. Furthermore, the ET evaluated the efficiency of the project management structure, specifically examining the role of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) in decision-making and implementation.

Additionally, the ET considered the soundness of the management practices introduced, such as work planning, reporting, monitoring, and communication efforts

EQ4.1. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?

▪ JC4.1.1. The extent to which the Project's implementation followed plans – timely delivery of activities

Various factors influenced the CRSR II implementation, hindering adherence to the original timeline. Initially scheduled for 36 months, from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2023, the Project faced several notable challenges. The intricate nature of its multidimensional institutional development scope, alongside external influences, significantly impacted key activities (as elaborated under the EQ 3.2.). In light of these challenges, the decision to pursue a no-cost extension, as requested by UNDP in collaboration with the MoJ, was deemed appropriate and well-justified. The second amendment to the Cost Sharing Agreement³⁸ subsequently extended the Project's implementation until December 31, 2024. This extension aimed to afford additional time to complete essential activities, including digitalising civil registry records, establishing the Civil Registration Portal, and postponed public awareness campaigns. The extension documentation underscored the importance of sustained collaboration among stakeholders to meet the revised deadlines and successfully attain the Project's intended outcomes.

However, the ET noted significant delays in 2024, attributable to management and institutional challenges. A particularly noteworthy issue was the MoJ's decision to accept the resolutions of the Project Steering Committee partially. Although the MoJ initially approved the 2024 Annual Work Plan (AWP) during a preliminary meeting of the Steering Committee in March 2024 and formally endorsed it on March 28, 2024,³⁹, they rescinded this endorsement later. The MoJ instructed the Project to concentrate exclusively on previously approved activities, limiting further modifications. This situation engendered uncertainty, extended the approval process, and obstructed progress toward achieving the Project's objectives. The ET re-emphasises the necessity for a comprehensive strategy, a shared vision, enhanced communication, effective risk management, and robust partnerships to navigate these complexities and arrive at feasible solutions. In the context of extensive, innovative reforms such as this, alterations in priorities and potential disagreements are commonplace, necessitating the establishment of mechanisms capable of addressing these challenges and advancing the reform process.

The slow fund utilisation rate reflects the mentioned management and institutional delays. As of August 2, 2024, the Project had disbursed only USD 143,550 out of the USD 1,715,973 allocated for the year. . This significant disparity and the risks identified during implementation indicate that the CRSR II is unlikely to complete its planned activities within the remaining project timeframe. Essential components, such as the procurement of web portal design services and archives digitalisation, remain in progress, with selection, contracting, and implementation still pending. These processes are inherently time-consuming; for instance, operationalising the web portal entails designing, testing, and capacity-building for ZAGS staff, all necessitating substantial time and effort. Similarly, the large-scale digitalisation of archives hinges upon these records' physical availability and organisation, further contributing to the required timeline. In addition, Output 4 encounters additional complexities concerning the procurement of communication and public awareness services. Despite established plans and agreements within the project framework, these activities still require final endorsement from the MoJ, to expedite anticipated progress.

³⁸ Amendment 2 was signed on February 14, 2023. This amendment extended the project end date from December 31, 2023, to December 31, 2024

³⁹ Meeting minutes from the combined Project Steering Committee, 28 March 2024, Dushanbe, tajikistan

Given the persistence of these delays and associated risks, the ET concludes that achieving the Project's objectives within the current timeframe appears unlikely, and considering an additional no-cost extension may be essential to ensure the successful completion of critical activities.

- **JC4.1.2. The extent to which selected method of delivery have been adequate and appropriate (efficient and cost-effective)**

The UNDP Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) utilized a streamlined project management framework to ensure management- financial and operational- efficiency during the Project's execution.

Given the complex nature of the Project, which encompasses sensitive subjects and intricate operations, the presence of a dedicated technical team along with substantial administrative and logistical support from the UNDP office proved essential. Still, during the implementation, UNDP replaced the initial project team, following a resolution to consolidate the management of the CRSR II with the Improved Access to Public Services through the Civil Registry Reform Project, funded by the European Union. This decision aligned with the overarching objectives of both initiatives to support the development of civil registration in Tajikistan but it imposed additional demands on the project team, thereby straining their capacity and resources. To address this complex situation, the partners enlisted a more proficient team to oversee both initiatives, focusing on enhancing alignment between the two projects and improving overall delivery efficacy. In 2023, a completely new team was assembled, including an international Project Manager, a Technology and Interoperability Analyst, a Design and Assessment Consultant, a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer, a Digitalization Specialist, two Project Associates, a Capacity Development Specialist, and experts in Communication and Gender. This highly qualified core team established and maintained productive relationships with national institutions characterized by professionalism and mutual respect. According to the partners, the new team's innovative perspective and revitalized vigour facilitated the resolution of several of the Project's complexities. They adopted a more proactive approach to stakeholder engagement, worked to optimize decision-making processes, and addressed previously identified gaps in implementation. Nevertheless, challenges remained, notably in counteracting institutional inertia, securing a comprehensive commitment from all partners, and adequately responding to national priorities, such as the push for digital transformation, which currently needs a fully elaborated framework.

The ET notes that the reforms initiated by the Project, which have received consensus among all partners, are fundamentally novel to the country. Consequently, they necessitate a systemic approach that invests considerable time, effort, and coordination to guarantee their successful implementation and lasting impact. Within this context⁴⁰, the DIM Modality obligated the UNDP to devise and supervise a comprehensive strategy that delineates the strategic direction for the Project, linking it to the civil registration reform, as represented in the Project's designation (details under EQ3.2.). As indicated in the previous paragraphs, the Project required but did not have a robust risk management mechanism, an effective communication and negotiation platform, the formation of strong coalitions, and the leadership of advocacy initiatives, all of which fell under the purview of the UNDP.

- **JC4.1.3. Existence of factors and constraints which have affected Project implementation (including other external factors unforeseen during the Project design)**

The Evaluation Team (ET) has provided a comprehensive overview of the factors influencing the delivery of results under EQ3.2. In order to avoid redundancy, the ET addressed this judgment criterion by concentrating solely on operational and management issues.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant disruptions, which subsequently led to the postponement of various activities due to lockdowns and an emphasis on essential services. Numerous initiatives, including workshops and infrastructure projects, encountered delays that impeded the progress of the Project. Moreover, allegations concerning improper procurement management necessitated an audit in 2021, during which funding and activities were suspended until its conclusion. Although the audit found no evidence of misconduct, delays in achieving project milestones persisted.

⁴⁰ It was already elaborated under the JC4.1.1.

Changes in leadership within the MoJ led to an extended adjustment period, as new officials required time to familiarize themselves with project procedures, impacting decision-making process. The project timeline was also affected by Ministry' shifts in priorities and consequently approval of the 2021 Annual Work Plan. Development partners emphasized the importance of adhering to previously established priorities to align with stakeholder objectives, observing that the absence of a broader strategy hindered effective planning and implementation.

EQ4.2. To what extent was the project management structure, as outlined in the project document, efficient in generating the expected results?

- ***JC4.2.1. The extent to which the Project management structure has been efficient in generating the expected results***

The CRSR II project's management structure has shown strengths and challenges that have impacted its ability to achieve the expected outcomes efficiently. Under UNDP leadership, the management team collaborated closely with key stakeholders, particularly the MoJ and its departments, to proceed with interventions such as legislative reform, digitalisation and improvement of services and modernisation of the selected offices. Although the Project initially faced disruptions due to changes in MoJ leadership and the time required for new officials to become familiar with the Project, the management team could adapt and mobilise resources effectively. One notable example of this adaptability was the joint efforts with the MoJ to introduce an analytical dashboard that improved the monitoring of civil registration processes, thereby enhancing data quality across civil registry offices. Similarly, the Project embarked on more significant digitalisation than originally planned, responding to the MoJ priority.

However, several challenges limited the Project's overall efficiency. While the project management structure exhibited resilience and adaptability, a more cohesive strategic approach, along with improved interagency collaboration, would have enhanced efficiency and accelerated the achievement of project objectives.

Stakeholders noted inconsistent decision-making and extended disagreements over key decisions within the PSC, which led to delays in critical activities such as the rollout of digitalisation processes and reforms in the business models of civil registry offices. A stronger coordination framework between national and international partners could have mitigated these delays and strengthened the overall implementation of the Project.⁴¹

- ***JC4.2.2. The extent to which the the role of the steering mechanism- Project Steering Committee (PSC) contributed to efficient implementation and decision-making purposes.***

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) has played a critical role in guiding the CRSR II Project towards its objectives, ensuring effective coordination among various stakeholders, and maintaining alignment with national priorities.

Established promptly and strategically, the PSC aimed to oversee the project's implementation within the broader context of governance reforms. Its members include representatives from UNDP, SDC, the EU, and the Ministry of Justice/ZAGS. The PSC reviewed project progress, discussed emerging challenges, and provided strategic direction. Regular PSC meetings, held annually, are crucial for fostering information exchange, assessing milestones, and addressing barriers to project delivery.

The ET already noted that some key stakeholders had not been actively involved, although their participation could be critical to advance the project's digitalisation efforts and more effectively address systemic challenges. In addition, the previous chapters of this report provided ET findings on the PCS. Still, the ET highlights that in the last PSC meeting, several key decisions regarding the project's future direction were declined due to the lack of consensus with MoJ. This situation underscores the need for improved communication and negotiation mechanisms to prevent delays in implementing critical activities, including the public awareness component and the further digitalization of civil registration archives.

⁴¹ Also

▪ **JV 4.2.3. The extent to which the Project has introduced sound and effective management practices**

The Project followed UNDP corporative results-oriented annual work plans that provided a solid foundation for scheduling activities, allocating resources and monitoring delivery. The ET finds that the preparation of work plans reflected a comprehensive, gender-sensitive approach involving the joint efforts of the Project team and the MoJ in considering inputs, planning and scheduling activities. The interviewed stakeholders highlighted the benefits of this approach, as it facilitated collaboration and synergy with other initiatives in the sectors, helped address reform priorities, and promoted progress in critical sectors. As presented in this report, the ET finds the need to transition from activity to a strategy-focused approach, thus enhancing the Project's efficiency and facilitating more effective utilisation of resources. This shift will ultimately focus the delivery and avert any potential loss of opportunity for reform.

The monitoring system has been established based on the CSRS II logical matrix. However, the ET identified challenges pertaining to the definition of targets and the measurement of progress (which have been elaborated in previous sections of this report). While the logical framework of the Project and the planned activities, including expected results, effectively encapsulated the initiatives of the Project and were meticulously monitored and analyzed in progress reports, the output and outcome-level indicators presented challenges, being overly ambitious and beyond the control of the Project. These issues could impede the accurate measurement and reporting of progress. Consequently, the ET perceives the necessity to reassess and refine outcomes and outputs and adjust the targets and indicators to facilitate more effective progress tracking and analysis.

The Project exhibited a **high communication standard** regarding the dissemination of critical messages through various channels and tailored approaches. Its communication and visibility strategy provided a framework, emphasizing the Project's transformative impact on developing civil registration and enhancing human resources within the ZAGS offices.

Concerning **knowledge generation and management**, the Project excelled in its reporting structure, producing a substantive and informative deliverables overview. A notable achievement was the establishment of the ZAGS Learning Management System (LMS), which incorporated modern e-learning features. This initiative was undertaken in response to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted traditional classroom-based training methods. Instead of conventional approaches, the Project formulated a concept note and collaborated with the MoJ to implement an electronic LMS utilizing the open-source platform, Moodle⁴². The integration of the LMS has enabled Civil Registration (CR) offices to deliver internal training, thereby fostering learning opportunities for staff across various areas of civil registration through the adoption of a rotational work model and a mentoring approach⁴³.

Additionally, the Project conducted an orientation workshop to acquaint key stakeholders with the platform, including the Institute for Advanced Training under the MoJ . This transition to e-learning has proven particularly advantageous in light of the necessity for social distancing, augmenting efficiency and service delivery quality within CR offices. The platform was installed on MoJ servers and underwent testing before its official launch in 2023; however, the MoJ/ZAGS websites were non-operational during the evaluation period, which signal the need for additional efforts to ensure sustainability.

5.5 Findings on sustainability

The review comprehensively evaluated the project's long-term sustainability by emphasizing the enduring institutional capacities developed, the relationships forged, and the processes instituted. It assessed the probability of maintaining the project's achievements following its completion, particularly regarding the ongoing digitalization and integration initiatives endorsed by the European Union. Furthermore, the assessment underscored potential risks and opportunities associated with resource mobilization and the coordination of forthcoming efforts.

⁴² A local firm, LLC Bit, was engaged to design and develop the LMS web platform and mobile application, as well as to create online training courses for ZAGS personnel.

⁴³ The development of this LMS includes courses on basic computer skills, provision of civil registration services, management in CR offices, and Russian language.

EQ5.1. To what extent will the Project's achievements be sustained? What are the possible systems, structures, and staff that will ensure its sustainability?

The sustainability of the Project's achievements appears to be positive- as in the case of the SUE "Qonuniyat." Sustained political will, financial resources, and skilled personnel are essential to ensure the long-term success of these reforms. Continuous engagement with the MoJ and ongoing capacity-building efforts will be key to fully embedding the Project's gains within the national civil registration system.

- **JC5.1.1. Existence of the Project's exit strategy and the likelihood that the Project's achievements will remain in place upon completion**

The exit strategy of the Project is centered on the transfer of systems and processes to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and ZAGS, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the improvements achieved, including the digitization of archives and the modernization of service delivery systems, following the conclusion of the Project. A robust foundation for sustainability has been established through the integration of digital tools such as CROIS2 and the implementation of capacity-building initiatives. The exit strategy meticulously details the necessary infrastructure, financial resources, and personnel required to maintain CROIS2 and other digital platforms, with SUE "Qonuniyat" designated to manage IT operations after the Project's completion. Despite facing initial challenges in operational capacity, SUE "Qonuniyat" is anticipated to receive close to half a million USD in 2025 to restore its functionality fully, underscoring the significance of a meticulously planned exit strategy.

The ownership and decision making process of the Ministry of Justice are paramount for the long-term success of this strategy and addressing relevant challenges. Although the modernisation and digitization of civil registry systems are prioritised on the national agenda, disputes among the MoJ and other stakeholders have resulted in delays in prioritising certain project interventions. Enhancing communication and coordination between the MoJ and national partners will be crucial to incorporating the successes of the Project into national systems and securing the MoJ's ongoing commitment to these reforms

JC5.1.2. Existence of nationally-driven support, including operational systems, structures, and staff to ensure the sustainability of the Project's results

National ownership is imperative for the sustainability of the Project's outcomes, with key institutions such as SUE "Qonuniyat" and ZAGS offices already showcasing a robust national commitment. SUE "Qonuniyat" is tasked with the maintenance of IT infrastructure, whereas ZAGS offices, which have adopted the front-and back-office operational model, persist in advancing these reforms despite facing ongoing logistical and infrastructure challenges.

Nevertheless, the long-term viability of the Project's accomplishments will depend on sustained commitment from national stakeholders, in conjunction with authentic leadership and ownership of the reform process. A primary focus must be placed on developing and retaining skilled personnel through a comprehensive human resource management strategy. While the Project has already invested in capacity building, the MoJ's institutionalization of these programs will ensure that civil registry employees are equipped to manage registration processes and adapt to evolving technologies independently. The Institute for Advanced Studies has contributed by offering training programs, yet concerns remain regarding the significant reliance on lecture-based methods, which provide limited practical application. Furthermore, the availability of online learning materials has been hampered by the prolonged inoperability of the MoJ and ZAGS websites.

Financial sustainability also poses a critical challenge. Despite economic challenges The MoJ' allocation of adequate budgetary resources to cover operational costs post-project, encompassing salaries, software updates, equipment maintenance, website hosting, and data center upkeep remains critical to ensure the continued success of the civil registration reforms.

EQ5.2. Are the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes in place for sustaining Project benefits?

- **JC5.2. Existence of legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures**

The Project has contributed to establishing legal frameworks and structures essential for the sustainability of its benefits, (with further details elaborated in EQ 6.2. and previous parts of this report). As already mentioned, the pivotal developments have been the amendments of the Civil Registration Law, which is poised to provide a robust legal foundation for the reforms pertaining to civil registration⁴⁴.

Concerning governance structures, the MoJ remains central in overseeing civil registration; these efforts further facilitate the integration of civil registration data within broader governance systems. Moreover, the digital tools and processes developed through the Project, notably CROIS2, have been integrated into national governance structures. SUE "Qonuniyat" has been designated the principal body responsible for maintaining the IT infrastructure.

However, challenges continue to exist in interagency coordination, underscoring the necessity for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to augment its collaboration with other essential agencies, particularly the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies, as well as relevant ministries. To guarantee the sustained success of civil registration reforms, the MoJ must create a comprehensive platform that improves alignment with national e-governance strategies and distinctly delineates the strategic direction for the modernization of civil registration.

EQ5.3. To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support? Has ownership been sufficient to ensure sustainability?

- **JC5.3. The extent to which decision-making bodies and partners have ensured sustainability**

The CRSR II Project has garnered substantial support from its development partners, notably the SDC, EU, WB, and UN Agencies. These agencies have played a pivotal role in both the implementation and sustainability planning phases. Their contributions have been instrumental in advancing the project's technical components and propelling its progress.

However, the degree of national ownership, particularly from the MoJ, has exhibited inconsistencies, which pose challenges to the long-term sustainability of the Project's outcomes. While the MoJ has shown commitment to civil registration reforms, the Evaluation Team observes that its ownership of the Project has been less manifest at the operational level. This has resulted in prolonged decision-making processes and disagreements regarding priorities, particularly in relation to the digitization of archives and the Civil Registration Portal. Such challenges have impeded the implementation of key components and hindered strategic decisions that are essential for digital transformation.

The designation of SUE "Qonuniyat" as the primary entity responsible for IT operations and ongoing capacity-building initiatives represents a constructive step towards enhancing national ownership of the Project's reforms. Nevertheless, for the reforms to achieve full sustainability, the stakeholders recognised the importance of MoJ's reinforced leadership role in daily operations and steering the strategic direction of civil registration reforms. The prevailing opinion is that the MoJ is crucial in integrating the Project's outcomes into broader national governance frameworks, ensuring that civil registration reforms align with national e-governance and digital transformation strategies.

In addition, the stakeholders recognised the need for effective collaboration with key agencies, such as the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies and other pertinent ministries. If functional, these partnerships will align civil registration reforms with Tajikistan's overarching digital transformation initiatives, promoting a more integrated and sustainable approach.

The ET highlighted that international partners continue to provide robust support to civil registration reform; still, the situation analysis (and elaborated challenges) confirmed that long-term success of these reforms is contingent upon the MoJ's role in leadership to implement the requisite changes. The ET finds that fostering inter-ministerial cooperation, ensuring strategic oversight, and maintaining a consistent financial

⁴⁴ The Project is committed to collaborating with the MoJ to review best practices and develop a strategic framework for advancing civil registration reform.

commitment from the government are vital for embedding the Project's achievements into national systems and securing their sustainability..

EQ5.4. To what extent has the Project developed appropriate capacities to be self-sufficient upon its completion?

▪ **JC5.4. Development of stakeholder capacities for sustainability**

The Project has undertaken efforts to enhance institutional and individual capacities to foster long-term sustainability. For example, the SUE "Qonuniyat" has been working to establish the necessary technical expertise for managing and maintaining civil registration systems, including CROIS2. Furthermore, capacity-building initiatives for ZAGS offices have improved service delivery at the local level.

Still, challenges persist regarding the retention of skilled personnel and the sustainability of these capacity-building endeavours. The Institute for Advanced Studies has contributed to staff training; however, its dependence on antiquated lecture-based methodologies restricts the practical application of the competencies imparted.

The analysis showed the need for the MoJ to institutionalise these training programs and develop a strategy for employees' ongoing professional development in ZAGS offices and within the civil registration system to ensure self-sufficiency post-project.

Moreover, the Project's knowledge management system, which also encompasses online learning resources, has encountered technical difficulties, impeding access to civil registration personnel's training materials. Ensuring the full functionality of these systems and the continuity of training will be essential to preserving the benefits attained by the Project.

EQ5.5: To what extent could the Project be scaled up, including additional areas for consideration, and be replicable?

▪ **JC5.5.1. Existence of potential priority areas of engagement: opportunities for continuation and expansion in digital transformation and public service delivery**

Several key components of the Project, including the CROIS2 digital platform, the development of a civil registration web portal, and the Front and Back Office operational model, have proven their potential for replication and expansion. These initiatives demonstrate practical success and align with Tajikistan's national digitalisation goals, further contributing to the efficiency of public service delivery.

The ET finds that the digitalisation of civil registration archives is a critical area for expansion. The MoJ and ZAGS representatives recognise this process as essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of civil registration reforms. The Project's Digitalisation Plan for Archives outlines a phased approach to digitising the remaining paper-based civil registration records. They expect that "by extending the digitalisation process to all ZAGS offices across Tajikistan, the government can improve record accessibility, enhance data accuracy and security, and reduce administrative bottlenecks, leading to more efficient service delivery".

In addition, the analysis of collected information showed that interoperability between the civil registration system and other critical state services also presents a high-potential avenue for expansion. The informants stated that integrating the civil registration platform with systems managed by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies could create seamless data sharing across public institutions. This integration would improve service delivery and governance oversight, aligning with Tajikistan's broader e-governance strategy and advancing the government's digital transformation objectives.

The ZAGS and end users have highly valued the Front and Back Office operational model- it has already proven effective in streamlining civil registration services, reducing inefficiencies, and improving customer service at ZAGS offices. The ET finds that expanding this model across other public administration

sectors⁴⁵—such as social protection, tax services, and health registration—could further simplify public service delivery, especially in rural and underserved areas. In connection to this, deployment of Mobile Civil Registration (Mobile ZAGS) units, introduced as part of the CRSR II Project, could be another area for scaling. These mobile units have been critical in delivering civil registration services to remote and underserved areas. Expanding the use of these units would ensure equitable access to civil registration services for populations in rural and hard-to-reach regions, particularly benefiting vulnerable groups such as women and children. Development partners stated that by scaling this initiative, Tajikistan can further advance its commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind in accessing essential services.

Future strategic expansion could also involve extending digital platforms to offer remote registration services. In line with global trends in e-governance, Tajikistan could explore options for enabling citizens to register vital events online, reducing the need for physical visits to registration offices. This would be particularly beneficial in urban areas where internet access is more prevalent, and could complement the use of mobile units in rural regions. Moreover, enhancing the security and interoperability of these digital systems through partnerships with the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies will ensure that the services are resilient, scalable, and secure, contributing to Tajikistan's broader digital transformation objectives.

5.6 Findings on (expected) impact

The ET comprehensively analysed how the Project has enhanced civil registration services and expanded public access to these essential services. This examination focused on the Project's overall impact on institutional frameworks and direct beneficiaries, with particular emphasis on the Project's effectiveness in addressing citizens' needs. Furthermore, the ET investigated systemic changes by assessing the Project's influence on the legal and regulatory frameworks governing civil registration. It also encompassed the Project's role in shaping critical policies and promoting interagency coordination.

EQ6.1. To what extent has the Project contributed to the strengthened provision of civil registration services and increased public access to the system (especially from the perspective of women's, men's, and children's human rights)?

- **JC6.1.1. Evidence of the Project's impact on the overall situation of the target institutions and direct beneficiaries**

While the Project's tangible contributions have begun reshaping ZAGS offices' structure and services, the precise measurement of its impact—namely, the enhancement of internal capabilities and the elevation of the civil registration role within public service delivery—will likely become more apparent in the ensuing years. This progressive momentum is anticipated to address the immediate needs of Tajikistan's civil registration system while laying the groundwork for enduring improvements in public service delivery (and broader public administration and governance reforms).

The Project's interventions for improving the CR system have positioned the ZAGS Head Office and the local ZAGS offices on a trajectory toward organisational development, with expected long-term impacts that align with the objectives of improved services (and digital transformation in Tajikistan). The establishment of advanced operational systems through the Back and Front Offices has already illustrated the potential for streamlining administrative processes, increasing efficiency, and diminishing bureaucratic inertia. Such enhancements are anticipated to produce lasting benefits in service delivery and organisational responsiveness. In organisational and individual capacity building, the Project was working to establish a foundation by linking the CR system with available expertise and cultivating a culture of professional development. Upgrading the capacities and strengthening the knowledge management infrastructure represent progressive steps toward an evolved learning environment, which is expected to render training more dynamic and accessible for ZAGS staff throughout the country in the long term.

⁴⁵ The model's success in providing multiple services under one roof makes it a viable solution for improving public administration across various sectors.

In parallel, it is expected that the Project will ensure an impact on direct beneficiaries, including various marginalised and vulnerable groups. The progress in improving access to civil registration services has already enabled these groups in the targeted regions to secure legal identity, which is essential for accessing a wide range of public services and legal protections. The analysis of the survey data and the visits to the selected ZAGS showed that women, in particular, have benefited from the more accessible services and enhanced awareness about the importance of registering marriages and births. The randomly interviewed beneficiaries in visited ZAGS stated that registration certifications, as legal documents, are crucial for claiming inheritance rights, accessing social services, and protecting their children's rights. In addition, they have recognised that service delivery in the targeted ZAGS offices has improved. In addition to technical and civil registration-specific training programs, ZAGS employees have received customer service training, ensuring that they can provide timely and accurate services to the public⁴⁶.

- **JC6.1.1. The extent to which the Project contributed to the strengthened provision of civil registration services and increased public access to the system (compared to baselines from the previous stage and other research)**

The Project has facilitated the expansion of ZAGS's Front and Back Offices, thereby enhancing civil registration processes by reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks that have historically impeded access, particularly for vulnerable populations. Initiatives aimed at modernizing infrastructure and digitalizing services, including the forthcoming online registration portal, are expected further to augment the speed and quality of service delivery. This upgrade has reduced the required visits to ZAGS offices from five to two. Stakeholders expressed confidence that the portal will permit online applications for birth and marriage registrations, accompanied by notifications regarding updates. Upon full implementation, these modifications, integral to Tajikistan's digital transformation agenda, are anticipated to elevate user convenience and enhance the transparency and accountability of the civil registration system.

The evaluation team identifies a pressing requirement for public awareness campaigns, especially in rural locales, to bolster access to registration services. Planned communication strategies will emphasise the importance of timely registration of vital events, particularly for women and marginalized communities. Mobile ZAGS offices constitute one of the initiatives aimed at enhancing accessibility to these essential services.

<p>EQ6.2. To what extent has the Project contributed to systemic- changes in the area of civil registration?</p>

- **JC6.2. The extent to which the Civil Registry Phase II Project has influenced national policy/ legal/ regulatory frameworks on civil registration (and broader)**

The Project is working on various activities and results that, if implemented successfully, will ultimately have an impact on the civil registry system

The ET used the policy cycle model⁴⁷ as an analytical tool to assess and elaborate on the Project's possible effects on national policy/ legal/ regulatory frameworks on civil registration (and broader, reform of public administration)

POLICY DECISIONS. The ET found that CRSR II, codifying its knowledge and experience, could influence "definition and agenda setting" in the policy cycle⁴⁸. The Project confirmed that **improving civil registration services for the entire population and facilitating access to critical public services** is a complex, slow process with challenges at different levels. While the Project has helped set the policy agenda, it has not made any

⁴⁶ These capacity-building efforts have been critical in sustaining the improvements made by the project, as they ensure that ZAGS offices can continue to provide high-quality services even after the project's conclusion.

⁴⁷ Reference to Guy Peters "Policy Making Cycle- steps and approaches," from "Capacity for Policy- how can we do it better" (prepared by Tomislav Novovic, UNDP Serbia, 2010)

⁴⁸ Priority setting is inherently complex and involves making choices about what issues are most pertinent and time sensitive. After identifying priority issues, government and other governance actors must set the agenda to address the issues. "Framing" priority issues involves defining a problem in terms that can mobilize political support to find a solution. More available at Jon Pierre, B. Guy Peters "Governance, Politics and the State," Macmillan, USA, 2016

new policy decisions. A brief reflection on the capacities of stakeholders, for example, showed that participating representatives of ZAGS have considerably different levels of skills and knowledge. This indicated the need to prioritise systematic follow-up and continued capacity development. While the Project offered some tools to address these differences, the stakeholders expressed a need for additional technical assistance.

The Project also raised to the reform agenda the need to further strengthen and institutionalise the Front and Back Office model in the ZAGS throughout the country. Progress in using new equipment is evident, but some operational challenges remain—from logistical challenges to the generally limited capacities of the ZAGS (including the overall weak management of human resources within the civil registration offices).

POLICY DEVELOPMENT: The ET analysed primary and secondary data that showed that the CRSR II used practical solutions to improve ZAGS's functioning and enhance civil registration effectiveness and efficiency. For example, this report highlighted the development of SOPs for key business processes in a few civil registry offices as pilot models and successful experience with the Front-and-Back Offices that mainstreamed the new business processes. The partners recognised the need for the Project to “critically assess these experiences and tested models, codify lessons learned and positive examples as inputs to optimise and streamline processes to create more citizen-centred civil registration services”.

In addition, the Project tested the mobile ZAGS platform as a scalable and sustainable solution for civil registration, particularly for rural and remote areas. This model can be expanded nationwide, reducing the long-term reliance on centralised offices and overcoming the geographic barriers that exclude rural populations from accessing vital legal services.

The Project introduced an **Analytical Dashboard** in **CROIS2** to monitor the digitalisation and timeliness of civil registration entries, track staff activity, and identify discrepancies in data entry. The ET found that the existence of a functional, analytical dashboard is inextricably linked with evidence-based policymaking. The ZAGS representatives recognised that “dashboard has enabled the MoJ and ZAGS offices to improve efficiency and accountability”. They added that the dashboard “provides solid and reliable information on the effectiveness of implemented measures- his data could help the stakeholders design policies and activities to further improve the system by enabling monitoring of activities.”

Regarding the upcoming amendment to the Civil Registry Law, the Project provided inputs to modernise the civil registration system in line with international standards. A significant outcome of these efforts was the proposal to introduce a unique identification number to ensure legal recognition for all citizens from birth. This Project's inputs for the systemic reform will affect enhanced access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and legal protection. The Project highlighted the need for more robust interagency coordination to ensure the law's smooth implementation (e.g., the need for working with agencies such as the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to harmonise civil registration processes). The ET's analysis of primary and secondary data confirmed that these efforts will help establish a more inclusive and sustainable civil registration system, ensuring that legal identity is accessible to all citizens and strengthening Tajikistan's governance infrastructure.

DECISION ON INSTRUMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION: The Project has designed tools and instruments that, according to the stakeholders, could facilitate further system improvements, ensuring effectiveness and efficiency and expanding access to services, particularly for remote and underserved populations. The ET finds the following tools:

- The Digitalization Plan for Civil Registration Records aims to convert the country's 25 million paper-based civil records to a secure digital format. The digitalised system will uniquely identify records, facilitating efficient data management and reducing duplication across civil registration offices.
- The proposal to enhance CROIS2 to improve user interfaces and data protection mechanisms and allow integration with other government systems;
- A platform to enhance data interoperability between civil registration offices and other key government agencies (to enable efficient data sharing and ensure that civil registration records could be utilised across different sectors)

The Project is also working on other critical tools, such as outreach and awareness activities and a strategic platform for CR development, that could further support civil registration services in Tajikistan, strategically aligning with national goals to build a modern, inclusive, and interoperable public service system.

5.7 Findings on cross-cutting issues

The ET already elaborated on cross-cutting issues- support to vulnerable groups and gender mainstreaming- under various evaluation criteria in this report. Still, in this part, the ET provided consolidated overview how the CRSR II addressed inclusivity and gender equality during its design, implementation, and monitoring phases. It assessed project partners' capacity-building efforts to implement the LNOB principle and HRBA, reflecting on key methodologies. Additionally, the ET evaluated the integration of gender equality into project operations and its contributions to women's empowerment.

EQ7.1: To what extent have poor, minorities, women, and other disadvantaged and marginalised groups benefitted from the Civil Registry Phase II Project and UNDP support?

The CRSR II followed an LNOB principle and HRBA approach, working to ensure that marginalised and disadvantaged groups benefit from improved civil registration services.

▪ **Implementation of LNOB and Human Rights-Based Approaches (JC7.1.1 & JC7.1.4)**

The ET finds that the Project considered and implemented activities to strengthen the capacity of ZAGS employees to implement LNOB and HRBA principles. For example, the Project planned and delivered a series of capacity-development initiatives for civil servants, particularly ZAGS office staff, to ensure more inclusive services, responsive, and sensitive to the needs of marginalised populations. In this context, the Project prepared and delivered training programs focused on improving understanding of gender-sensitive service delivery and enhancing cultural competencies to provide services for those with limited access to civil registration due to geographical or socio-economic barriers.

In addition to this example, the ET highlighted the Project's work to improve and simplify civil registration procedures by working on standard operating procedures. The SOP provided that ZAGS need to ensure accessible registration services for all citizens, regardless of socio-economic status, gender, or geographic location. The interviewed ZAGS staff stated that improved processes and ongoing reforms brought benefits for women and children in remote areas, emphasising the increase of timely birth registration in remote and rural areas. They view these heightened figures as evidence that women and children in these areas have improved access to vital services.

▪ **Ensuring Benefits for Vulnerable Groups (JC7.1.2 & JC7.1.3)**

The introduction of Mobile ZAGS units represents an important initiative to address the needs of rural and remote populations. In addition, the Project implemented One-Stop-Shop (OSS) service delivery models within pilot ZAGS offices, effectively reducing bureaucratic barriers and enhancing service accessibility for economically disadvantaged and other vulnerable groups. The collaboration with local civil society organisations enabled the Project to incorporate feedback mechanisms from the citizens. These pivotal results contribute to user-centred civil registration processes, thereby further supporting the inclusion of historically marginalised groups, including ethnic minorities and stateless populations.

Moreover, the Project supports the MoJ and ZAGS in expanding the digitalisation of civil registration archives and improving access to civil registration records, particularly for populations that previously encountered challenges in retrieving such documents due to geographical distance or financial constraints. The national stakeholders stated that this digital transition and targeted outreach campaigns will further address vulnerable groups' needs concerning civil registration.

Looking ahead, the Project intends to continue its efforts to standardize processes to ensure sustainability and augment outreach initiatives to minimise barriers to registration for vulnerable groups. In parallel, there is a need for enhanced national commitment to continue and ensure the advancements achieved by the Project are integrated within the national system.

EQ7.2: To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Civil Registry-Phase II Project? To what extent has the Project promoted positive changes in gender equality and advanced women's empowerment?

The CRSR II integrated gender considerations throughout its design, implementation, and monitoring phases, with a focus on promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. The previous paragraphs indicated that the main contribution has been ensuring that civil registration services were more accessible and inclusive for women, particularly those from rural and underserved areas, and addressing the barriers women face in accessing legal identity and registration services.

▪ ***Gender Mainstreaming and Implementation (JC7.2.1 & JC7.2.4)***

The ET notes that gender mainstreaming has been fundamental to the Project since its start. For example, gender considerations were part of capacity-building initiatives: the Project collaborated with the MoJ and ZAGS to train civil registration personnel on gender-sensitive service delivery, ensuring that women, especially those in vulnerable situations, accessed services with dignity. These trainings highlighted the need to address women's specific needs, including their roles as primary caregivers and the importance of legal identity for accessing healthcare, education, and social protection for themselves and their children.

Furthermore, the Project fostered the establishment of mobile civil registration units (Mobile ZAGS), aiming to prioritise service delivery to women residing in rural areas, especially those encountering financial constraints or cultural restrictions that impede their mobility.

▪ ***Promotion of Positive Gender Practices (JC7.2.2)***

The ET finds that the CROIS₂ system has contributed to streamlining the registration procedure and mitigating bureaucratic delays, disproportionately affecting women. Its focus on simplifying and digitising processes has also empowered women to navigate the system independently.

Furthermore, the Project has imparted an indirect yet significant influence on women's empowerment by improving their access to birth certificates for their children, which are essential for obtaining healthcare and education services. Consequently, this enhancement has enabled women to assume a more proactive role in ensuring the well-being of their families, thus advancing broader objectives of gender equality.

▪ ***Unintended Effects and their Impact (JC7.2.3)***

While the project was generally regarded as successful in promoting gender equality, certain unintended consequences were noted. For example, in specific regions, established cultural norms about women's roles within the family resulted in the continued predominance of men in the registration processes, particularly regarding marriage and family-related events. This dynamic constrained the comprehensive empowerment of women in these contexts, notwithstanding the initiatives implemented to foster inclusivity. Moreover, in some regions, the emphasis on enhancing women's access to civil registration may have unintentionally shifted focus away from other vulnerable groups, such as stateless individuals and ethnic minorities, who also face significant challenges in obtaining registration services.

▪ ***Effectiveness in Promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (JC7.2.4)***

The Project's methodology concerning gender equality and social inclusion has proven effective through its initiatives in knowledge transfer, capacity building, and enhancement of service delivery via a gender-sensitive perspective. The training programs established for civil servants and frontline registration personnel were instrumental in cultivating an understanding of gender-related issues and facilitating a more inclusive approach to service delivery. The emphasis on enabling women, particularly in rural regions, to access civil registration services has significantly advanced gender equality.

In the future, sustained efforts to address cultural obstacles and engage men in discussions concerning gender equality could significantly enhance the efficacy of these initiatives. Additionally, expanding outreach efforts to include other marginalised groups while maintaining a focus on gender will ensure that the Project continues to champion comprehensive social inclusion and human rights protection.

6 Conclusions

The ET has analysed the findings under each evaluation criterion, and prepared the following conclusions (that stem from elaborated findings)

6.1 Conclusions on relevance

C1. The Project has been closely aligned with Tajikistan's national development agenda, as demonstrated in key strategic documents, including the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016–2030 and the Medium-Term Development Program. The Project has effectively addressed the country's needs by tackling systemic issues in civil registration, modernising infrastructure, and digitising civil records. This modernisation has facilitated the establishment of legal identity for all citizens, particularly for vulnerable groups, and has enhanced access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and social protection. However, the Project encountered limitations regarding its scope. Although it focused on modernising ZAGS offices at the city and district levels, it should have given more significant consideration to the role of Jamoats, which manage civil registration in rural areas where a significant portion of the population resides.

C2. The design of the Project was predicated upon a comprehensive analysis of the political, legal, and institutional challenges, specifically targeting the critical deficiencies within the civil registration system. It effectively addressed issues, including antiquated legislation, limited institutional capacity, and inefficiencies prevalent in the ZAGS offices. Nevertheless, the lack of a holistic civil registration reform agenda, and the absence of well-defined strategic objectives with specific milestones, has constrained the Project's scope. . Furthermore, the Project faced challenges with interagency coordination, particularly in integrating newer entities such as the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies, which has the potential to enhance digital coordination and system interoperability.

C3. The CRSR II has sustained its relevance throughout implementation, continuing to align with national priorities in governance reform and digital transformation. The Project adapted to evolving political, legal, and institutional changes, particularly regarding new civil registration laws and capacity building within ZAGS offices. However, implementation faced challenges, including delays in decision-making, lack of ownership over certain project components, and the absence of a cohesive strategic vision among partners. Additionally, the Project struggled to gain full institutional ownership from the Ministry of Justice, leading to slower-than-expected progress on critical components like digitalising archives and establishing the Civil Registration Portal.

6.2 Conclusions on coherence

C4. The CRSR II Project exhibited substantial internal coherence. Nonetheless, although the intervention logic was fundamentally sound, the project's long-term objectives, including comprehensive digitalisation and the systemic reform of civil registration services, appeared excessively ambitious, considering the limitations in the country's institutional and financial capacities. A discernible disconnect existed between the short- to mid-term outputs and the extensive, impact-level outcomes. This disparity could be alleviated by incorporating more pragmatic intermediate outcomes and nuanced indicators to monitor progress.

C5. The project demonstrated considerable external coherence, effectively aligning with the national strategies of Tajikistan, including the Digital Economy Concept, along with its international commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It specifically contributed to SDG 16, which focuses on legal identity for all, and SDG 5, which emphasises gender equality by enhancing civil registration services and promoting equitable access, particularly for marginalised groups. Nonetheless, challenges related to interagency coordination and the lack of a comprehensive national digitalization strategy hindered the complete realisation of the project's potential to integrate civil registration with broader reforms.

C6. The Project fostered strong partnerships with various governmental bodies and international agencies, including UNICEF and UNHCR, which supported joint advocacy efforts for legislative reforms. Additionally, it facilitated collaboration across multiple ministries to advance the digitalization agenda. Despite these efforts, gaps in strategic coordination, particularly concerning the MoJ engagement and leadership, hindered the effective implementation of some initiatives.

The Project's operational coherence was supported by its structured coordination mechanisms, such as the Combined Steering Committee, which allowed for collaborative decision-making across four related projects. This structure enhanced the alignment of various initiatives and helped maintain focus on governance reform. Still, the need for engagement of emerging institutions like the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies remains. Also, varying interpretations of the Project's role, suggest that broader and clearer national ownership and leadership would improve coherence.

6.3 Conclusion on effectiveness

C7. The Project has contributed to enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of civil registration services through implementing the One-Stop-Shop model in the ZAGS offices. Furthermore, the Project has augmented general attitudes and knowledge regarding the importance of timely registration, thereby contributing to improved birth registration rates. Nevertheless, challenges persist in fully achieving the Project's ambitious objectives, particularly in remote and underserved areas where timely registration continues to be obstructed by geographical and infrastructural barriers. Additionally, the Project's direct impact on increasing registration rates has been somewhat mitigated by broader government initiatives, which curtail its ability to claim full credit for these outcomes. Comprehensive system-wide reform is required to expand the scope and include all instances that provide registration services.

The Project has advanced with the digitalisation of civil registration through the CROIS2 system, the establishment of new standardised operating procedures in pilot ZAGS offices, and progress in formulating reformed and improved civil registry legislation. Nevertheless, challenges in interagency coordination, delays in legislative approvals, and infrastructural limitations in remote areas have hindered the complete implementation of these processes. Insufficient strategic framework—which includes the imperative to clarify the role of Jamoat-level registration in future registration initiatives—coupled with difficulties in scaling up digital services and integrating feedback mechanisms further obstructed the Project's ability to institutionalise the changes fully.

C8. Several factors contributed to the Project's performance, including UNDP's ability to deliver and its strong technical team. However, negative factors external to the Project affected the efficiency. The overall reform process was affected by the slow adoption of legislative reforms and the digitalisation process by slow decisions and limited involvement of key institutions (like the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies and other relevant ministries). Additionally, the lack of a comprehensive strategy for civil registration (for the MoJ and the Project) to align sectoral reform (as indicated in the civil registration sector) with national (digitalisation and public administration reform) goals resulted in frequently different visions on priorities.

Cooperation with key stakeholders, including the MoJ, was central to the Project's progress. The partnership between UNDP, SDC, and MoJ helped establish a framework for reform, although disagreements on priorities and delays in decision-making processes affected some critical areas of implementation. There was a clear need for better communication and coordination between stakeholders to ensure alignment of priorities, with the involvement of other institutions.

6.4 Conclusions on efficiency

C9. The complex nature of the reform and the multifaceted institutional framework in Tajikistan created a challenging environment for implementing CRSR II. Delays were largely attributed to slow decision-making within the MoJ, disagreements over project priorities, and external factors. These challenges hindered the timely execution of key activities, including digitalisation efforts and public awareness campaigns. Moreover, the absence of streamlined procurement processes and effective risk management hindered timely fund utilization.

Despite the Project Steering Committee (PSC)'s critical role in coordinating efforts, inconsistent decision-making and operational complexities, such as leadership transitions, further impeded progress and made it difficult for the Project to remain on schedule. The Project required stronger coordination with key entities like the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies, and clearer, more consistent decision-making processes within the PSC to align stakeholder priorities and sustain momentum.

C10. The UNDP Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) provided an efficient framework for managing the Project. However, challenges emerged due to the unpredictable priorities and changing (often limited) commitment of partners, particularly the MoJ, which selectively endorsed certain activities. While integrating a more capable project team, which demonstrated adaptability in navigating institutional complexities improve the overall management, persistent logistical hurdles, delays in procurement, and a lack of endorsement for some activities from the MoJ further hampered progress. The absence of a comprehensive reform strategy and weak risk management (from the Project's side) constrained the efficiency.

6.5 Conclusions on sustainability

C11. The Project's exit strategy has established a strong foundation for the continuation of key systems, particularly in the areas of digitalisation and civil registry modernisation- systems like SUE "Qonuniyat" demonstrated readiness to manage IT infrastructure post-project. However, the long-term sustainability of these reforms hinges on consistent political commitment, adequate financial resources, and the retention of skilled personnel. While the involvement of the national institutions and ZAGS offices in managing digital platforms and service delivery systems signals strong national ownership, inconsistent leadership from the MoJ, particularly in decision-making and reform prioritisation, poses a potential risk to the enduring success of these initiatives. Challenges persist in institutionalising capacity-building efforts, as the Institute for Advanced Studies continues to rely on outdated training methodologies, and online learning resources remain limited. Financial sustainability also remains a concern, with the MoJ needing to secure sufficient funding to maintain IT infrastructure, proceed with the digitalisation of archives, update software, and ensure sufficient logistical requirements and operational costs to ensure that the reforms continue to benefit the public.

C12. The Project has made notable contributions to drafting and preparing a solid legal framework, including the amendment of the Civil Registration Law, which if adopted will strengthen the institutional foundation for reforms. Digital tools like CROIS2 have been integrated into national governance systems, with SUE "Qonuniyat" positioned as the key body responsible for IT operations. However, making these systems sustainable and more effective remains challenging- particularly due to limited and seldom interagency coordination, particularly with key institutions such as the Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies. The MoJ did not grasp its leadership role to foster greater collaboration to ensure alignment between the civil registration reform and national e-governance priorities. This remains an area for improvements.

C13. In terms of scalability, the Project's successes can be expanded by broadening digitalisation efforts, such as digitising remaining archives and integrating civil registration data with other public sector systems. The Front and Back Office model presents potential for replication across all ZAGS offices and other public service areas, while the expansion of mobile ZAGS units could improve service delivery to rural populations. Ensuring seamless interoperability between civil registration systems and other government services will enhance governance and service delivery nationwide. Expanding digital registration capabilities, including online services, would further streamline public services and improve accessibility, especially in urban areas. Achieving this will require robust coordination among key stakeholders, investment in data security, financial planning, and continuous staff development to secure the long-term success of civil registration reforms in Tajikistan.

6.6 Conclusions on impact

C13. The CRSR II Project endeavors to improve civil registration services in Tajikistan, with particular emphasis on women, children, and marginalised populations. Through the implementation of legislative reforms, the digitalization of processes, and the establishment of efficient service models, the project could contribute to access to essential services. Continuous amendments to the Civil Registration Law and the issuance of unique identification numbers at birth will be crucial in facilitating this access. The transition to an online civil registration system via a web portal is anticipated to augment efficiency and transparency further. Although the full impact may require time to materialise, the Project has laid a strong foundation for considerable advancements in civil registration and public service delivery, contingent upon successfully attaining all outlined objectives.

Challenges persist in extending mobile ZAGS units to underserved rural areas with limited registration services. Infrastructure issues like unreliable internet and power outages hinder the effective use of the electronic registration system. Public awareness of timely registration's importance, particularly among women and marginalized communities, is insufficient, reducing the Project's potential impact.

C14. The Project could also have a transformative effect on national policies and legal frameworks concerning civil registration. Important results have been concerning establishing standard operating procedures (SOPs) and the development of critical tools like the Analytical Dashboard. These reforms, along with the introduction of the Front and Back Office model and mobile ZAGS units, offer scalable solutions for future reforms at the national level. Ongoing legal amendments, particularly those related to the Civil Registration Law, are set to modernise the registration process further, improve interagency coordination, and strengthen governance across Tajikistan. The groundwork laid by the Project enables more efficient public service delivery and positions the country to continue progressing toward a more integrated and accessible civil registration system.

Implementing legal reforms remains challenging as the GoT has delayed the finalisation of amendments that have not yet been approved. Successful systemic changes depend on better digital infrastructure and interoperability with sectors like health and social protection, and this has been challenging. Finally, limited funding and turn-over of staff with generally weak technical capacity in ZAGS offices jeopardise the long-term viability of results.

6.7 Conclusions on cross-cutting issues

C15. The CRSR II Project incorporated Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principles and the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), working to enhance marginalized groups' access to civil registration services. Initiatives like capacity-building programs improved ZAGS staff's ability to offer gender-sensitive, culturally competent services. Mobile ZAGS units and the One-Stop-Shop reduced barriers, benefiting underserved populations in remote areas. However, sustaining these improvements remains a challenge. Continuous outreach and expanded awareness are needed to reach remote marginalized populations. While mobile units address some barriers, scaling services is essential for comprehensive coverage. Digital services must also be more accessible for those with limited internet connectivity to uphold the inclusivity achieved during the Project.

C16. The CRSR II Project shows a commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through gender-sensitive operations. It improved women's access to civil registration services in rural areas by addressing legal identity barriers. Initiatives like the CROIS2 system and Mobile ZAGS units allow women to navigate the registration process, facilitating access to healthcare and education for themselves and their children. Capacity-building programs for ZAGS staff emphasised the need for gender-responsive services, fostering an inclusive public service environment.

Still, cultural barriers still limit women's autonomy, especially in family-related registration where men often dominate. Sustaining gender equality progress will require tackling these cultural norms through community outreach and involving men in gender equality dialogues. Broadening the Project's focus to include stateless individuals and ethnic minorities will further support social inclusion. Continuous training for civil servants and adopting gender-responsive policies will be crucial to maintaining women's empowerment gains.

7 Lessons learned

The following lessons learned have been generated during the implementation:

- **National Ownership and Leadership by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ):** The importance of national ownership, particularly from the MoJ, cannot be overstated. When key national institutions do not take full ownership of processes, activities, and resources, it results in delays and misalignment of priorities. The CRSR II project experienced several setbacks due to a lack of The cohesive leadership and timely decision-making from the MoJ. Without strong ownership and leadership from the MoJ, Tthe project's efforts to modernise the civil registration system struggled to gain momentum. This underlines the necessity for projects of this scale to secure early and continuous commitment from the primary national counterpart, ensuring that key reforms are championed at all levels of the

government. National ownership should include responsibility for both the strategic direction and the mobilization of resources to implement and sustain reforms beyond the project's life.

- **Sectoral Reform Requires a Sound and Well-Elaborated Strategy:** The reform of civil registration in Tajikistan highlighted the critical need for a well-elaborated and comprehensive strategy. Sectoral reforms, particularly in areas like civil registration, require detailed planning that outlines specific milestones, timelines, and coordination mechanisms among various stakeholders. The lack of a robust strategy in the CRSR II project contributed to delays in critical activities such as the digitization of archives and the development of the Civil Registration Portal. A well-defined strategy would not only align efforts across different sectors (such as justice, innovation, and digital technologies) but also provide clear objectives, identify potential risks, and set up mechanisms for monitoring progress. Future reforms should be anchored in a strategic document that aligns all stakeholders towards a common goal, with clear accountability and resource mobilization plans.
- **Integrating Digital Solutions Requires More than Infrastructure:** While the CRSR II project made significant strides in digitizing the civil registration system, the implementation of digital solutions requires more than just infrastructure. The project faced challenges in fully operationalizing digital systems due to inadequate training, lack of interagency coordination, and slow adoption of new technologies by key institutions. Successful digital transformation in governance needs to include comprehensive capacity-building for the personnel responsible for implementing and managing these systems. In addition, integrating digital solutions must be accompanied by regulatory and policy frameworks that ensure interoperability between different governmental departments. Future projects should prioritize not just the hardware and software of digital solutions but also the human capital and legislative backing required to maintain and scale these systems.
- **Gender and Inclusivity Must Be Addressed Systematically:** The project's effort to promote gender equality and inclusivity, particularly by focusing on improving access to civil registration for women, rural populations, and marginalized groups, was a positive step. However, the project revealed that systematic approaches are necessary to overcome the cultural and logistical barriers that often prevent full participation. Gender-sensitive interventions must be embedded in all levels of project design and implementation, and public awareness campaigns need to be tailored to address the specific needs and constraints of different target groups. For example, ensuring that mobile civil registration units reach the most remote areas is essential for addressing long-standing inequalities in access to vital registration services. Future efforts must go beyond surface-level inclusion and address the deeper societal and structural barriers that hinder equal access to services.
- **Effective Communication and Public Awareness are Critical to Project Success:** Communication strategies are just as important as technical interventions in projects that aim to reform public services. The CRSR II project encountered challenges in fully implementing its public awareness campaigns, partly due to misalignment between project priorities and ministry focus. A strong, clear communication strategy should be integrated into project planning from the beginning to ensure that citizens are fully informed about the benefits of civil registration and the availability of new services. The success of any public reform initiative hinges on the infrastructure or systems put in place and the public's awareness and willingness to engage with those systems. Future reforms should invest in multi-channel public awareness campaigns that reach a wide audience, including rural and marginalized communities, using culturally relevant messaging and media.

These lessons underline the importance of strategic planning, national leadership, inclusive design, human capital development, and effective communication in ensuring the success and sustainability of large-scale governance reforms.

8 Recommendations

The primary and secondary data analysis served to define findings and form conclusions. Considering these inputs, recommendations have been defined as a framework for further analysis and follow-up actions.

The evaluation team has developed the following primary recommendations (which are largely contingent upon the decision to extend the project):

Direct recommendations to the CRSR II project (and the project partners)

Recommendation #	Justification
<p>Recommendation 1:</p> <p>To: UNDP, Project team, Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)</p>	<p>Request a no-cost extension for the Project</p> <p>Given delays in procurement and critical activities, such as the Civil Registration Portal and the digitalization of archives, the Project should request a no-cost extension.</p> <p>This will provide the additional time needed to complete the remaining key activities, finalize digital infrastructure thorough design and testing of the CR Portal, and ensure digitization of civil registry archives. It will also allow time to reinforce capacity-building efforts, ensuring that ZAGS staff are fully trained to manage new systems and processes post-project</p> <p>A comprehensive public awareness campaign should be implemented to target rural and marginalized populations, highlighting the benefits of timely civil registration, especially for women and children. The objective is to reduce registration barriers for underserved populations and ensure that awareness about civil registration is both widespread and accessible. (C9, C11).</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>To: UNDP, Project team, Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and key stakeholders</p>	<p>The ET recommends developing a comprehensive Civil Registration Reform Platform along with a detailed Roadmap for the project, should the partners agree to pursue a no-cost extension.</p> <p>The CRSR II Project should prioritize developing a detailed civil registration reform platform in close collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and other national stakeholders, provided the project is extended. This platform should establish a clear direction for civil registration development and outline strategic objectives aligned with long-term national goals, including digital transformation and modernization of public administration.</p> <p>This platform should include provisions to address legal identity, access to essential services, and human rights, particularly for marginalized groups.</p> <p>This document should outline both short-term achievable objectives and long-term strategic goals, laying the foundation for future reforms and sustainability, ensuring alignment with the national agenda (C1, C2, C4).</p> <p>Following the civil registration reform platform, a specific and detailed roadmap at the level of the CRSR II Project should be created. This roadmap must break down each outcome and output into clear, actionable steps with defined timelines, milestones, and stakeholder responsibilities. It will ensure that all planned objectives are met, and that progress is tracked effectively.</p> <p>By aligning this roadmap with the Project’s broader strategy, the team can ensure the Project adapts to changes in the institutional landscape and that it maintains momentum toward achieving the desired outcomes (C2, C10).</p>
<p>Recommendation 3:</p> <p>To: UNDP- Project team,</p>	<p>Strengthen interagency coordination and communication- and involve other important stakeholders in the Project Steering Committee</p> <p>Improved interagency coordination is essential for the Project’s success. The Project team should enhance collaboration with the newly established Agency</p>

<p>Ministry of Justice (MoJ),</p> <p>Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies, Ministry of Health, other ministries</p>	<p>for Innovation and Digital Technologies, the Ministry of Health, and other ministries and involve them as full members of the Project Steering Committee.</p> <p>Strengthening these partnerships will ensure the civil registration reforms are effectively integrated with broader national governance priorities, such as e-governance and public health initiatives. Regular communication channels between these agencies will support better data-sharing and service delivery (C6, C8).</p>
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Recommendations for the Government of Tajikistan, UNDP, and other development partners on the critical needs to effectively support future reforms of the civil registry

<p>Recommendation 4:</p> <p>To: UNDP, Development partners (EU/ SDC/ World bank)</p> <p>Ministry of Justice Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies</p>	<p>Strengthen strategic management for the on-going initiatives and the development assistance in the civil registration sector</p> <p>The on-going and future development interventions would need comprehensive and specific risk management strategies that identify potential risks—such as political shifts, institutional resistance, budgetary constraints, and external disruptions (e.g., public health crises)—and develop mitigation measures. These strategies should be integrated into the roadmap to address these challenges proactively.</p> <p>With a clear risk management framework in place, the development assistance can respond to potential delays and navigate obstacles to ensure that it remains on course for timely completion (C9, C10).</p> <p>In addition, the ET recommends to establish a communication and lobbying platform to enhance collaboration with the MoJ and stakeholders. This platform should be established to facilitate ongoing collaboration with the MoJ and other national stakeholders. This platform will promote open dialogue, enabling stronger relationships and fostering a common understanding of the Project’s goals. It will also ensure that key stakeholders are aligned, particularly regarding legislative reforms, infrastructure modernization, and digitalization efforts. Through this platform, the Project can address delays and ensure efficient decision-making processes (C3, C6).</p>
<p>Recommendation 5:</p> <p>To:</p> <p>Ministry of Justice (MoJ),</p> <p>UNDP- development partners</p>	<p>Develop a comprehensive capacity-building program with institutional ownership</p> <p>Building on the progress made so far, the development partners should continue providing robust technical assistance to the MoJ and other national stakeholders. Among other, this support could include developing tailored training modules for ZAGS staff to enhance their understanding of digital technologies and improve their operational capacity. This technical assistance should also aim to foster leadership within the MoJ to ensure stronger national ownership and sustainability of the reforms. Given the challenges related to ZAGS offices' limited capacities in managing new systems and processes, a focus on embedding technical expertise at all levels is crucial. (C7, C11)</p> <p>There is a need for MoJ to take responsibility for institutionalizing capacity-building programs (initiated by the CRSR II and other initiatives) to ensure that civil registry employees are fully capable of managing digital systems and processes independently. The development of a comprehensive human resource management strategy is essential to staff retention, ongoing training, and career development. There is a need for the Institute for Advanced Studies</p>

	to modernize its training approaches, moving beyond lecture-based methods to practical applications and online learning, ensuring that ZAGS staff are continuously upskilled (C11, C12).
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>To:</p> <p>Ministry of Justice (MoJ),</p> <p>Development partners (UNDP, EU, SDC)</p>	<p>Propose sustainability strategy and design a proposal for financial sustainability of the Civil Registration System</p> <p>A key aspect of ensuring long-term sustainability is the establishment of a national Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework specifically focused on civil registration. This framework should be aligned with the CROIS2 system to track key performance indicators related to registration efficiency, service delivery, and access for vulnerable groups. By setting clear targets and tracking progress, the MoJ and other national bodies can ensure continuous improvement and accountability within the civil registration system. (C14, C19)</p> <p>There is a need for allocation of sufficient financial resources by MoJ to sustain the achievements of the civil registration reforms. This includes securing budgetary provisions for maintaining IT infrastructure, such as CR Portal/ CROIS2, covering operational costs (staff salaries, equipment maintenance, software updates), and ensuring that digitalization efforts continue to operate smoothly. A financial sustainability plan must be developed to ensure that the reforms continue to benefit the public long after the Project concludes (C11, C12).</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>To: UNDP, Development partners</p>	<p>Incorporate a robust approach to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) during intervention design (including well-elaborated intervention logic and measurable indicators)</p> <p>To enhance both impact and resilience, it is recommended to incorporate a robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) approach during the intervention design phase, integrating well-elaborated intervention logic and measurable indicators to support risk mitigation. By refining the intervention logic to accurately reflect expected outcomes, and developing or adjusting performance indicators to capture both short-term achievements and long-term impacts—particularly in areas like digitalization, governance reform, and inclusivity—the intervention can better anticipate and respond to emerging risks.</p> <p>This M&E framework will enable proactive monitoring and provide an early warning system for potential challenges, ensuring that necessary adjustments can be made to keep the Project on track toward its objectives while minimizing risks (C4, C5).</p>

9 Annexes

Annex 1 Evaluation matrix

The EC has improved the understanding of the Project's structure and available data sources through an initial document review and the creation of an evaluation matrix. This matrix considered proposed evaluation questions from the Terms of Reference (ToR), and adjusted and reviewed them. As a result of this review, the list of evaluation questions has been consolidated, as questions that were too similar have been combined and sub-questions have been re-framed to make them more focused.

The principle was to ensure that the questions were answerable, all of the Project's components were appropriately addressed, and there was no duplication or undue overlap. The EC formulated precise questions, allowing for an exploratory data collection approach.

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Evaluation criteria and questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data analysis	Data Sources & collection tools
Relevant evaluation criteria: RELEVANCE				
EQ1.1. To what extent has the Project been relevant in responding to the needs of Tajikistan in reforming the overall civil registry system?	<p>JC1.1.1. The extent to which the Project responded to the Tajikistan's priorities concerning reform of civil registry (and broader, public administration reform and digitalization)</p> <p>JC1.1.2. The extent to which the Project aligned with government priorities</p> <p>JC1.1.3. The extent to which the Project is relevant to UNDP and SDC priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that the objectives and outputs of the Project are supporting priorities concerning civil registry system reform (and measures to respond to the public administration reform and digitalization needs) The existence of measures that addressed governmental priorities Evidence that the Project is relevant for the implementation of UNDP and SDG Strategic priorities 	<p>Desk based research-including verification of problem analysis vis-à-vis project's intervention logic</p> <p>Assessment of the strength of the ToC designed for the Project (explicit or implicit).</p> <p>Interviews and group interviews with identified stakeholders concerning the Civil Registry Phase II Project</p>	<p>Programming documents: Project documents, Project Matrix, Progress Reports and other deliverables</p> <p>Stakeholders from the UNDP/ Project Team,</p> <p>MoJ and its departments, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p>
EQ 1.2. To what extent has the Project design been consistent and based on problem analysis?	<p>JC1.2.1. The extent to which the Project design reflected problem analysis (political, legal and institutional level) in formulation of its intervention logic</p> <p>JC1.2.2. The extent to which the project responded to the needs and demands of the beneficiaries in gender disaggregated manner (i.e., for men and women, girls and boys; LNOB or non-LNOB).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that the Project has been designed reflecting in-depth problem analysis Evidence and examples that the Project has been relevant in addressing the needs and demands of beneficiaries, men and women, including from most vulnerable groups Evidence that the Project has been relevant in implementation of the LNOB Agenda 		<p>Development partners in the respective fields</p>
EQ1.3. Has the Project remained relevant during the implementation and beyond?	<p>JC1.3.1. The extent to which the Project incorporated the lessons learned from the mid-term review</p> <p>JC1.3.2. The extent to which the Project has been responsive to political, legal, institutional changes in the country and remained relevant to the national and institutional needs and priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidences (including opinions) about the changes in the EWN Project environment Evidence and examples that the Project incorporated the lessons learned from the mid-term review Evidence- examples and opinions that the Project has been responsive to political, legal, institutional changes in the country Evidence that the Project remained relevant to the national and institutional needs and priorities 		

		(including the analysis of the need to adjust activities and implementation approach)		
Relevant evaluation criteria: COHERENCE				
EQ2.1. <i>To what extent the Project ensured its internal coherence and logical connection and consistency within its intervention logic?</i>	<p>JC2.1.1. The extent to which the objectives of the project design (inputs, activities, outputs and their indicators) and its theory of change logical and coherent</p> <p>JC2.2.2. The extent to which the objectives of the project clear, realistic, and feasible in the current country context?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the ToC and the links between outputs and outcomes, assumptions and activities- logical connections and consistency • Analysis about the extent to the benchmarks and if the targets were realistic to be achieved within the given timeframe • Analysis of the indicators at various levels (including baselines and targets) 	Desk based research- including verification of problem analysis vis-à-vis project's intervention logic (including UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2016-2022 and CPD 2023-2026 and the SDC International Cooperation Strategy, Swiss Cooperation Strategy Central Asia 2017-2022, Swiss Cooperation Programme for Central Asia 2022-2025)	<p>Programming documents: Project documents, Project Matrix, Progress Reports and other deliverables</p> <p>Stakeholders from the UNDP/ Project Team,</p> <p>MoJ and its departments, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p> <p>Development partners in the respective fields</p>
EQ2.2. <i>To what extent the external coherence existed- e.g., aligning with the varied national, organizational and other priorities concerning civil registration and broadly?</i>	<p>JC2.2.1. The extent to which the Project aligned with the national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcomes,</p> <p>JC2.2.2. The extent to which the Project contributed so far towards the achievement of UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2016-2022 and CPD 2023-2026.</p> <p>JC2.2.3. The extent to which the Project aligned with the SDC International Cooperation Strategy, Swiss Cooperation Strategy Central Asia 2017-2022, Swiss Cooperation Programme for Central Asia 2022-2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the Civil Registry Phase II strategic priorities and alignment with the national development framework • Analysis of the coherence between the Project and examples of contribution to UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2016-2022 and CPD 2023-2026 • Evidence and opinions that the Civil Registry Project-Phase II aligned with the SDC priorities (SDC International Cooperation Strategy, Swiss Cooperation Strategy Central Asia 2017-2022, Swiss Cooperation Programme for Central Asia 2022-2025) 	<p>Assessment of the strength of the ToC designed for the Project (explicit or implicit).</p> <p>Interviews and group interviews with identified stakeholders concerning the Civil Registry Phase II Project</p>	
EQ2.3. <i>To what extent were the project design and delivery coherent with international obligations? Has the Project contributed to the progress under specific SDGs?</i>	<p>JC2.3.1. Existence of the Project's alignment with international obligations</p> <p>JC2.3.2. The degree to which the Project contributed to SDGs and planned targets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples and opinions of the Project's alignment with international obligations • Evidence and examples that the Project contributed to SDGs and established targets in the specific areas 		
EQ2.4. <i>To what extent the Project cooperated and coordinated with other initiatives in the civil registry area and broader public</i>	JC 2.4. The extent to which the project complemented work among different entities- state partners (i.e., ministries and departments), development partners and civil society, with similar interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinions and examples of joint efforts and complementary work between the project and other different entities- state partners (i.e., ministries and departments), development partners and civil society, with similar interventions 		

<p>administration, digitalization and access to services?</p>	<p>JC2.4.2. The extent to which other or similar interventions or policies support or undermine the project</p> <p>JC2.4.3. Evidence that the Project established appropriate and effective partnerships at various levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of synergetic effects ensured through the partnerships with other initiatives • Examples of partnerships that the Project established during its implementation (at various levels) 		
<p>Relevant evaluation criteria: EFFECTIVENESS -</p>				
<p>EQ3.1. To what extent were the Project's main objectives achieved in keeping with the original activities, outputs and performance indicators?</p> <p>Were the planned objectives and outcomes achieved according to the results framework?</p>	<p>JC3.1.1. The extent to which the civil registry system of Tajikistan is effectively managed and provides quality and affordable services to the population and qualitative vital statistical data for the State. (Outcome 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of ZAGS offices with One- Stop-Shop (Front and Back offices) model in Tajikistan – target 10 ZAGS • No. & quality of reports produced with use of CR electronic data – target 7 reports 	<p>Desk-based research including national and organizational statistics, and third-party reports</p>	<p>Stakeholders from the MoJ, Moh and other stakeholders from the Government of Tajikistan</p>
<p>JC3.1.2. The population of Tajikistan know how to and timely have their vital events recorded in the civil registry system. (Outcome 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of children under 5 years old with birth certificates (disaggregated by gender)- target 95% • Percentage of timely birth registrations in ZAGS (disaggregated by gender) – target 95% 	<p>National statistics and international performance indicators on the priority areas</p>	<p>UNDP information and sources</p>	
<p>JC3.1.3. The extent to which newly adopted civil registry legislation is implemented and interagency coordination effectively ensured (Output 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of implementation of the new CR Law, the Government decree #77 and the law on consular departments of MFA. • Status and number of agencies connected to the data exchange with CR electronic system 	<p>Interviews and group interviews with identified stakeholders from participating partners, and other regional and national institutions.</p>	<p>National statistics and review of secondary sources</p>	
<p>JC3.1.4. Evidence that new quality business processes are developed and effectively applied in the civil registry (Output 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of internal rules, regulations and SOPs adopted and implemented (guiding day-to-day working procedures and practices of the civil registry offices in line with the relevant national legislation). • Number of visits to CR Office by citizens required for the registration of civil acts 	<p>The intention is on validating or refuting lines of inquiry - collecting perceptions about results (outputs) achieved with the reference to outputs and progress towards outcomes.</p>	<p>Review of project documentation</p>	
<p>JC3.1.5. Existence of electronic civil registry system and evidence that digitalized archives are handed over and effectively managed by MoJ (Output 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of the civil registry records timely entered into the electronic system (with further break down by type of registrations and office geographic location) • Number of paper-based archive records digitalized into an electronic format. • Number of queries dealt by the MoJ IT Unit (*precise technical parameters will be developed 			

		during initial project imp. period- e.g. length of time to resolve queries, successful resolution, customer service etc.)		
	JC3.1.6. The extent to which population is aware of timely registration benefits through MoJ communication strategy and supported by selected CSO to bolster civil registration, and the existence of feedback mechanisms (Output 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and quality of campaigns carried out to cover various groups of people and the most vulnerable. (disaggregated by gender) • Percentage of adult population of Tajikistan (16 years old and above) that are aware of the benefits of free of charge timely birth registration and reduced waiting time. • Percentage of adult population (16 years old and above) that know how/where to obtain information in selected 4 big areas (Rudaki district, B. Gafurov, Bokhtar city and Dushanbe city) how registering their civil acts (disaggregated by type of civil act) 		
<i>EQ2.2. What were the positive or negative unplanned results that the Project achieved?</i>	JC2.2. Existence of results that the Project produced and were not originally planned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence, including opinions of stakeholders if the Project has achieved some unintended results and examples of these results 		
<i>EQ2.3. What factors have contributed or impeded Project's performance and achievement of outputs?</i>	<p>JC2.3.1. Existence of factors and the extent to which these factors positively or negatively affected the Project</p> <p>JC2.3.2. The extent to which COVID-19 pandemic has affected project implementation and delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of external situation that have affected implementation of the Project • Evidence, including opinions and examples, that external challenges affected the Project's progress – especially COVID-19 and the effectiveness of mitigation strategy 		
<i>EQ2.4. Was the cooperation with Project beneficiaries and key Project partners, including but not limited to the MoJ successfully achieved and contributed to the achievement of the Project's goals?</i>	<p>JC2.4.1. The form and effectiveness of cooperation with Project beneficiaries and key Project partners, that contributed to the achievement of the Project's goals?</p> <p>JC2.4.2. The extent to which the role of the state partners in the project has been well-defined and clear</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence and examples/ opinions if the cooperation with Project beneficiaries and key Project partners, was effective and opinions how it contributed to the achievement of the Project's goals • Opinion about the role of the state partners in the project and suggestions how to improve it 		
Relevant evaluation criteria: <u>EFFICIENCY</u>				
<i>EQ4.1. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?</i>	JC4.1.1. The extent to which the Project's implementation followed workplans – timely delivery of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of planned vs implemented activities and delivery of outputs or delays and changes in the implementation of plans 	Desk-based research including national and organizational statistics,	Programming documents: The Project Document, and

	<p>JC4.1.2. The extent to which project funds and selected method of delivery have been adequate and appropriate (efficient and cost-effective)</p> <p>JC4.1.3. Existence of factors and constraints, which have affected Project implementation (including other external factors unforeseen during the Project design)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the Project’s budget and evidence that resources have been available and used to achieve results on time • Evidence of requested no-cost or cost extensions and justifications (if any) with budgetary revisions • Evidence- examples of factors and constraints (including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic policy and other external factors) that have affected Project 	<p>and third parties’ reports</p> <p>Analysis of the Civil Registry Phase II budget and management/ organizational structure</p> <p>Analysis of the management and steering mechanisms and coordination approaches from the meetings- to verify decision-making approaches</p>	<p>Reports. Other deliverables.</p> <p>Available meeting minutes</p> <p>Contractual arrangements including analysis of the approved budget</p> <p>Stakeholders from the implementing partners-</p>
<p>EQ4.2. To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?</p>	<p>JC4.2.1. The extent to which the Project management structure has been efficient in generating the expected results</p> <p>JC4.2.2. The extent to which the the role of the steering mechanism- Project Steering Committee (PSC) contributed to efficient implementation and decision-making purposes.</p> <p>JC4.2.3. The extent to which the Project has introduced sound and effective management practices (work planning, reporting, monitoring and communication and visibility)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that the Project’s management structure has been optimized and cost-efficient to ensure timely delivery • Evidence that the PSC contributed to decisions making and strategic positioning of the Project • Evidence that the project work planning and reporting have been quality, timely, and adequate • Evidence that the monitoring data were objectively used for management of risks, actions and decision making • Evidence that the Project implementation strategy contributed to the efficiency 	<p>Interviews with key informants –group interviews with beneficiaries and experts</p>	
<p>Relevant evaluation criteria: SUSTAINABILITY</p>				
<p>EQ5.1. To what extent will the Project’s achievements be sustained? What are the possible systems, structures, staff that will ensure its sustainability?</p>	<p>JC5.1.1. Existence of the Project’s exit strategy -the likelihood that the Project’s achievement will remain in place (upon its completion)</p> <p>JC5.1.2. Existence of nationally-driven support including operational systems, structures and staff to ensure sustainability of Project’s results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence about the Project’s exit strategy and its effectiveness- opinions and examples of sustainability of the Project’s results • Evidence that nationally-driven support is in place- examples and opinions of operational systems, structures and staff to ensure sustainability of Project’s results • Evidence that the national stakeholders have ensured operational support to continue delivering results that the Project produced 	<p>Desk-based research including national and organizational statistics, and third parties’ reports</p> <p>Analysis of the project budget and management/ organizational structure</p> <p>Interviews with key informants -</p>	<p>Programming documents: The Project Document, and Reports. Other deliverables.</p> <p>Available meeting minutes</p> <p>Contractual arrangements including analysis of the approved budget</p>
<p>EQ5.2. Are the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and</p>	<p>JC5.2. Existence of the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes for sustaining project benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes are in place for sustaining project benefits 	<p>Group interviews if possible (to discuss</p>	

processes in place for sustaining Project benefits?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinions about suitability of the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes to ensure sustainability- or create risks to sustainability 	achievements and validate findings)	Stakeholders from the implementing partners
EQ5.3. To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support? Has the ownership been sufficient to ensure sustainability?	JC5.3. The extent to which the project decision making bodies and implementing partners undertaken decisions and course of actions to ensure the sustainability of the effects of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples and opinions that the project decision making bodies and implementing partners undertaken decisions and course of actions to ensure the sustainability of the effects of the project 		
SQ5.4. To what extent has the Project developed appropriate capacities to be self-sufficient upon its completion?	JC5.4. The extent to which stakeholders' capacities (individual and institutional) have been developed to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence including opinions and examples that institutional systems and individual capacities are in place for sustaining benefits Examples of contributing factors and constraints for the development of capacities 		
EQ5.5. To what extent could the Project be scaled up (including additional areas for consideration) and replicable?	<p>JC5.5.1. Existence of potential priority areas of engagement- opportunities for continuation and expansion national, donor's and UNDP's interventions in terms of digital transformation and public service delivery</p> <p>JC5.5.2. The extent to which lessons learned and gained knowledge has been codified and shared with the decision making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidences about the lessons learned and codified knowledge to inform future planning and programming the area of Project intervention Evidence including opinions about of potential priority areas of engagement- analysis and suggestions of opportunities for continuation and expansion national, donor's and UNDP's interventions in terms of digital transformation and public service delivery 		

Relevant evaluation criteria: **IMPACT**

EQ6.1. To what extent has the Project contributed to strengthened provision of civil registration services and increased public access to the system (especially from the perspective of women's, men's and children's human rights)	<p>JC6.1.1. The extent to which the Project contributed to strengthened provision of civil registration services and increased public access to the system (compared to baselines from the previous stage and other researches)</p> <p>JC6.1.2. Evidence of the Project's impact on the overall situation of the target institutions and direct beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence- including opinions (self-reflections, partners and beneficiaries), and other examples that the Project contributed to strengthened institutions for the provision of civil registration services Evidence- including quantitative data and results of the survey (other qualitative data) on Project's contribution to increased public access to the system 	Desk based research – Key informants' interviews Other researches and national reports- including progress in public administration	including surveys (including analysis of the previous stages/ researches) Statistics/ Quantitative data from the MoJ on civil registration services Legal and policy documents
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<p>EQ6.2. To what extent has the Project contributed to systemic- changes in the area of civil registration?</p>	<p>JC6.2. The extent to which the Civil Registry Phase II Project has influenced national policy/ legal/ regulatory frameworks on civil registration (and broader)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence and analysis that the Project influenced national policies/ legal/ regulatory frameworks and on civil registration 		<p>concerning civil registration system Stakeholders and partners</p>
<p>Relevant evaluation criteria: CROSS-CUTTING</p>				
<p>EQ7.1. To what extent have poor, minorities, women, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from the Civil Registry Phase II Project and UNDP support?</p>	<p>JC7.1.1. The degree to which partners are capacitated to implement “leave no-one behind” and human rights-based approach</p> <p>JC7.1.2. The extent to which the Project ensured benefits to poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the Civil Registration Reform</p> <p>JC7.1.3 The extent to which the Project contributed to promotion of human rights and social inclusion</p> <p>JC7.1.4. Existence of project initiatives to ensure sustainable improvements for vulnerable groups and promote responsible practices and HRBA-oriented principles among civil servants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of practices in the promotion and mainstreaming of LNOB and HRBA during its formulation and implementation Evidence- opinions that the Project contributed to the capacity development of the stakeholders to implement “leave no one behind” and human rights principles in its activities Evidence that the poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the Civil Registration Reform Evidence and examples that the Project contributed to promotion of human rights and social inclusion Examples of project initiatives to ensure sustainable improvements for vulnerable groups and promote responsible practices and HRBA-oriented principles among civil servants 	<p>Desk based research including national and organizational statistics, and third parties’ reports</p> <p>Interviews with key informants -</p> <p>Group interviews (to discuss achievements and validate findings)</p>	<p>Project document, Progress Reports. Project deliverables.</p> <p>National and international statistics</p> <p>Stakeholders from the implementing partners, public institutions and other stakeholders</p>
<p>EQ7.2. To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the Civil Registry- Phase II Project? To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and advanced the empowerment of women?</p>	<p>JC7.2.1. The extent to which gender mainstreaming was considered and implemented under the Project and existence of unintended effects</p> <p>JC7.2.2. The extent to which the Project promoted positive changes in gender equality (including unintended results)</p> <p>JC7.2.3. Evidence of unintended effects and examples of their effects on the project and the community of engagement</p> <p>JC7.2.4. The extent to which the Project approach was effective in promoting gender equality and social inclusion (in activities like knowledge transfer, planning, training)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence and opinions that gender was considered and mainstreamed during the Project design and implementation Evidence and examples/ opinions that the Project promoted gender-transformation Evidence that the gender marker assigned to this project is appropriate (including that the Project was gender responsive Evidences that partners enhanced capacities for gender mainstreaming in all activities Examples of unintended effects and examples of their effects on the project and the community of engagement 		

Annex 2 Agenda for the fieldwork (including stakeholders for interviews)

Agenda for Mission of Final Evaluation, Evaluator of UNDP

Mission period: from 23 September to 2 October 2024

Participants: Mr. Tomislav Novovic, International Expert of UNDP
Mr. Boimurod Bobojanov, National expert

Project Team, UNDP CO, project stakeholders

Arrival to Dushanbe on Monday, 23 September, and hotel check-in	
Day 1: Monday, 23 September, 2024	
13:00-14:30	Meeting with Project team to review and finalize mission program and planned meetings/field trip logistics <i>Venue: UNDP CO meeting hall or CR Office (UAGS building)</i>
15:00 - 16:00	Kick off Meeting at UNDP Country Office with Senior Management / Meeting at UNDP Country Office Resident Representative (RR) / Deputy Resident Representative (DRR) UNDP TJK CO, Team Lead / Programme Specialist, Country Office Monitoring & Evaluation Associate, Civil Registration Project Manager (briefing on Final Evaluation process, mission agenda, etc), <i>Venue: UNDP RR office</i>
16:00 - 17:00	Review of Project Progress and plans with Project Team <i>Venue: UNDP CO meeting hall or CR Office (UAGS building)</i>
Day 2: Tuesday, 24 September, 2024	
09:00 – 09:30	Pick-up at the hotel and drive to the CR Project Office
09:30 – 11:30	Meeting with Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Tajikistan (SDC) <i>Venue: SDC Office</i>
11:30 – 12:30	Meeting with European Union (EU) <i>Venue: EU Office</i>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 16:30	Meeting with UNDP Team Leader, Head of Programme Unit and CO M&E Associate (and other UNDP staff by request of the Evaluators) <i>Venue: UNDP CO CH</i>
16:00 – 17:00	Open to follow up discussions, consolidation of Day 2 data etc.
Day 3: Wednesday, 25 September, 2024	
09:00 – 09:30	Pick-up at the hotel and drive to the CR Project Office
09:30 – 11:30	Meeting with MoJof the Republic of Tajikistan representatives First Deputy Minister of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan – Ms. Nigina Alizoda, Deputy Minister of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan – Mr. Sharaf Karimzoda, Deputy Head of International Legal Relations Department, MoJof the Republic of Tajikistan - Mr. Talabzoda Bakhtiyor; <i>Venue: MoJ Building</i>
11:30 – 12:30	Meeting with Director of State Unitary Enterprise Qonuniyat under the MoJof the Republic of Tajikistan - Mr. Faridun Sharifi <i>Venue: SUE Qonuniyat Office</i>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:30	Meeting with Institute for Advanced Training under the MoJ of the Republic of Tajikistan <i>Venue: Institute of Advanced Training Office</i>

15:00 – 16:00	Meeting with Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative (or Consular Department) Venue: MFA premises or MoJ
16:00 – 17:00	Open to follow up discussions, consolidation of Day 3 data etc.
Day 4: Thursday, 26 September, 2024	
09:00 – 09:30	Pick-up at the hotel and drive to the CR Project Office
09:30 – 11:30	Meeting with Head of Department of Civil Status Acts of the MoJ of the Republic of Tajikistan (UAGS) – Ms. Alizoda Mainiso, Deputy Head – Ms. Saidmurodzoda Sarvinoz Bobomurod. Venue: UAGS Office
11:30 – 12:30	Agency of innovation and digital technologies under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Venue: Agency of innovation and digital technologies
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:30	Meeting with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population Venue: Ministry of Health and Social Protection TBD
15:00 – 16:00	Meeting with Agency on statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Venue: Agency on Statistics office
16:00 – 17:00	Open
Day 5: Friday, 27 September, 2024	
09:00 - 12:00	On site visit and meeting with Head and staff of ZAGS Offices of Sino and Firdavsi in Dushanbe; Meeting with random beneficiaries in these offices. Venue: On site, Sino ZAGS Office, Firdavsi ZAGS Office
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
13:30 – 17:00	On site visit and meeting with Head and staff of ZAGS Office of Varzob; Meeting with random beneficiaries in this office, as well as meeting with <i>Jamoat</i> representatives of any nearby jamoat in Varzob. Venue: On site, Varzob ZAGS Office
Day 6: Saturday, 28 September, 2024	
08:30 - 17:00	On site visit and meeting with Head and staff of ZAGS Offices of Vahdat and Rudaki; Meeting with random beneficiaries in these offices, as well as meeting with <i>Jamoat</i> representatives of any nearby jamoat in Vahdat and Rudaki. Venue: On site, Vahdat ZAGS Office, Rudaki ZAGS Office
Day 7: Sunday, 29 September, 2024	
09:00 – 12:00	Consolidation of all the data and finalizing findings Initial preparation for presentation of Final Evaluation, initial conclusions and findings/recommendations
13:00 – 17:00	Travel to Istaravshan (Overnight in Istaravshan)
Day 8: Monday, 30 September, 2024	
08:30 – 10:30	On site visit and meeting with Head and staff of ZAGS Offices of Istaravshan; Meeting with random beneficiaries in this office. Venue: On site, Istaravshan ZAGS Office
10:30 – 11:30	Travel to Shahrison
11:30 – 13:00	On site visit and meeting with Head and staff of ZAGS Offices of Shahrison; Meeting with random beneficiaries in this office. Venue: On site, Shahrison ZAGS Office
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 17:00	Travel to Dushanbe
Day 9: Tuesday, 1 October, 2024	
09:00 – 09:30	Pick-up at the hotel
09:30 – 12:00	Any other meeting requested by the Evaluators (otherwise, time for data consolidation of initial finding for evaluators team)

12:00 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:30	Final Evaluation Team Review and consolidation of data and initial findings
15:30 – 16:30	Follow up and wrap-up
Day 10: Tuesday, 2 October, 2024	
09:00 – 09:30	Pick-up at the hotel
10:00 – 11:30	Presentation of initial findings at the UNDP CO – RR, DRR, Team Leader/ Programme Specialist, CO M&E Associate
11:30 – 12:30	Follow up and wrap-up
Final Evaluation Lead Consultant Departure (TBD)	

Note:

The date and times of meetings can be changed upon agreement with participants.
The names of the persons to be met will be confirmed two days prior to the meeting.

Annex 2: List of analysed documents

https://undp.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/teams/TJK/UNDP%20TJK/UNDP%20Projects/Governance%20Cluster/Civil%20Registration/1.%20CR_all/MEAL/EVALUATIONS/2.%20CR%20Ph%20II/FINAL/Annex%20A.%20Lis%20of%20docs%20for%20Desk%20review?csf=1&web=1&e=3Q2ObV

Annex 4: Interview guides

Civil Registry Project Team

Evaluation Criteria: Relevance

EQ1.1: To what extent has the Project been relevant in responding to the needs of Tajikistan in reforming the overall civil registry system?

- **SQ1.1.1:** How effectively has the Project addressed specific needs related to civil registry reform in Tajikistan, including public administration reform and digitalisation?
- **SQ1.1.2:** How closely does the Project's intervention align with current government policies and strategies?
- **SQ1.1.3:** How does the Project contribute to achieving UNDP and SDC strategic goals in Tajikistan?

EQ1.2: To what extent has the Project design been consistent and based on problem analysis?

- **SQ1.2.1:** Was the Project designed based on a thorough analysis of Tajikistan's political, legal, and institutional context?
- **SQ1.2.2:** How effectively did the Project address the specific needs of men, women, and marginalized groups?

EQ1.3: Has the Project remained relevant during implementation and beyond?

- **SQ1.3.1:** How were lessons from the mid-term review incorporated into the Project, and what changes were made?
- **SQ1.3.2:** How did the Project adapt to changes in the political, legal, and institutional environment during implementation?

Evaluation Criteria: Coherence

EQ2.1: To what extent did the Project ensure internal coherence and logical connections within its intervention logic?

- **SQ2.1.1:** How consistent and logical were the linkages between the Project's activities, outputs, and outcomes?
- **SQ2.1.2:** Were the Project's objectives realistic and achievable given the country's context and available resources?

EQ2.2: To what extent did external coherence exist, aligning with national, organizational, and other priorities?

- **SQ2.2.1:** How well did the Project align with Tajikistan's national development priorities?
- **SQ2.2.2:** In what ways has the Project contributed to achieving outcomes set in the UNDP Country Programme?
- **SQ2.2.3:** How does the Project align with SDC's priorities and cooperation strategies in the region?

EQ2.3: To what extent were the Project design and delivery coherent with international obligations, particularly SDGs?

- **SQ2.3.1:** How did the Project ensure alignment with Tajikistan's international obligations, especially related to SDGs?
- **SQ2.3.2:** What specific contributions has the Project made towards achieving relevant SDGs?

EQ2.4: To what extent did the Project cooperate and coordinate with other initiatives?

- **SQ2.4.1:** How effective was the Project in complementing other initiatives in the civil registry and public administration sectors?
- **SQ2.4.2:** Were there any external interventions that either supported or conflicted with the Project's objectives?

Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness

EQ3.1: To what extent were the Project's main objectives achieved in line with the original activities, outputs, and performance indicators?

- **SQ3.1.1:** How has the civil registry system improved in terms of management and service delivery?
- **SQ3.1.2:** How has public awareness about civil registration improved, and what are the registration rates for vital events?
- **SQ3.1.3:** How effectively has the new civil registry legislation been implemented and coordinated across agencies?
- **SQ3.1.4:** What new business processes have been introduced, and how effectively are they being applied?
- **SQ3.1.5:** How effective is the new electronic civil registry system, and what progress has been made in digitalizing archives?
- **SQ3.1.6:** How successful were the communication strategies in raising public awareness about the benefits of timely registration?

EQ3.2: What were the positive or negative unplanned results that the Project achieved?

- **SQ3.2.1:** Were there any unexpected outcomes from the Project, and what were their impacts?

EQ3.3: What factors contributed to or impeded the Project's performance?

- **SQ3.3.1:** What external factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, positively or negatively impacted the Project's performance?

EQ3.4: Was the cooperation with Project beneficiaries and key partners, including the Ministry of Justice, successful and did it contribute to the achievement of the Project's goals?

- **SQ3.4.1:** How effective was the collaboration with the MoJ and other key partners in achieving the Project's goals?
- **SQ3.4.2:** Were the roles of state partners clearly defined and effectively executed?

Evaluation Criteria: Efficiency

EQ4.1: To what extent have the UNDP Project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?

- **SQ4.1.1:** Were the Project's activities delivered on schedule, and what were the reasons for any delays?
- **SQ4.1.2:** How effectively were financial resources utilized, and were the delivery methods appropriate and cost-effective?
- **SQ4.1.3:** What constraints or external factors affected the Project's efficiency, and how were they managed?

EQ4.2: To what extent was the Project management structure as outlined in the Project document efficient in generating expected results?

- **SQ4.2.1:** How effective was the Project's management structure in achieving the expected results?

- **SQ4.2.2:** How did the Project Steering Committee contribute to the efficiency and strategic direction of the Project?
- **SQ4.2.3:** How effective were the Project’s work planning, reporting, and monitoring practices in ensuring timely and quality implementation?

Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability

EQ5.1: To what extent will the Project’s achievements be sustained? What systems, structures, and staff will ensure sustainability?

- **SQ5.1.1:** Does the Project have a robust exit strategy, and what is the likelihood that its results will be sustained after completion?
- **SQ5.1.2:** Are there sufficient national support systems, structures, and trained staff in place to sustain the Project’s outcomes?

EQ5.2: Are the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures in place for sustaining Project benefits?

- **SQ5.2.1:** How suitable are the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures for sustaining the Project’s benefits?

EQ5.3: To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support? Has the ownership been sufficient to ensure sustainability?

- **SQ5.3.1:** How committed are the Project partners and decision-making bodies to sustaining the Project’s outcomes, and what actions have they taken to ensure this?

EQ5.4: To what extent has the Project developed appropriate capacities to be self-sufficient upon its completion?

- **SQ5.4.1:** How well has the Project developed the capacities of stakeholders to ensure the self-sufficiency of its outcomes?

EQ5.5: To what extent could the Project be scaled up and replicated?

- **SQ5.5.1:** What are the opportunities for scaling up or replicating the Project, and what lessons learned could inform future interventions?

Evaluation Criteria: Impact

EQ6.1: To what extent has the Project contributed to strengthening civil registration services and increasing public access?

- **SQ6.1.1:** How has the Project strengthened civil registration services and increased public access, particularly for vulnerable groups?
- **SQ6.1.2:** What has been the impact of the Project on the target institutions and direct beneficiaries?

EQ6.2: To what extent has the Project contributed to systemic changes in civil registration?

- **SQ6.2.1:** How has the Project influenced national policies, legal, and regulatory frameworks related to civil registration?

Evaluation Criteria: Cross-cutting Issues

EQ7.1: To what extent have poor, minorities, women, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the Project?

- **SQ7.1.1:** How effectively has the Project capacitated partners to implement “Leave No One Behind” (LNOB) and human rights-based approaches?

- **SQ7.1.2:** How did the Project ensure that benefits reached poor, indigenous, physically challenged, and other marginalized groups?
- **SQ7.1.3:** In what ways did the Project promote human rights and social inclusion?

EQ7.2: To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Project? Has the Project promoted positive changes in gender equality?

- **SQ7.2.1:** How effectively was gender mainstreamed throughout the Project, and were there any unintended effects?
- **SQ7.2.2:** How has the Project promoted positive changes in gender equality, and were there any unintended outcomes?

UNDP Country Office

Evaluation Criteria: Relevance

EQ1.1: To what extent has the Project been relevant in responding to the needs of Tajikistan in reforming the overall civil registry system?

EQ1.3: Has the Project remained relevant during implementation and beyond?

Evaluation Criteria: Coherence

EQ2.2: To what extent did external coherence exist, aligning with national, organizational, and other priorities?

- **SQ2.2.1:** How well did the Project align with Tajikistan's national development priorities?
- **SQ2.2.2:** In what ways has the Project contributed to achieving outcomes set in the UNDP Country Programme?

EQ2.3: To what extent were the Project design and delivery coherent with international obligations, particularly SDGs?

EQ2.4: To what extent did the Project cooperate and coordinate with other initiatives?

- **SQ2.4.1:** How effective was the Project in complementing other initiatives in the civil registry and public administration sectors?

Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness

EQ3.1: To what extent were the Project's main objectives achieved in line with the original activities, outputs, and performance indicators?

- **SQ3.1.1:** How has the civil registry system improved in terms of management and service delivery?
- **SQ3.1.2:** How has public awareness about civil registration improved, and what are the registration rates for vital events?
- **SQ3.1.3:** How effectively has the new civil registry legislation been implemented and coordinated across agencies?
- **SQ3.1.4:** What new business processes have been introduced, and how effectively are they being applied?
- **SQ3.1.5:** How effective is the new electronic civil registry system, and what progress has been made in digitalizing archives?
- **SQ3.1.6:** How successful were the communication strategies in raising public awareness about the benefits of timely registration?

EQ3.2: What were the positive or negative unplanned results that the Project achieved?

EQ3.3: What factors contributed to or impeded the Project's performance?

EQ3.4: Was the cooperation with Project beneficiaries and key partners, including the Ministry of Justice, successful and did it contribute to the achievement of the Project's goals?

Evaluation Criteria: Efficiency

EQ4.1: To what extent have the UNDP Project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?

- **SQ4.1.1:** Were the Project's activities delivered on schedule, and what were the reasons for any delays?

- **SQ4.1.2:** How effectively were financial resources utilized, and were the delivery methods appropriate and cost-effective?
- **SQ4.1.3:** What constraints or external factors affected the Project's efficiency, and how were they managed?

EQ4.2: To what extent was the Project management structure as outlined in the Project document efficient in generating expected results?

Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability

EQ5.1: To what extent will the Project's achievements be sustained? What systems, structures, and staff will ensure sustainability?

EQ5.3: To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support? Has the ownership been sufficient to ensure sustainability?

- **SQ5.3.1:** How committed are the Project partners and decision-making bodies to sustaining the Project's outcomes, and what actions have they taken to ensure this?

EQ5.4: To what extent has the Project developed appropriate capacities to be self-sufficient upon its completion?

- **SQ5.4.1:** How well has the Project developed the capacities of stakeholders to ensure the self-sufficiency of its outcomes?

EQ5.5: To what extent could the Project be scaled up and replicated?

- **SQ5.5.1:** What are the opportunities for scaling up or replicating the Project, and what lessons learned could inform future interventions?

Evaluation Criteria: Impact

EQ6.1: To what extent has the Project contributed to strengthening civil registration services and increasing public access?

EQ6.2: To what extent has the Project contributed to systemic changes in civil registration?

Evaluation Criteria: Cross-cutting Issues

EQ7.1: To what extent have poor, minorities, women, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the Project?

EQ7.2: To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Project? Has the Project promoted positive changes in gender equality?

National Partners

Evaluation Criteria: Relevance

EQ1.1: To what extent has the Project been relevant in responding to the needs of Tajikistan in reforming the overall civil registry system?

- **SQ1.1.1:** How effectively has the Project addressed specific needs related to civil registry reform in Tajikistan, including public administration reform and digitalisation?
- **SQ1.1.2:** How closely does the Project's intervention align with current government policies and strategies?

EQ1.3: Has the Project remained relevant during implementation and beyond?

- **SQ1.3.2:** How did the Project adapt to changes in the political, legal, and institutional environment during implementation?

Evaluation Criteria: Coherence

EQ2.2: To what extent did external coherence exist, aligning with national, organizational, and other priorities?

- **SQ2.2.1:** How well did the Project align with Tajikistan's national development priorities?

EQ2.3: To what extent were the Project design and delivery coherent with international obligations, particularly SDGs?

- **SQ2.3.1:** How did the Project ensure alignment with Tajikistan's international obligations, especially related to SDGs?
- **SQ2.3.2:** What specific contributions has the Project made towards achieving relevant SDGs?

EQ2.4: To what extent did the Project cooperate and coordinate with other initiatives?

Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness

EQ3.1: To what extent were the Project's main objectives achieved in line with the original activities, outputs, and performance indicators?

Considered the following sub-questions as needed:

- **SQ3.1.1:** How has the civil registry system improved in terms of management and service delivery?
- **SQ3.1.2:** How has public awareness about civil registration improved, and what are the registration rates for vital events?
- **SQ3.1.3:** How effectively has the new civil registry legislation been implemented and coordinated across agencies?
- **SQ3.1.4:** What new business processes have been introduced, and how effectively are they being applied?
- **SQ3.1.5:** How effective is the new electronic civil registry system, and what progress has been made in digitalizing archives?
- **SQ3.1.6:** How successful were the communication strategies in raising public awareness about the benefits of timely registration?

EQ3.3: What factors contributed to or impeded the Project's performance?

EQ3.4: Was the cooperation with Project successful and did it contribute to the achievement of the Project's goals?

Evaluation Criteria: Efficiency

EQ4.1: To what extent have the UNDP Project implementation strategy and execution been efficient?

- **SQ4.1.1:** Were the Project's activities delivered on schedule, and what were the reasons for any delays?
- **SQ4.1.3:** What constraints or external factors affected the Project's efficiency, and how were they managed?
- **SQ4.2.2:** How did the Project Steering Committee contribute to the efficiency and strategic direction of the Project?
- **SQ4.2.3:** How effective were the Project's work planning, reporting, and monitoring practices in ensuring timely and quality implementation?

Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability

EQ5.1: To what extent will the Project's achievements be sustained? What systems, structures, and staff will ensure sustainability?

- **SQ5.1.2:** Are there sufficient national support systems, structures, and trained staff in place to sustain the Project's outcomes?

EQ5.2: Are the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures in place for sustaining Project benefits?

EQ5.3: To what extent the GoT is committed to providing continuing support? Has the ownership been sufficient to ensure sustainability?

EQ5.4: To what extent has the Project developed national capacities to be self-sufficient upon its completion?

Evaluation Criteria: Impact

EQ6.1: To what extent has the Project contributed to strengthening civil registration services and increasing public access?

EQ6.2: To what extent has the Project contributed to systemic changes in civil registration?

Evaluation Criteria: Cross-cutting Issues

EQ7.1: To what extent have poor, minorities, women, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the Project?

EQ7.2: To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Project? Has the Project promoted positive changes in gender equality?

SDC

Evaluation Criteria: Relevance

EQ1.1: To what extent has the Project been relevant in responding to the needs of Tajikistan in reforming the overall civil registry system?

- **SQ1.1.2:** How closely does the Project's intervention align with current government policies and strategies?
- **SQ1.1.3:** How does the Project contribute to achieving UNDP and SDC strategic goals in Tajikistan?

EQ1.3: Has the Project remained relevant during implementation and beyond?

- **SQ1.3.1:** How were lessons from the mid-term review incorporated into the Project, and what changes were made?
- **SQ1.3.2:** How did the Project adapt to changes in the political, legal, and institutional environment during implementation?

Evaluation Criteria: Coherence

EQ2.2: To what extent did external coherence exist, aligning with national, organizational, and other priorities?

- **SQ2.2.1:** How well did the Project align with Tajikistan's national development priorities?
- **SQ2.2.3:** How does the Project align with SDC's priorities and cooperation strategies in the region?

EQ2.4: To what extent did the Project cooperate and coordinate with other initiatives?

Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness

EQ3.1: To what extent were the Project's main objectives achieved in line with the original activities, outputs, and performance indicators?

EQ3.2: What were the positive or negative unplanned results that the Project achieved?

- **SQ3.2.1:** Were there any unexpected outcomes from the Project, and what were their impacts?

EQ3.3: What factors contributed to or impeded the Project's performance?

- **SQ3.3.1:** What external factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, positively or negatively impacted the Project's performance?

EQ3.4: Was the cooperation with Project beneficiaries and key partners, including the Ministry of Justice, successful and did it contribute to the achievement of the Project's goals?

Evaluation Criteria: Efficiency

EQ4.1: To what extent have the UNDP Project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?

EQ4.2: To what extent was the Project management structure as outlined in the Project document efficient in generating expected results?

- **SQ4.2.1:** How effective was the Project's management structure in achieving the expected results?
- **SQ4.2.2:** How did the Project Steering Committee contribute to the efficiency and strategic direction of the Project?

- **SQ4.2.3:** How effective were the Project's work planning, reporting, and monitoring practices in ensuring timely and quality implementation?

Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability

EQ5.1: To what extent will the Project's achievements be sustained? What systems, structures, and staff will ensure sustainability?

EQ5.2: Are the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures in place for sustaining Project benefits?

EQ5.3: To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support? Has the ownership been sufficient to ensure sustainability?

EQ5.4: To what extent has the Project developed appropriate capacities to be self-sufficient upon its completion?

EQ5.5: To what extent could the Project be scaled up and replicated?

Evaluation Criteria: Impact

EQ6.1: To what extent has the Project contributed to strengthening civil registration services and increasing public access?

EQ6.2: To what extent has the Project contributed to systemic changes in civil registration?

Evaluation Criteria: Cross-cutting Issues

EQ7.1: To what extent have poor, minorities, women, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the Project?

EQ7.2: To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Project? Has the Project promoted positive changes in gender equality?

Annex 5: Overview of the CRSR II results

<p>Outcome 1: By 2025, people have access to more effective, innovative, and transparent public administration based upon the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, labor rights, and quality data.</p>	
<p>Cumulative progress</p> <p>When measured by its indicators, Outcome 1 of the Civil Registry System Reform Project in Tajikistan demonstrates progress, particularly in implementing the Front and Back Offices (One-Stop-Shop -OSS model) and improvements in civil registration service delivery. The ET verified that at the time of this evaluation, the CRSR II had completed 9 of these offices, aiming for 16 by the end of the Project, surpassing the original target of 10. Additionally, the CROIS2 electronic system has been installed and utilised, enhancing the digitalisation of civil registration and improving data reporting. These achievements, viewed through the lens of performance indicators, suggest that the Project is on track to meet its targets.</p> <p>However, the actual situation on the ground reveals considerable challenges that threaten the long-term sustainability and effects of the reforms. The MoJ formally endorses the reforms, but challenges remain in timely implementation of critical activities, which once again stipulates the need for improved communication, coordination, partnership and ownership within the Steering Committee to ensure effective decision making mechanism and alignment in priorities and general vision. Overcoming these challenges will ensure more robust institutional support and engagement of National Partners, and more speedy progress in institutionalization of reforms.</p> <p>Another major challenge is the short-term focus in strategic planning for digitalising civil registry services. The Project has struggled with lacking a long-term, strategic platform for civil registry reform. With a clear and comprehensive strategic platform for civil registry reform (beyond immediate priorities), the potential for the reforms to integrate fully into Tajikistan's public administration framework is more likely to occur. The need remains to address deeper, systemic issues that require medium- and long-term planning, such as interoperability with other public services and sustainability beyond the Project's lifespan.</p> <p>Additionally, the Project has faced challenges in institutionalising certain practices. For example, the Qunoniat office under the MoJ has limited capacity to support local ZAGS. While technological upgrades have been introduced, staff at these offices have struggled to adapt to the new systems due to insufficient training, a lack of capacity, and limited monitoring mechanisms. These factors have further slowed down the implementation of key reforms, creating inefficiencies in service delivery that the Project attempts to address.</p> <p>The broader context of governance challenges compounds these difficulties. According to the World Governance Indicators (WGI) from the World Bank, Tajikistan consistently ranks low in critical areas such as Effectiveness and Regulatory Quality, which are essential for successfully implementing reforms like the civil registry overhaul. Limitations in governance capacity has further constrained the reform efforts, as the low regulatory quality undermines the potential for systemic improvements in public administration. This broader governance context directly impacts the success of the civil registry reform, as low institutional capacity and a fragmented regulatory environment make it challenging to achieve a fully integrated, efficient system. Overcoming these challenges might therefor require or more systemic approach and a broader partnership.</p>	
<p>Progress measured by indicators</p>	
<p>Indicators, baselines and targets</p>	<p>Progress</p>

<p>Outcome Indicator 1.1: No. of ZAGS offices with Front and Back offices model</p> <p>Baseline: 2</p> <p>Target (2025): 10</p>	<p>Status – Achieved:</p> <p>The Project progressed in expanding the Front and Back Offices (One-Stop-Shops-OSS model) across ZAGS throughout the country. The initial project target was to establish 10 ZAGS offices utilizing the OSS model, which efficiently separates citizen-facing services (front office) from backend processing (back office). The ET confirms that the project has successfully renovated and equipped nine offices, with plans to expand this number to 16 by the end of 2024. This expansion significantly exceeds the original target, showcasing the project's effectiveness in enhancing the operational and technical capacities of the CROs.</p> <p>These infrastructure improvements streamline service delivery, making it more efficient and user-friendly, and align with the broader objective of strengthening the overall management of the civil registry system.</p> <p>At the same time this is only a fraction of a total number of ZAGS offices around the country, while the Jamoats level registration was not envisaged within the project at all. The financial limitations in the project could not allow the comprehensive coverage, however the need for the long term strategy and a systemic reform with broader coalition is once again prove its importance for reaching a long term sustainable impact of the reform.</p>
<p>Outcome Indicator 1.2: No. & quality of reports produced with use of CR electronic data</p> <p>Indicator 1.3:</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target (2024): 7</p>	<p>Status: Achieved</p> <p>On the digital infrastructure front, the introduction and use of the CROIS2 system (that has started during the previous phase) has allowed to generate 7 different reports based on electronic civil registration data, fully meeting the project's target for report production. One key report tracks the number of births registered within specific time frames (up to 3 months after birth, between 3 months and 1 year), disaggregated by status (signed or not signed) and by location (country, region, CR office, and jamoat). Another report focuses on civil status records, providing data on the seven types of records, further categorized by the signatures of CR employees and heads of offices, and includes both signed and draft status records, again broken down by location.</p> <p>The system also generates a report on records using the previous form, Shakli peshtara, listing registrations that are signed by at least one CR staff member and categorized by geographical location. Additionally, a report on active CROIS users tracks users' roles within the system, their place of work, and the number of hours they have worked on CROIS. For broader insights, the system produces a Civil Registration report for regions, cities, and districts, comparing data across</p>

	<p>different time periods. Finally, a specific report on birth registration by date of birth provides information on the number of birth registrations, along with details like the date of birth and registration location, helping to ensure comprehensive tracking and analysis across the civil registry system.</p> <p>The national partners stated that the Project’s achievement in promoting and strengthening data-driven management, has laid the groundwork for a more transparent and efficient civil registry system (as challenges and areas for improvement could be easily traced)</p>
<p>Outcome Indicator 1.3: % of population satisfied with delivery of civil registration services, (disaggregated by gender) (SDG 16.6.2/16.9.1)</p> <p>Baseline: 48%</p> <p>Target (2024): 70%.</p>	<p>Status: Partially achieved/ on-going (requires time beyond the Project’s planned timeframe)</p> <p>Progress in service quality and citizen satisfaction is still an area where further improvement is needed. The Project employed a Net Promoter Score (NPS) to assess customer satisfaction with civil registration services⁴⁹. The results highlighted several areas for improvement. Service efficiency was a key concern, with many respondents dissatisfied with the time taken to receive documents. Additionally, there was a lack of communication regarding the status of applications, which further contributed to lower satisfaction scores. Accessibility and pricing were also significant issues, as many respondents had to travel long distances to make payments, and the cost of services was considered high⁵⁰.</p> <p>The project aimed to achieve a 70% satisfaction rate by 2024, but the current satisfaction level stands at 35%, as measured by a NPS survey conducted in 2022. While this figure highlights the challenges in meeting public expectations, it is important to note that a follow-up survey scheduled for the latter half of 2024 will provide a more comprehensive assessment of how the recent reforms have impacted user satisfaction. The stakeholders stated that the Project identified strategic areas for improvement, including enhancing communication through more efficient channels, streamlining service processes, and implementing modern OSS- with continued improvements in service infrastructure and management, there is potential for this satisfaction level to increase.</p>

⁴⁹ The assessment used a 5-point scale, where respondents rated their satisfaction, with those rating a 5 considered "Satisfied," 4 as "Neutrals," and 3 or below as "Critics." The NPS result was -19, indicating a higher proportion of dissatisfied or neutral customers.

⁵⁰ Report “On the Assessment of Satisfaction Level of the Population with the Civil Registration Services”, Prepared by the LLC “Tahlil va mashvarat” (Zerkalo – Analytics Group”) for UNDP project “Civil Registration System Reform in Tajikistan”, Dushanbe, 2022

Comments on Outcome 1:

This outcome reflects mid-term changes achieved through collaboration between the project and partners such as the MoJ and the Civil Registry Office. However, its current formulation blends mid-term achievements with impact-level goals, creating a composite outcome that mixes objectives at different levels.

Proposing a More Appropriate Outcome:

To better reflect **mid-term changes** (outcomes) rather than **impact objectives**, the ET recognised the need to reformulate it in a way that clarifies the progress toward reform- focusing on the foundational changes that are being put in place and that contribute to eventual system-wide improvements.

Some of the possible reformulation could be, for example, "The capacity of the civil registry system is strengthened to improve service delivery, supported by sound management practices and infrastructure modernization."

Rationale for the Revised Outcome:

"The capacity of the civil registry system is strengthened": This focuses on the mid-term change of building institutional capacity, which is a key objective of the project and reflects progress toward comprehensive reform without implying that the reform is complete.

"To improve service delivery": This specifies the aim of enhancing the way services are delivered without making a definitive claim that the services are already of high quality. It highlights the process of improvement, which aligns more with a mid-term outcome.

"Supported by sound management practices and infrastructure modernization": This underscores the importance of management reforms and infrastructure improvements without implying that these are fully realized. It allows for the gradual development of these critical components, which are essential for long-term impact.

Outcome 2: The population of Tajikistan know how to and timely have their vital events recorded in the civil registry system.

Cumulative progress

When measured by the proposed indicators, Outcome 2—ensuring that the population of Tajikistan knows how to and timely records their vital events in the civil registry system—has demonstrated notable progress. For Indicator 2.1, 94% of children under 5 years old now possess birth certificates, moving closer to the target of 95%. Similarly, for Indicator 2.2, 85% of births are registered on time, though this remains below the 95% target. These improvements reflect an overall positive trend in birth registration coverage and timeliness, as indicated by data from the CROIS2 and UAGS annual statistical reports.

However, significant challenges remain. The decline in timely birth registrations, down to 82% in some recent data, reveals ongoing difficulties in reaching the target. Key challenges include geographical barriers in remote areas and a lack of awareness in certain communities about the importance of timely registration. In addition, the systemic difficulties- that four civil registration functions have been delegated to jomoats and resource limitations in ZAGS affect the ability to process registrations efficiently. Furthermore, infrastructure gaps, including the incomplete digitalisation of services, further impede progress toward achieving full and timely coverage.

It is also important to note that the progress seen under Outcome 2 cannot be fully attributed to the project alone. Broader governmental initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and other external factors likely contributed to the overall improvements in birth registration and timeliness. At the same time there are possible attributions to the broader development initiatives implemented by sister agencies namely UNICEF and UNHCR, who targeted same groups of populations during the same

period of time. The project’s direct influence on these outcomes is limited, as success in timely and widespread civil registration depends on systemic changes, institutional commitment, and consistent resource allocation that go beyond the project’s immediate scope. These factors once again stipulate on the need for more systemic approach and strategy development that would consider different risk factors, with more close risk management, improved cooperation with the wider range of stakeholders and other elements needed for the long term sustainability of results. Working on supply and demand side in parallel as well dealing with the registration on remote areas as integral parts of the intervention would contribute to more systemic approach. At present the general understanding is that those components were implemented as a separate activities with limited links established.

Progress measured by indicators

Indicators, baselines and targets	Progress
<p>Indicator 2.1: % of children under 5 years old with birth certificates (disaggregated by gender)</p> <p>Baseline: 91% of children under 5 years of age have birth certificates</p> <p>Target: 95% of children have birth certificates (Disaggregated by gender)</p>	<p>For Indicator 2.1, which measures the percentage of children under 5 years old with birth certificates, the data from the Civil Registration Office Information System (CROIS2) indicates that 94% of children in this age group are now registered with birth certificates. This represents a substantial improvement compared to the baseline of 91%, moving closer to the project’s target of 95%. While this progress is encouraging, it is not yet fully verified, as the primary source of validation, the Demographics and Health Survey (DHS) 2023, has yet to publish its results (expected in the second quarter of 2024). The project is close to its target but may face challenges reaching the remaining unregistered children, especially in rural or remote areas where awareness and access to civil registration services may be limited as well as establishing a system for dealing with the complicated cases that require involvement of wider range of institutions. Experience and successes of other development partners namely UNICEF and UNHCR would therefore contribute to the overall success.</p>
<p>Indicator 2.2: % of timely birth registrations in ZAGS (disaggregated by gender)</p> <p>Baseline: 85%* births are registered on time. (M/F)</p> <p>Target: 95% births are registered on time. (Disaggregated by gender)</p>	<p>For Indicator 2.2, which tracks the percentage of timely birth registrations in ZAGS (disaggregated by gender), the UAGS annual statistical reports for 2023 show that 85% of births are registered on time, which is defined as within one year of birth. This falls short of the project’s target of 95% and reflects a slight decline from previous years, with timely registration dropping to 82% in the most recent data.</p> <p>This decline suggests persistent challenges in ensuring that all births are registered promptly, despite the overall improvements in coverage. Key obstacles include geographical access, particularly in remote areas, administrative barriers, and potentially a lack of awareness among certain population groups about the importance of timely birth registration. Additionally,</p>

	<p>staffing and resource limitations at ZAGS may hinder their ability to process registrations efficiently, contributing to delays. Reviewing the role of Jamoats in registration process would also help in streamlining the registration services and increasing effectiveness.</p>
<p>Comments on Outcome 2</p>	
<p>The Project's Outcome 2 ("The population of Tajikistan knows how to and timely records their vital events in the civil registry system") should be reconsidered and reformulated. As currently framed, this outcome extends beyond the Project's direct control and aligns more with an impact-level objective. While essential, the broad focus on ensuring timely civil registration for the entire population requires long-term systemic and behavioral changes, which depend on external factors such as public awareness, institutional commitment, and broader governance reforms.</p> <p>A more appropriate outcome formulation would focus on the Project's contribution to creating the enabling environment for civil registration within its scope of control. A suggested revision could be:</p> <p>Revised Outcome 2: Tajikistan's civil registration system is strengthened through improved service accessibility, operational efficiency, and increased public awareness of civil registration processes.</p> <p>This formulation focuses on the Project's immediate and tangible contributions, such as improving the quality of services, streamlining registration processes, and raising public awareness, without implying that the Project alone is responsible for the broader impact of timely registration across the entire population. The Project's outputs (e.g., training, system modernization, public awareness campaigns) would feed into this revised outcome, while the longer-term goal of increasing timely civil registrations would be recognized as part of a broader, impact-level objective.</p>	
<p>OUPUTS</p>	
<p>Output 1. Newly adopted civil registry legislation is implemented and interagency coordination is effectively ensured. Gender marker: GEN 2</p>	
<p>Cumulative progress and comments on Output 1</p>	
<p>Under Output 1, "Newly adopted civil registry legislation is implemented and interagency coordination is effectively ensured" the focus has been on establishing a robust legal and regulatory framework to modernise the civil registration system and improve inter-agency coordination.</p> <p>The project has made progress with drafting and refining the Civil Registration Law, currently under review. It introduces a unique identification number (UIN) at birth to ensure that all individuals are registered at birth, allowing them access to essential services. Beyond the main legal framework, the project has worked extensively on developing the necessary by-laws and secondary regulations to support the implementation of the new legislation. These include detailed procedures for civil status registrations, both within the country and in consular offices, as well as guidance for the upcoming Civil Registration Portal (CR Portal). The CR Portal will digitize key civil registry processes and facilitate data sharing across governmental institutions.</p> <p>However, delays have occurred due to institutional bottlenecks, slow finalisation of legal amendments, and harmonisation with existing legislation. Despite the UN's joint efforts to lobby and advocate for quicker approval, prolonged consultations and misalignment of priorities have impacted these core legal reforms. At the same time considering that any change in legislation usually a long process and requires multiple layers of consultations and approvals, it would have been appropriate</p>	

if this process would have been initiated at the earlier stages of the reform and perhaps even within the first phase of the project. In this case any further initiatives that the project has committed itself to would have an early legal foundation. Also the realistic timing and more appropriate sequence of activities including the proper risk management and consideration of the context should have been all incorporated while developing a strategy for the reform at the early stages of project formulation within the first phase. All that initiatives in turn would contribute to a smoother project implementation of both phases of the reform. Finally the coordination mechanism should have been constantly modified as part of the strategy by adapting to the new developments in the country, and emerging roles and initiatives in other ministries such as Ministry of Health, Agency for Innovations, etc. Currently the reform within the project is more managed in a form of set of activities rather than the Strategy with the systemic approach, which is among other factors flexible for adaptation and revision considering the changing context. All that does not imply that UNDP can be responsible for the wider reforms that are outside of the project scope. However it means that the project would be able to fit better in the whole process, identify the critical gaps where it can contribute, and adapt its contributions with the consideration of the bigger picture which can be also improved by adopting a strategy perhaps also with the consideration of the broader related UNDAF outcome.

The ET finds that significant challenges remain to achieve planned results. The Project will need to maintain negotiations with the MoJ and other stakeholders to ensure that the legal and regulatory framework is finalised and effectively operationalised, with a long-term vision for civil registration reform in Tajikistan

Comments on Output 1

The formulation of this Output seems more appropriate as an outcome rather than an output, as it focuses on aspects beyond the direct responsibility of the project. The adoption and implementation of laws as well as the ensuring of interagency coordination rely heavily on external factors, particularly the commitment and readiness of national stakeholders, such as the MoJ and other government bodies. These are systemic changes that cannot be fully controlled or delivered solely by the project.

The project's role is more focused on preparing draft laws, by-laws, and providing inputs for the development of civil registration legislation. For example, the project contributed significantly by drafting the revised Civil Registration Law and associated by-laws, as well as supporting the development of interagency data exchange systems. However, the adoption of these laws and the actual implementation of interagency coordination depend on the government's decision-making processes.

Therefore, a more appropriate formulation of this output would highlight the project's contribution to drafting and advocating for civil registration reforms, rather than framing it as fully responsible for the final adoption and implementation. This distinction is important, as it acknowledges the need for national ownership and emphasizes that progress towards this objective is contingent on the broader context

Progress under Output 1 indicators

<p>Output indicator 1.1: Status of implementation of the new CR Law, the Government decree #77 and the law on consular departments of MFA.</p> <p>Baseline: Relevant legislation still needs to be harmonized in line with the new CR law</p> <p>Target: All laws and by-laws are in compliance with the new CR law</p>	<p>Status: <i>Partially achieved/ on-going</i> (requires time beyond the Project’s planned timeframe)</p> <p>The key achievements so far relate to the drafting and refinement of the Civil Registration Law⁵¹, which is essential for the country's comprehensive reform of civil registry services. The draft law, currently under review by the relevant authorities, introduces several critical legal provisions to improve the management of civil registration. It includes a unique identification number (UIN) at birth, as an individual code assigned to each person to be a permanent digital identifier throughout their life. The UIN will ensure that every individual is registered in the civil registration system from birth, allowing them to access essential services such as healthcare, education, and social protection. It will help prevent identity fraud, facilitate seamless integration with other governmental databases, and improve public administration by enabling accurate population tracking and data-driven governance. This legal reform aligns with international standards and is a critical step toward modernising Tajikistan's civil registry system⁵².</p> <p>In addition to the main law, the Project has concentrated efforts on developing the necessary by-laws and secondary legislation to support the full implementation of the new legal framework. These by-laws are designed to regulate specific aspects of civil registration, including the procedures for registering civil status documents domestically and in consular offices. It also included instructions for the planned Civil Registration Portal (intended to facilitate the digitalisation of the registration process and enhance inter-agency data sharing).</p>
<p>Comment on indicator 1.1.</p> <p>The Output Indicator 1.1—"Status of implementation of the new CR Law, the Government Decree #77, and the law on consular departments of MFA"—is too ambitious given the project's scope, as the implementation of national legislation depends on external factors beyond the project’s control. A more relevant indicator would track the project’s contributions, such as whether comments and revisions to the CR Law were prepared (yes/no indicator), focusing on deliverables within the project's capacity.</p> <p>Regarding the Baseline and Target, they are too broad. Instead of aiming for "All laws and by-laws are in compliance," the target should reflect the project's role, such as the successful submission of draft laws and by-laws for government review. This would better align with the project’s influence over the reform process.</p>	

⁵¹ Annex 2 to the 1st Progress Report in 2024- The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on State Registration of Civil Status Documents, revised draft from 2024

⁵² For example- <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/795091518546134883-0090022018/original/IntegratingUniqueIdentification.pdf>).

<p>Output indicator 1.2: Status and number of agencies connected to the data exchange with CR electronic system</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target 5</p>	<p>Status: Partially achieved/ on-going (requires time beyond the Project’s planned timeframe)</p> <p>The Project has prepared the Civil Registration Portal (CR Portal) concept to enhance the efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of civil registration services in Tajikistan by digitising key processes and ensuring seamless data exchange with other governmental systems. The portal will serve as the central hub for automating the registration of vital events⁵³ and streamline processes. It will operate as part of a broader digital transformation strategy, integrating IT solutions from various public institutions such as the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), and the Tax Committee. This interoperability will allow real-time data exchange, ensuring the integrity of citizen records and improving decision-making at the governmental level. The concept envisaged its architecture based on a three-tier system comprising the presentation, application, and data layers. This modular, fault-tolerant structure will ensure high availability, scalability, and flexibility for future updates⁵⁴. The Project Team initiated the tender process (which was ongoing during this evaluation), but the actual design, operationalisation, and portal testing require time beyond the planned Project's timeframe.</p>
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Comment on indicator 1.2.

The **Output Indicator 1.2**—"Status and number of agencies connected to the data exchange with the CR electronic system"—also appears to be overly ambitious for an output-level indicator. The establishment of data exchange between the Civil Registration (CR) electronic system and other agencies involves several external factors and preconditions, such as interagency agreements, technical infrastructure, and government-level coordination. These dependencies extend beyond the project's direct control, making it more appropriate as an outcome indicator rather than an output-level one.

The Baseline of 0 is appropriate for the starting point, but the Target of 5 agencies connected by the end of the project may be unrealistic without addressing those external dependencies first. A more suitable output-level indicator could focus on the preparation work, such as whether data-sharing protocols or agreements have been drafted and approved by relevant stakeholders, or if technical infrastructure (e.g., the Civil Registration Portal) has been set up to facilitate data exchange in the future. This would more accurately reflect the project's role and contributions toward the broader goal of establishing interagency data connectivity.

Output 2: New quality business processes are developed and effectively applied in the civil registry

Cumulative progress under Output 2 and comments:

⁵³ Such as births, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, paternity acknowledgement, and name changes

⁵⁴ The portal's ultimate goal is to improve the quality of civil registration services, reduce corruption risks, and increase public trust by providing a transparent, secure, and efficient platform for managing civil registration records. Additionally, the system will support digital signatures, QR code generation for document verification, and robust data protection measures to comply with national security regulations

Progress under Output 2: New quality business processes are developed and effectively applied in the civil registry has seen both advancements and ongoing challenges. The Project has made efforts to enhance the efficiency and quality of civil registry services by introducing standardised processes. A key initiative has been implementing the OSS service delivery model through the Front and Back Office in several ZAGS, where front-office and back-office functions are separated to streamline citizen interactions and the processing of civil status records. This model has been successfully implemented in all pilot offices. Still, the majority of offices have encountered challenges in fully adopting the OSS model due to limitations such as infrastructure issues, frequent power outages, poor internet connection and frequent errors in printing certificates, all of which affect the consistent application of the model. Additionally, the queue management system, which was introduced to reduce wait times and improve service delivery, has not been fully functional in the large majority of offices- it was working in only one out of six offices that the ET visited offices. This issue is further affecting the efficiency of the new processes. The ET finds the need to enhance the use of Analytics Dashboard for daily monitoring of QMS and activities of staff to improve the situation.

The Project has also supported the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for these business processes. However, there remains a need to formalise and institutionalise these procedures to ensure their sustainability beyond the Project's lifetime. The ET finds that the Project should consider the GoT plans to reform delivering Public Services and, continue working to standardise “a new business process” (introduced through the OSS) with focus on developing citizen-centred civil registration public services by optimising and streamlining public service delivery processes. While these improvements have been an important focus, the full adoption and long-term success of these reforms will depend on continued commitment and support from the Ministry of Justice, as well as further improvements to infrastructure. In addition the SOPs is operationalized only in a few civil registry offices, as a sample of more effective systems, not in all civil registry offices around the country as it might be perceived from the formulation of the output, thus a more concrete formulation of the output would actually determine the project role more accurately.

Indicator 2.1: Status of internal rules, regulations and SOPs adopted and implemented (guiding day-to-day working procedures and practices of the civil registry offices in line with the relevant national legislation).

Baseline: Internal rules and regulation are to be developed

Target: All internal rules and SoP are adopted and applied regularly by MoJ and CR department

Status: *Partially achieved/ on-going* (requires time beyond the Project’s planned timeframe)

At the time of the evaluation, the ET finds that the Project has prepared a draft standard operating procedures (SOPs), internal rules, and regulations to guide the daily operations of Civil Registration Offices (CROs). These SOPs are designed to align the working procedures of CROs with national legislation and ensure standardized service delivery across offices

The partial implementation had begun in selected offices, where they have helped improve the organization and efficiency of registration processes.

However, the adoption and consistent application of these rules and SOPs across all offices are still in progress. Full implementation is dependent on the Ministry of Justice's commitment to institutionalizing these changes, as the project can only provide the framework and guidelines.

Comments on indicator 2.1.

this indicator as currently formulated is not adequate to measure the progress of an output, as it focuses on both the adoption and implementation of rules and SOPs. While the development of internal rules and SOPs is within the project’s control, the effective implementation across the country’s civil registry offices depends on external factors, such as political will, institutional capacity,

<p>ongoing support from the MoJ and much bigger investment considering the number of civil registry offices around the country and the role of Jamoats in civil registration. A more appropriate indicator would measure the development and submission of these procedures, with a focus on the project's role in creating the framework, rather than expecting full-scale adoption and implementation, which goes beyond the project's direct responsibility.</p> <p>The Baseline and Target could also be adjusted to reflect this. A more realistic Target would be something like: "All internal rules and SOPs are developed and submitted to the MoJ and CR Department for approval and potential implementation," allowing for a more accurate reflection of what the project can achieve within its scope.</p>	
<p>Indicator 2.2: Number of visits required for the registration of civil acts (disaggregated by gender)</p> <p>Baseline: Up to 5 visits</p> <p>Target: 2 visits</p>	<p>Status: <i>Partially achieved/ on-going</i> (requires time beyond the Project's planned timeframe)</p> <p>The number of visits to civil registration offices decreased from an average of 5 visits at baseline to fewer than 3 visits by 2022, as identified in the 2022 satisfaction level study.</p> <p>With the upcoming design and implementation of the new CR portal and the ability to register births in hospitals, the Project will directly contribute to further minimize visits to civil registration offices, limiting them to those who require paper format certificates.</p>
<p>Comments on indicator 2.2.</p> <p>Indicator 2.2: "Number of visits required for the registration of civil acts (disaggregated by gender)", which measures the reduction of visits from 5 to 2, is a valid indicator for tracking the project's impact on streamlining civil registration processes. However, the Evaluation Team (ET) finds that this indicator is more appropriate for an outcome-level objective, as it reflects broader systemic improvements in the efficiency of civil registration services.</p> <p>Reducing the number of visits involves various factors, such as the implementation of new procedures, digitalization efforts, and changes in institutional behavior, which extend beyond the project's immediate control. Thus, while it is a critical measure of success, it better aligns with the overall objectives of improving public service delivery, rather than measuring direct project outputs.</p> <p>For an output-level indicator, a more focused measure would track the project's contributions, such as the development or introduction of mechanisms (e.g., digital tools, one-stop shops) aimed at reducing the number of visits.</p>	
<p>Output 3: Electronic civil registry system and digitalized archives are handed over and effectively managed by MoJ. Gender marker: GEN 2</p>	
<p>The Project has progressed under Output 3: Electronic civil registry system and digitalised archives are handed over and effectively managed by the MoJ, with some evident challenges remaining. The Project has contributed to modernising the civil registry system, notably with 85% of civil registry records entered into the electronic system (CROIS2) on time (by the end of 2023), an improvement from the baseline of 60%. The ongoing target is to reach 100% timely data entry, although this is particularly challenging in jamoats (local administrative units), where delays in data reporting persist. Key informants from ZAGS offices indicated that the delays are primarily due to jamoat staff having to perform manual registrations, after which ZAGS employees are responsible for entering the data electronically into the system. Additionally, registration certificates from jamoats are submitted at the end of each month across the entire country, leading to a surge in data entries during the last week. This overload causes CROIS2 to slow down significantly, compounded by the already slow</p>	

internet speeds in some regions. These factors are creating bottlenecks and affecting the efficiency of the registration process.

The Project has achieved some progress with the digitalisation of nearly 200,000 civil registry records. The initial target of 278,000 has been increased to 1,35 million (a total of 2.5 mil jointly with the EU-funded initiative on improving services). The ET has already elaborated on changing priorities and delays in decision on digitalisation. Still, the Project has initiated procurement of services for the digitalisation of Civil Registration Archives in Tajikistan, covering seven vital event categories: births, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, paternity recognition, and name changes. The digitalisation will occur across 74 civil registration offices and regional archives, with the records to be uploaded into the Archive Management System (AMS) to modernise and streamline access to historical data.

The scope of work includes methodology development, inventory management, and scanning paper-based CR records. In addition, the selected company will deliver training and capacity building for 300 civil registry staff to ensure they are proficient in the digitalisation process, including data entry, scanning, and quality control. It also includes post-project support to ensure the long-term sustainability of the digitalisation process. Close collaboration with the MoJ and a focus on overcoming these logistical challenges and technical issues (ensuring data privacy and confidentiality and managing the diversity of record formats) will be essential for the success of this process.

Additionally, the Project has worked to strengthen the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) IT capacity by providing technical support through SUE 'Qonuniyat'. In addition to developing technical capacities, the Project has prepared the Exit Strategy for the IT component and sustainability of SUE 'Qonuniyat' to ensure "continued support and development of IT products related to the civil registration system". One of the key elements of the exit strategy is to secure the necessary human and financial resources to maintain and enhance the existing systems, including the CROIS2 system and the development of the new CR IT Portal/Population Registry. The strategy highlights the importance of having skilled IT personnel and funding mechanisms in place to support operational needs, such as salaries for IT staff, hardware replacements, and software updates. This ensures the uninterrupted functioning of IT services, critical for sustaining the improvements made in civil registration.

Moreover, the strategy emphasizes the need for the MoJ to take ownership of these IT components, including managing network connections, data centers, and the overall IT infrastructure. It outlines specific resource requirements for maintaining the IT systems, including the gradual replacement of outdated hardware and securing licenses and training for staff. The SUE 'Qonuniyat' is expected to play a central role in managing these operations, ensuring that IT support is continuously available for civil registration offices. The strategy includes cost estimates for future equipment needs and data center services, laying out a clear financial roadmap to ensure the long-term sustainability of the IT component.

However, despite the Project's efforts, Qonuniyat lost a significant portion of its technical staff due to a lack of funding. However, the ET has been informed that starting in 2025, the national budget/MoJ will allocate approximately 500,000 USD to fund Qonuniyat's core functions completely. This decision represents a positive step toward ensuring the sustainability of the IT support structure.

The ET finds additional challenges. The CROIS2 system, while functional, has limitations due to its monolithic architecture, making updates and improvements difficult. Plans are underway to shift toward a more modern microservice architecture, which will allow for better modularity and more accessible updates, ensuring the system's sustainability and scalability. To achieve the Project's long-term goals, addressing these infrastructure issues and improving data entry processes at the local level will be essential.

Comments

The formulation of Output 3 Electronic civil registry system and digitalised archives are handed over and effectively managed by the MoJ also extends beyond the Project's direct control. While it plays a crucial role in establishing and developing the new electronic civil registry system and supporting

the digitalisation of archives, the effective management and sustainability of these systems largely depend on the MoJ and other government bodies. The long-term success of this output is influenced by external factors such as the technical capacity of the MoJ, the availability of resources, and the government's readiness to adopt and maintain these systems fully.

The Project's primary contributions are developing and implementing the technical infrastructure, supporting MoJ IT structures, and offering capacity-building assistance for digitalising records. While these efforts are critical, the Project cannot directly ensure that the MoJ will sustain these systems in the long run. The dependency on national funding and commitment, as seen with the challenges faced by SUE' Qonuniyat', further emphasises the importance of continued institutional backing and financial resources from the government.

Therefore, a more appropriate formulation of this output would focus on the Project's contribution to establishing the technical systems and building capacity for their use rather than framing the Project as responsible for ensuring the ongoing and effective management of electronic systems and archives. This adjustment acknowledges the need for national ownership and institutional commitment to guarantee that the progress made through the Project is sustainable in the long term.

<p>Indicator 3.1: % of the civil registry records timely entered into the electronic system (with further break down by type of registrations and office geographic location)</p> <p>Baseline: 60% of all offices register data on time</p> <p>Target: 100% of records are timely entered into the system</p>	<p>Status: <i>Partially achieved/ on-going</i> (requires time beyond the Project's planned timeframe)</p> <p>Indicator 3.1 tracks the efficiency of civil registration offices (ZAGS) in entering data into the CROIS2 electronic system. The baseline for this indicator was 60% of all offices registering data on time, with a target of 100%. The analysis indicated that by 2023, 85% of civil registry records were being entered into the system on time, marking significant progress from the baseline.</p> <p>The informants stated that these improvements are primarily due to the Project's efforts in streamlining registration processes, including the development of standardized operating procedures (SOPs) and training programs to enhance the capacity of ZAGS staff in managing electronic records efficiently (as elaborated in the previous paragraphs). However, the target has yet to be achieved, with delays persisting. As already elaborated, various challenges contributed to these delays. The stakeholders must address infrastructure and technical challenges, particularly in remote areas. Upgrading internet connectivity (as the Project is working with the optic fibres) and further automating the registration process could help reduce manual entry bottlenecks. Enhanced monitoring and support for underperforming offices, especially during peak periods, will also be critical to ensuring all records are processed within the required timeframes.</p>
<p>Indicator 3.2: Number of paper-based archive records digitalized into an electronic format</p> <p>Baseline: 188,201 records transferred to electronic archive</p>	<p>Status: <i>Partially achieved/ on-going</i> (requires time beyond the Project's planned timeframe)</p> <p>The digitalization process is a crucial part of the Project's efforts to modernize the civil registry system, ensuring that vital records are securely archived and more easily accessible in electronic format. However, progress has been slowed by several factors, including</p>

<p>Target: In total 278.000.00 civil registry acts are digitalized</p>	<p>decision making process that have impacted the pace of digitalization. Infrastructure limitations, staff capacity and training gaps, and the complexity and age of some paper records have further complicated the process, with damaged or unclear entries requiring more time to digitize than initially anticipated.</p> <p>Despite these challenges, the original target has been reconsidered, and a new target of 1.35 million records has been established. The Project is currently in the process of procuring services to meet this goal. However, there remain ongoing negotiations with MoJ officials concerning the role of the project in digitalization of archives. This ongoing debate continues to affect the overall momentum of the digitalization efforts.</p>
<p>Indicator 3.3: Number of queries dealt by the MoJ IT Unit (*precise technical parameters will be developed during initial project imp. period- e.g. length of time to resolve queries, successful resolution, customer service etc.)</p> <p>Baseline: No. of queries dealt with effectively by IT Unit = 0</p> <p>Target: 100% / MoJ IT Unit is fully staffed and functioning to fulfil its mandate</p>	<p>Status: <i>Partially achieved/ on-going</i> (requires time beyond the Project’s planned timeframe)</p> <p>Progress under Indicator 3.3 has shown mixed results. While the MoJ/ Qonuniyat’ has been capacitated to handle queries from civil registration offices, contributing to the smooth functioning of the CROIS2 system, there have been challenges in ensuring long-term sustainability. The Unit faced staff turnover due to budget constraints, though recent funding from the national budget will help restore full capacity.</p> <p>However, precise technical parameters—such as query resolution time and customer service quality—have yet to be developed, making it difficult to comprehensively assess the unit’s effectiveness. Continued efforts to define these metrics and ensure sustained staffing and operational capacity will be essential to fully meet the target of a fully staffed and functional IT Unit.</p> <p>In addition, some of the technical problems that the Civil Registry offices faced with while using the new software remain unsolved as informed by the staff of the Civil Registry.</p>
<p>Output 4: Population is aware of timely registration benefits through MoJ communication strategy and supported by selected CSO to bolster civil registration, and the public contributes to improving the quality of the system through enhanced feedback mechanisms. Gender marker: GEN 2</p>	
<p>Under Output 4: Population is aware of timely registration benefits through the MoJ communication strategy and supported by selected CSOs, progress has been mixed, but the perspective is associated with high risk. The Project aimed to increase public awareness of timely registration of vital events through communication campaigns and engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs). This component also sought to establish feedback mechanisms to gather citizen input to improve civil registration services' quality.</p> <p>The Project implemented some public awareness activities and outreach campaigns in 2023- covering various regions (through CSO “Jahon”- more details under the status of indicator 3.1.).</p>	

These efforts were part of the broader Communication Strategy designed to raise public awareness and improve understanding of the importance of timely registration of vital events. It emphasizes the benefits of civil registration for securing legal identity, accessing public services, and protecting citizens' rights and outlined a range of activities targeting various segments of the population, with a focus on reducing delays in registration and encouraging accurate and timely reporting.

A key component of the strategy was a multi-channel media campaign utilizing both traditional and digital platforms. To maximize reach, it planned the creation and dissemination of videos, infographics, articles, and interviews through television, radio, and social media. Additionally, targeted SMS campaigns were planned to deliver crucial messages directly to citizens, informing them of the importance of registering births, marriages, and deaths. The Strategy planned workshops and trainings for ZAGS staff, CSOs, and other stakeholders, such as healthcare workers, to equip them with the knowledge and tools needed to support the public in navigating the civil registration process. It planned to involve religious and community leaders to enhance outreach in rural and remote areas. Lastly, the Strategy aimed to establish feedback mechanisms, including surveys and hotlines, to gather public input on the quality of civil registration services and identify areas for improvement.

However, the project did not reach a final agreement with the MoJ for the prioritization of the communication related activities as the MoJ's primary focus remained on the technical and infrastructural aspects of the civil registration system. There is currently limited progress in raising public awareness and engaging citizens in feedback mechanisms. The lack of consensus with the MoJ has been a key challenge, as they expressed doubts about the value of investing resources into communication and public outreach, seeing it as secondary to system improvements.

Evidence from project reports indicates that this lack of consensus has affected the effects of the public awareness campaigns. For example, while CSOs conducted outreach in targeted areas but the overall reach was limited, resulting in lower public participation than expected. Similarly, efforts to implement feedback systems to improve service quality were not fully realized due to the lack of agreement on required support.

<p>Indicator 3.1. Number of people reached through communication, outreach activities – 0 for the second Phase</p> <p>Communication strategy 2019 - 2020 developed and adopted by MoJ</p> <p>Communication strategy 2019 - 2020 is fully implemented;</p> <p>Communications Strategy 2025 – 2026 is developed & adopted Communications Strategy 2023 – 2024 is developed</p>	<p>The public awareness campaign conducted by NGO Jahon on civil registration in Tajikistan achieved notable milestones, with a multi-platform strategy to inform the population about the importance of timely registration of vital events. The campaign included a targeted SMS campaign, reaching over 1.45 million people across several regions, including Dushanbe and rural areas, with information on birth registration. The messages emphasized the importance of registering births within the first three months, directly contributing to increasing public awareness and engagement on civil registration practices. Additionally, the campaign included ten articles published online, which collectively reached 273,751 viewers through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Telegram, further expanding the campaign's reach.</p> <p>Moreover, the campaign involved the development of four video products and five infographics focused on educating the public on civil registration processes. For example, one video on the benefits of official marriage registration reached over 157,153 viewers across social media platforms. These digital tools were complemented by six radio programs broadcasted</p>
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	<p>nationally, each focusing on different aspects of civil registration, such as birth, marriage, and paternity recognition, with each program aired five times for maximum outreach. Despite these achievements, the report notes a place for further improvements of campaign, that could be achieved by further MoJ's support of certain initiatives, such as the proposed pregnancy calendar, which replaced by other materials during the course of the project implementation. Continuation of negotiations and reaching agreements on some elements of the mass media campaign is essential for obtaining institutional backing of project initiatives that might seem questionable.</p>
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Annex 6 Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

International Consultant for Final Evaluation of the Civil Registry System Reform Project – Ph II

Project/Programme Title: Civil Registry System Reform (CRSR) Project Ph II (PID: 00092984)

Description of assignment: International Consultant for conducting Final Evaluation of the “CRSR Ph-II” project

Period of assignment/services: 30 working days within 19 August – 30 October 2024, including at least 10 days of in-country mission in Tajikistan.

Type: International Consultancy

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In 2016, UNDP Tajikistan initiated the Civil Registry System Reform Project (2016-2019) with financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and in close partnership with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The second phase of the project initiated in 2020 and was further extended in 2023 through additional funding until December 2024.

Building on the results and lessons learned from the first phase⁵⁵, the second phase focuses on improving the accessibility, affordability and quality of civil registry services to population nationwide.

The primary goal of the project's second phase is to support the government, particularly the Ministry of Justice, in carrying out the initiated Civil Registry System reforms. This initiative entails collaborating with a wide range of stakeholders at all levels to improve the responsiveness and performance of civil registry offices across the country. The initiative adopts a human rights-based approach, aiming to improve civil registration services for all residents. It seeks to ensure that every citizen in the country can exercise their fundamental right to identify and related entitlements, allowing for smooth access to critical public services.

This initiative is consistent with the National Priority (NDP 2030), National ZAGS Reform Programme 2014-2019, Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2021-2024, Swiss Cooperation Strategy Central Asia 2017-2022, Swiss Cooperation Programme for Central Asia 2022-25, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2026 (formerly known as UNDAF, 2016-2020) and the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2023-2026, both of which aim to protect human rights, improve access to justice, and provide quality services in Tajikistan. Furthermore, the initiative is consistent with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which emphasizes the growth of peaceful and inclusive communities, universal access to justice, and the creation of effective, responsible, and inclusive institutions at all levels. The Civil Registry Reform (CRR) Project specifically targets SDG Target 16.9, which aims to provide legal identification for all persons, contributing to the larger global goal of establishing full legal identity, including birth registration, by 2030.

The overall **goal** of the second phase of the project remains the same as the first phase to ensure that:

“Women’s, men’s and children’s human rights (civil, social, political and economic) are better protected by strengthened provision of civil registration services and by increased public access to the system”.

The project is people-centered and adopts a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to programming, with a principle of ‘leaving no one behind’ as well as identifying vulnerable groups for successful /

⁵⁵ Evaluation Report, Ph I – 2019.

effective intervention during implementation. By combining the supply side dynamics through institutional reform of the civil registry system, with the demand side for civil registry reform, the project works on both upstream and down-stream activities. Through building up awareness and demand for improved civil registry services, the Project becomes more effective and addresses the real needs of the end users, i.e., the population of Tajikistan. During the first phase of the project, the focus was more on the supply side and strengthening the legislative framework and capacities of duty bearers. In the second phase, a more equal focus is applied, through increased activities on the demand side and raising the knowledge and awareness levels of rights holders. Particularly gender approach is used for identifying issues women and girls face, while addressing gender inequalities. For this purpose, the ‘Ethnographic and behavioral research’ was conducted in 2020 as well, apart from the Baseline and other studies conducted. Project indicators also take into consideration gender disaggregation to ensure engaging women participation and their empowerment.

The Project has two outcomes that together will produce one goal:

Outcome 1 intervenes at the national, regional and local level on the supply side “*The reformed civil registry system of Tajikistan is effectively managed and provides quality and affordable services to the population and qualitative vital statistical data for the State*” whereas **Outcome 2** intervenes at the national, regional and local level on the demand side “*The population of Tajikistan know how to and timely have their vital events recorded in the civil registry system*”.

The project has four outputs that contribute to the achievement of the Project’s objectives and its ultimate goal.

Output 1. Newly adopted civil registry legislation is implemented and interagency coordination is effectively ensured.

Output 2. New quality business processes are developed and effectively applied in the civil registry.

Output 3. Electronic civil registry system and digitalized archives are handed over and effectively managed by MoJ.

Output 4. Population is aware of timely registration benefits through MoJ communication strategy and supported by selected CSO to bolster civil registration, and the public contributes to improving the quality of the system through enhanced feedback mechanisms.

The Project’s theory of change states that: “*If the reformed civil registry system is effectively managed and provides quality, affordable and accessible services to the population and vital statistics for the state, and contributes to the development of enhanced partnerships and coordination among relevant agencies on providing services; and if the population of Tajikistan know how to and timely have their vital events recorded in the civil registry system and provide feedback to improve the quality of services; then women’s, men’s and children’s human rights are better protected by strengthened provision of civil registration services and by increased public access to the system.*”

In terms of partnerships, the project is directly implemented by UNDP in close cooperation with the Ministry of Justice. The initiative works with a variety of stakeholders at all levels (stakeholder analysis and list of stakeholders is Annex VII of the Project Document Phase II provided, though important to mention key stakeholders are MoJ, CR Department under MOJ, SUE Qonuniyat, Institute of Advanced Training) to improve the responsiveness and functioning of civil registry institutions and systems. This includes attempts to build capacity among key institutions and stakeholders, as well as simplifying and standardizing procedures. Furthermore, the initiative applies enhanced capacity building methods and forms strategic alliances with organizations such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of

Health and Social Protection, and the Ministry of Interior with further information data system integration and the system's interoperability.

Furthermore, insights gained during the first and second phases of the Civil Registry Reform Project funded by SDC helped shape the design of the EU-funded project named "Improved Access to Public Services (IAPS) through Civil Registry Reform." UNDP signed an agreement with the EU for this project in October 2022. The IAPS project supplements the second phase of the SDC initiative by improving access to critical public services for rights holders and is being implemented now in parallel, through digitalized and integrated public services which will last until 2026.

Basic project information also included in table format below⁵⁶:

PROJECT BRIEF INFORMATION		
Project title	'Civil Registry System Reform Project in Tajikistan – Phase II'	
Atlas ID (Quantum ID)	00085270 (00092984)	
Corporate outcome and output	<p>CPD (2016-2022):</p> <p>Outcome 1. People in Tajikistan have their rights protected and benefit from improved access to justice and quality services delivered by accountable, transparent, and gender responsive legislative, executive and judicial institutions at all levels.</p> <p>Output 1.2. Justice sector institutions enabled to uphold rule of law in compliance with international commitments; promote and protect Human Rights and improve access to justice and civil registration of vulnerable population groups, especially women, youth and persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Indicative Output(s) with gender marker: GEN 2</p> <p>CPD (2023-2026):</p> <p>Outcome 2: No one left behind, centering on equitable access to opportunities and a rights-based approach to human agency and human development.</p> <p>Output 3.1. Output 3.1.: Institutions at national and local levels have improved capacities and use innovative solutions to provide accessible, quality public services to the people and economic actors.</p>	
Country	Tajikistan	
Region	Nationwide	
Date project document signed	20 December 2019	
Project dates	1 January 2020	31 December 2023
	Extended until 31 December 2024	

⁵⁶ More details can be found from the Prodoc Phase II from the UNDP website through this link: [Projects | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](https://undp.org/projects)

Project budget	5,740,000 (UNDP TRAC 1,000,000)
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	TBC
Funding source	SDC
Implementing party⁵⁷	UNDP Tajikistan

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE, SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The evaluation will assess the impact of the Project “Civil Registry System Reform Project - Phase II” against stated goals, outcome and outputs for the intervention period of 5 years since project beginning in 2020, as well as document lessons learned and provide recommendations for future programming purposes. It will also highlight issues and challenges having affected effective and efficient implementation of outputs and their contribution to project outcomes and impact.

Specific Objectives:

Evaluate the Civil Registry Reform Project's interventions on improving the accessibility, cost savings, improved quality of civil registration services in Tajikistan, and increased population awareness with an emphasis on two key outcomes:

- a) **Outcome 1:** The reformed civil registry system of Tajikistan is effectively managed and provides quality and affordable services to the population and qualitative vital statistical data for the State.
- b) **Outcome 2:** The population of Tajikistan know how to and timely have their vital events recorded in the civil registry system.

In addition:

- Assess Project progress towards the achievement of the objectives, expected outputs and outcomes as specified in the Project Document following a number of parameters set under evaluation questions in the sections below; compare planned outputs of the Project to actual outputs; evaluate the relevance of the objectives; assess signs of Project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to calibrate Project activities towards meeting emerging needs of government partners by the end of the Project; review the Project strategy and potential risks to its sustainability;
- Review progress indicators and targets set in a logical framework in terms of their relevance and feasibility in accounting for the country context and provide feedback on achieving the targets;
- Draw the lessons learned that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from the Project and tailor UNDP's response to the needs and priorities of Project beneficiaries;
- Provide clear recommendations to improve the Project implementation over the remaining part of its lifetime.

Scope of Work:

The final evaluation will assess the Civil Registry Reform Project's overall effectiveness and efficiency of the project implementation approaches including technical and operational sides, results produced and their impact, alignment of the intervention purpose with national priorities and meeting the expectations of the stakeholders, with a focus on the following major evaluation areas:

⁵⁷ This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

- a) **Relevance:** Assess the alignment of project activities and outcomes with the broader aim of improving civil registration services and increasing access to rights for all Tajik citizens vis-a-vis national priorities, SDC strategic documents and UNDP strategic documents.
- b) **Effectiveness:** Assess the extent to which project interventions have achieved the desired results, such as better civil registry system management, greater public access to services, and increased awareness and registration of critical events.
- c) **Coherence:** Assess the coherence and integration of project components, such as legislative changes, capacity-building efforts, communication strategies, and technical improvements, in accomplishing project goals.
- d) **Efficiency:** Assess the efficiency of resource use, implementation deadlines, and project coordination methods, highlighting areas of effectiveness and possibilities for improvement, including documenting lessons learned.
- e) **Impact:** Assess the project's overall impact on the target population, government stakeholders, civil society, and other relevant actors, including any improvements in civil registration service delivery, data quality, and public participation in the civil registration system.
- f) **Sustainability:** Assess the long-term viability of project outputs and initiatives, including institutional capacity development, relationships formed, and procedures in place to strengthen civil registration services after the project ends, considering the ongoing digitalization and integration efforts in coming years by EU funded project. Assess risks and opportunities with regard to resource mobilization, harmonization of the intervention areas related to future programming.
- g) **Gender Equality:** Review the project's approaches, in general and with regards to mainstreaming of gender equality and social inclusion.
- h) **Lessons and Recommendations:** Document lessons gained, best practices, problems faced, and specific recommendations for future actions and improvements in Tajikistan's civil registry reform activities, offering actionable insights for UNDP and other stakeholders working on comparable programs.

In addition, the evaluation may have a look at the external factors that are outside of the project control and impacted it either positively or negatively; have a look at the management and quality assurance mechanism employed during intervention; coordination mechanism employed as well.

3. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY GUIDING QUESTIONS

The Final Evaluation will be based on the OECD-DAC's⁵⁸ main evaluation requirements, which include *relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability*. Cross-cutting criteria will include a *human rights-based approach, addressing gender issues, and promoting social inclusion*.

When suggesting a methodology for conducting the evaluation, the evaluators must utilize an evaluation matrix to translate the theory of change and its established framework of direct and indirect results into a comprehensive set of measurable categories for evaluative analysis. This matrix should be designed in a way that effectively encompasses the dimensions of gender equality and human rights.

The consultant should refine the leading questions given below and reach an agreement with UNDP in advance.

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
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⁵⁸ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee

<p><i>Relevance: the extent to which the project strategy, proposed activities and expected outputs and outcome are justified and remain relevant to the Government of Tajikistan in its efforts to advance public access to civil registration services. More specifically, the relevance of the project should be assessed through the following guiding questions:</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, the SDC International Cooperation Strategy, Swiss Cooperation Strategy Central Asia 2017-2022, Swiss Cooperation Programme for Central Asia 2022-2025 and the SDGs? II. To what extent has the Project contributed so far towards the achievement of national objectives and the Outcome of UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2016-2022 and CPD 2023-2026. III. Analyze whether the project’s overall human rights-based approach addresses the needs and demands of the beneficiaries in gender disaggregated manner (i.e., for men and women, girls and boys; LNOB or non-LNOB). IV. Assess the partnership approach and its appropriateness and effectiveness. V. To what extent is the initiative in line with the UNDP mandate, national priorities and the requirements of targeting women, men and vulnerable groups? VI. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, institutional changes in the country? VII. Did the Project design incorporate the lessons learned from the project’s midterm review (MTR)?
<p><i>Coherence: the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in the country, sector or institution. More specifically, the effectiveness of the project should be assessed through the following guiding questions:</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. To what extent has the project complemented work among different entities, including state partners (i.e., ministries and departments), development partners and civil society, with similar interventions? ii. To what extent do other or similar interventions or policies support or undermine the project? iii. To what extent were the project design and delivery coherent with international obligations? iv.
<p><i>Effectiveness: the extent to which the project’s expected outputs and outcomes are being achieved or are expected to be achieved. Factors contributing to or detracting from the achievement of the project desired results and objectives should also be included in the assessment. More specifically, the effectiveness of the project should be assessed through the following guiding questions:</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Assess the overall performance of the Project with reference to its respective Project document / cost-sharing agreement, strategy, objectives (or lack of thereof) and indicators, and identify key issues and constraints that affected the achievement of Project objectives including per individual Project components. Were the planned objectives and outcomes achieved according to the results framework? II. Are the set targets feasible in the current country context? To what extent have the results at the outcome and output levels generated results for gender equality and promoting sustainable practices? What are the results achieved beyond the logical framework? III. Was the cooperation with Project beneficiaries and key Project partners, including but not limited to the Ministry of Justice successfully achieved and contributed to the achievement of the Project’s goals? How the role of the state partners in the project could be enhanced?

	<p>IV. To what extent were the project outputs achieved, considering men, women, and vulnerable groups?</p> <p>V. Analyze the underlying factors that affect Project effectiveness (including analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats).</p> <p>VI. Assess the monitoring and evaluation framework of the project and its effectiveness in achieving project results.</p> <p>VII. Assess the extent to which COVID-19 pandemic has affected project implementation and delivery.</p>
<p><i>Efficiency: the extent to which the project resources (funds, expertise/human resources, time, etc.) are optimally used and converted into intended outputs. More specifically, the efficiency of the project should be assessed through the following guiding questions:</i></p>	<p>i. To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?</p> <p>ii. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?</p> <p>iii. Assess the extent to which project funds and activities have been delivered in a timely manner.</p> <p>iv. Assess visibility and communications strategy of the project and extent to which it has been cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements.</p> <p>v. Analyze the role of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and whether this forum is optimally used for decision making purposes.</p> <p>vi. Assess the timeline and quality of the reporting followed by the Project.</p> <p>vii. Assess the qualitative and quantitative aspects of management and other inputs (such as equipment, monitoring and review and other technical assistance and budgetary inputs) provided by the project vis-à-vis achievement of outputs and targets.</p> <p>viii. Identify factors and constraints, which have affected Project implementation including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic policy issues in addition to other external factors unforeseen during the Project design.</p>
<p><i>Sustainability: analyzing whether benefits of the project are likely to continue after the project cycle</i></p>	<p>i. Has the Project contributed or is likely to contribute to long-term social and economic improvements, considering the current evolving country context?</p> <p>ii. Assess likelihood of continuation and sustainability of the project outcome and benefits after completing the project.</p> <p>iii. Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?</p> <p>iv. Assess the effectiveness of the exit strategies and approaches to phase out of the Project including contributing factors and constraints.</p> <p>v. Identify the key factors that require attention to improve prospects of sustainability of the project outcomes.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi. Assess the extent to which capacities are strengthened and sustained at the individual and institutional level (including contributing factors and constraints). Provide recommendations for strengthening sustainability. vii. Identify significant lessons or conclusions which can be drawn from the Project in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability. viii. To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project? ix. What could be potential priority areas of engagement and corresponding recommendations for further donor's and UNDP's interventions in terms of digital transformation and public service delivery? Findings, conclusions and recommendations should reflect gender equality, women empowerment and social inclusion.
<p><i>Impact: the extent to which the project 's is expected to contribute to longer term outcomes/results. The impact or effect of the intervention in proportion to the overall situation of the target institutions or direct beneficiaries</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Does the overall project intervention contribute to long-term outcomes/results? ii. What is the impact or effect of the intervention in proportion to the overall situation of the target institutions and direct beneficiaries?
<p><u>Human rights:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. How HRBA and LNOB were taken into account in the setting-up, implementation and MEL of the project? ii. To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP on Civil Registration Reform? iii. Has the Project contributed to promotion of human rights and social inclusion? iv. To what extent were project initiatives adequate to ensure sustainable improvements for vulnerable groups and promote responsible practices and HRBA-oriented principles among civil servants? v. Specifically for Output 2: How have business processes been developed (participatory method? How were LNOB groups and women included and their needs and interest's taken into account?)? vi. What can additionally be done to improve the Project's contribution in this domain?

<p><u>Gender issues and social inclusion:</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. To what extent has gender been mainstreamed, in addition to sufficient consideration provided for its intersectional effects within the design, implementation and monitoring of the project? ii. Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality? How gender responsive is the project? iii. To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and advanced the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects and what were their impact on the project and the community of engagement? iv. Were sufficient resources made available for gender mainstreaming? v. What are the avenues for improvement in considerations for gender and its intersectional effects across the project? vi. To what extent the project approach was effective in promoting gender equality and social inclusion - particularly focusing on the marginalized and the poor through knowledge transfer, action planning, training and what project did to tackle this issue during intervention?
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4. METHODOLOGY

The method outlined below is a guidance that will be modified and finished in the inception report by the evaluators. The assessment will combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to assure the results' legitimacy, reliability, and value. The evaluator will use a proactive and collaborative approach, working closely with government counterparts, the project team, the UNDP Country Office, and other relevant stakeholders, including beneficiaries. Gender equality and social inclusion will be addressed fully through the methodology and data gathering technologies used. The following procedures will be used, with adjustments made as needed:

Document review: Conduct an in-depth review of project documentation such as proposals, progress reports, legislative revisions, coordination among agencies mechanisms, and communication strategies for civil registration reform.

Stakeholder consultations: Consult with key stakeholders, such as project staff, officials from the Ministry of Justice, Civil Registration Department and other government partners (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population, Agency on Statistics etc.), Civil Registration Offices, civil registration workers as an end user or project beneficiaries.

Field visits and interviews: Conduct field visits to project implementation locations located throughout Tajikistan (will be limited to 2-4 CROs). Conduct organized and semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries (population civil service receivers), civil registry workers, local government officials, and community members to acquire firsthand information and comments on the project's impact and efficacy.

Focus Group Discussions (if required): Hold focus group conversations with a variety of stakeholders, including women, marginalized populations, and civil society leaders, to gather a range of viewpoints on civil registration services and their accessibility.

Data Analysis: Use quantitative analytic tools to evaluate statistical data on civil registration, such as registration rates, data quality, and user satisfaction surveys (from the CR department Statistical Reports and CROIS2 reports, from open sources whenever relevant, from conducted surveys by project during project implementation). Use qualitative data analysis techniques, such as theme coding and content analysis, to evaluate interview transcripts, focus group discussions, and field observations.

Gender and Social Inclusion Approach: Use a gender-sensitive and socially inclusive strategy throughout the appraisal process. Ensure that different voices and viewpoints are included, with a focus on the experiences of women, girls, and underrepresented groups seeking civil registration services.

Data Triangulation entails combining data from several sources, such as document reviews, stakeholder engagements, field trips, and data analysis, to confirm results and improve conclusion dependability.

Briefing and Debriefing Sessions: Host briefing and debriefing meetings with UNDP, stakeholders to present early findings, solicit input, validate conclusions, and collaborate on practical recommendations for the future of civil registration reform activities.

The previously mentioned process/steps should guarantee that the most suitable and relevant data are acquired for the purposes stated above. The study's findings and conclusions should be used to provide suggestions for the endeavors' future direction. The evaluator is required to provide the final comprehensive report in English and Russian. The report's format and content should follow the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines and the SDC Guidance for Evaluation. The full methodological approach, which includes specific data collecting plans, interview procedures, sample techniques, and analytical frameworks, will be specified in the inception report and reviewed and agreed upon with UNDP and key stakeholders before the assessment begins. The evaluator should use a proper sampling strategy to choose the respondents. The evaluator needs to confirm that the respondents are gender balanced.

The **conclusions** related to the implementation of the Project from its start until the end of July 2024 should be comprehensive and balanced, and highlight the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and outcomes of the Project. They should be well substantiated by the evidence and logically linked to the progress evaluation findings. They should respond to key evaluation questions and provide insights into the identification of and/or solutions to important problems or issues pertinent to Project beneficiaries, UNDP and the donor.

The **recommendations** for adaptive management to improve the Project over the remaining part of its lifetime and guide further interventions in the area of digital transformation should identify how best practices and achievements of the Project can be scaled up or proliferated to better respond to the emerging needs and priorities of the governmental partners, as well as to adapt/strengthen the theory of change of the Project, based on interviews with Project partners and beneficiaries. The recommendations need to be supported by an evidential basis, be credible, practical, and action-oriented, and define who is responsible for the action to have the potential to be used in decision-making.

Documents to be reviewed

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

- Country Programme Document (CPD) 2016-2022; 2023-2026.
- United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2016-2022; 2023-2026)
- The Swiss Cooperation Programme for Central Asia 2022–25, including the Result Framework
- Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy [2021-2024, particularly](#) ch. 3.3. and Annex 2 of the [Strategy](#)⁵⁹.
- Project Document "Civil Registry System Reform in Tajikistan – Phase II
- Annual Progress Reports for Project implementation (2020-2023)
- Final Report Phase I

⁵⁹ Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24 (click on the highlighted work 'strategy' to access the file)

- Management Responses provided by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Tajikistan to the project reports
- Monitoring and Evaluation tools (Quarterly Progress reports, minutes of the Project Steering Committee meetings).
- Previous Project Evaluations (Phase I & II)

5. EVALUATION PRODUCTS (DELIVERABLES)

The evaluator should submit the following deliverables:

Deliverable #	Key Deliverables	Timeline	Payment Breakdown	Remarks
Deliverable #1	Inception report ⁶⁰ detailing the reviewer's understanding of what is being evaluated, why it is being evaluated, and how (methodology) it will be evaluated. The inception report should also include a proposed schedule of tasks, evaluation tools, activities, and deliverables	6 working days (30 August 2024)	10%	Evaluation Manager should approve the inception report along with evaluation matrix
	Evaluation matrix that includes key criteria, indicators, and questions to capture and assess them			
Deliverable #2	Primary Data Collection (Online and field phases) and Evaluation debriefing- immediately after completion of data collection, the evaluator should provide preliminary debriefing and findings to the UNDP/Project team	10 working days (25 September 2024)	40%	
	Draft Evaluation Report for review and comments (A length of 40 to 60 pages including executive summary is suggested.)	6 working days (7 October 2024)		
Deliverable #3	Reviewed Evaluation Audit Trail including proper responses of the evaluator to the comments and suggestions related to the draft Evaluation Report	3 working days (20 October 2024)	50%	
	Final Report ⁶¹ within stipulated timeline with sufficient detail and quality by incorporating feedback from the concerned parties (both in English and Russian) Recommended sections to be in the Final report:	4 working days (30 October 2024)		

⁶⁰ For more detail information please check the UNDP guidance: [Sec 4 Inception Report content.docx \(live.com\)](#)

⁶¹ For more detail information please check the UNDP guidance: [Sec 4 UNDP evaluation report template and quality standards.docx \(live.com\)](#)

	<p>Title and opening pages;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project and evaluation information details; • Table of contents; • List of acronyms and abbreviations; • Executive summary (up to 4 pages); • Introduction; • Description of the intervention; • Evaluation of scope and objectives; • Evaluation approach and methods; • Data analysis; • Findings; • Conclusions; • Recommendations; • Lessons learned; • Report Annexes: ToR, methodology related documentation, list of individuals or groups interviewed/consulted, documents reviewed, summary tables of findings, signed Code of Conduct, etc. 			
	<p>An exit presentation on findings and recommendations</p>	<p>1 working days (30 October 2024)</p>		

The key product expected is a comprehensive evaluation report (with the parameters indicated above). The report must be as free as possible of technical jargon in order to ensure accessibility to its wide and diverse audience. The report should be in line with UNDP’s principles of gender-responsive communication and should be prepared in English and translated into Russian.

All reports and results are to be submitted to the UNDP in electronic form (*.docx, *.xlsx, *.pptx, and *.pdf or other formats accepted by UNDP).

Payments will be based upon the satisfactory completion of deliverables upon review and acceptance by UNDP. 100% of the total amount shall be paid upon completion of the Deliverables 1-6.

6. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION AND REQUIRED COMPETENCIES / INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT

This final assessment will be carried out by an individual international consultant/evaluator in collaboration with one national consultant. The UNDP CO will select the lead evaluator and national consultants (as required).

A team of two independent consultants will conduct the Final Evaluation – one **international team leader** (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally), and one **national team expert** with national level experience of the project implementation context. The team leader will have overall responsibility for the preparation of the specified deliverables (Final Evaluation Inception report including design of the methodology and conducting of the field mission, initial presentation of findings, draft Final Evaluation and Final Evaluation report). The team expert will provide in-country support (document and background data collection) and Tajikistan contextual guidance / information to the Final Evaluation team leader, and both translation and logistical advice/support during the field mission.

The consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project's related activities.

Duty station: Home based with at least 10 days of country visit and projects sites.

Working days: 30 days.

International consultant

Responsible for the overall leadership and supervision of the final evaluation. She/he will be in charge of carrying out the final review of the aforementioned project. She/he will be completely responsible for completing all of the procedures and producing the deliverables outlined above. S/he shall be in charge of ensuring that a gender and social inclusion viewpoint is integrated throughout the assessment process and report. The international consultant will hold the following tasks and responsibilities:

- Collection and assessment of relevant documents
- Finalizing and designing the methodologies and data collection instruments.
- Prepare inception report, evaluation matrix including the evaluation questions, data collection instruments, etc.
- Coordinating and guiding the work of national consultant(s) in support of evaluation activities.
- Conduct field visits in selected communities and conduct interviews with the selected target groups, partners and stakeholders.
- Facilitate stakeholders' discussion and focus groups to collect and synthesize information.
- Analyze the data and prepare a draft evaluation report in the prescribed format.
- Incorporate the feedback and finalize the evaluation report.

Qualifications and Competencies:

Academic Qualifications:

Master's degree in social sciences, management, public administration, development studies, or any other relevant university degree.

Experience:

The International Evaluation Expert should have not less than 7 years of professional development experience.

- At least 7 years of demonstrated work experience in the field of project implementation, monitoring, evaluation and/or project design in development sectors.
- Demonstrated experience of conducting similar evaluations on development projects related to civil registration reform or related areas.
- Demonstrated expertise of more than 7 years in good governance, public administration, development, gender and human rights are strong advantage.

- Proven knowledge of monitoring and evaluation methodologies including gender equality, development, and cross cutting issues.
- Strong analytical and report writing skills.
- Expertise in data gathering methods such as focus group discussions, key informant interviews etc.

Language requirements:

Excellent knowledge of English. Knowledge of Russian and Tajik is an advantage.

Competencies:

- Strong report writing skills, advanced computer literacy and the ability to effectively communicate and work with high-level government officials.
- Ability to make recommendations focused on results and impact, with a strong understanding of value for money concepts.
- Demonstrates good knowledge of policy development, strategic reforms, strategies implementation, and good understanding on Local context.
- Excellent command in different data collection methods including FGDs, KIIs.
- Demonstrates integrity by modeling the UN's values and ethical standards.
- Treats all people fairly without favoritism.
- Fulfills all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment.
- Relevant international experience and cross-cultural communication skills.
- Proven interpersonal skills.
- Knowledge of CIS context, preferably Central Asia region; Experience in Tajikistan is desirable.
- Knowledge of UNDP procedures and programme implementation strategies will be desirable.

The International Evaluation Expert will be allocated 30 working days (with at least 10 working days of in-country mission).

7. EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The principal responsibility for managing this Final Evaluation resides with the Commissioning Unit which is UNDP Country Office in Tajikistan.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the evaluation team to provide all relevant documents, including an updated stakeholder list with contact details (phone and email), set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

Institutional arrangements/reporting lines

The UNDP CO in Tajikistan is primarily responsible for administering this evaluation. The UNDP CO will engage the consultant and oversee the evaluation's timely completion. The International Evaluation Consultant will report directly to the Evaluation Manager, who is the UNDP Team Leader for the Governance, Rule of Law, and Human Rights Cluster in this case.

The Evaluation Manager will ensure that the evaluation is carried out effectively, with quality, and independently, with the necessary direction from UNDP's Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst and Senior Management. The Evaluation Manager will approve the assignment's deliverables, which

include an inception report and a final evaluation report. The Evaluation Manager will also ensure that evaluation recommendations are addressed by giving management replies and critical actions for all suggestions.

The UNDP CO Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst will support the Evaluation Manager with all aspects of the evaluation process, including oversight and quality assurance of the evaluation outputs.

The project team will provide the necessary information for assessment, led by the Governance, Rule of Law, and Human Rights Cluster Team Leader. The project team will arrange all field trips, stakeholder meetings, and interviews as will be requested. The International Consultant will handle all correspondence through the Evaluation Manager.

The Evaluation Manager should approve each phase of the evaluation. The final assessment report will be signed by the Resident Representative. UNDP will inform the international consultant upon arrival on the objectives, purpose, and scope of the final review. The evaluation will remain entirely impartial. A mission wrap-up meeting wherein feedback from participants will be collected for consideration in the final report.

Responsibility for expenses

The International consultant is responsible for all personal local travel, living, and accommodation expenses, which are included in the contract amount.

Duration, Monitoring, and Reporting

The assignment will commence by August 2024. The chosen applicant will report to the UNDP Team Leader for the Governance, Rule of Law, and Human Rights Cluster. Reporting will be based on the deliverables listed above.

Payment

Payments are dependent on delivering the services defined in the TOR that contribute to the project deliverables outlined in "Evaluation products (deliverables)".

Copyright

All information and products produced by the Consultant under this assignment will remain the property of UNDP Tajikistan.

8. TIMEFRAME FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation will begin in August 2024 and last up to 30 working days. This will involve desk reviews, primary information collecting, fieldwork, and report writing. However, it is recommended that the evaluator should propose a more realistic timeframe as part of the inception report.

Planned activities	Responsible party	Period / Tentative days
The Project evaluation is expected to be implemented in the period from 19 August - 30 October 2024		
a. Desk review of the contextual and project-related documentation	International	

b. Inception report detailing the reviewer’s understanding of what is being evaluated, why it is being evaluated, and how (methodology) it will be evaluated. The inception report should also include a proposed schedule of tasks, evaluation tools, activities, and deliverables	Consultant	2 weeks upon signature of contract
c. 10-day in-country mission and presentation of findings at the end of the mission	International Consultant	After completion of the data collection 5 weeks upon signature of contract
d. First draft of the Project Evaluation report submitted within 2 weeks after the mission	International Consultant	7 weeks upon signature of contract
e. Final Project Evaluation report with the strategic and feasible recommendations in a form and substance satisfactory to UNDP, submitted within 2 weeks after the receipt of final comments from UNDP (both in English and Russian)	International Consultant	10 weeks upon signature of contract
f. An exit presentation on findings and recommendations	International Consultant	10 weeks upon signature of contract
Total		30 working days

9. EVALUATION ETHICS

“This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.”

Consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and must sign a Code of Conduct before accepting the assignment.

10. APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Documents to be included when submitting the proposals:

- 1) Letter of interest/proposal, providing brief methodology on how the work will be conducted and/or approached as well as stating independence from any organization that has been involved in designing, executing or advising any aspect of the Project that is the subject of evaluation (up to 2 pages);
- 2) CV including information about past experience in similar projects/assignments and contact details for referees (at least 3 contacts);

3) Samples of at least two (2) previously prepared programme/project evaluation reports.

Financial proposal:

Lump sum contract.

The financial proposal shall specify a total lump sum amount, and payment terms around specific and measurable (qualitative and quantitative) deliverables (i.e. whether payments fall in instalments or upon completion of the entire contract). Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the ToR. In order to assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (including the number of anticipated working days).

Travel costs are not applicable. In the case of unforeseeable travel, payment of travel costs including tickets, lodging and terminal expenses should be agreed upon between UNDP and the Consultant prior to travel, and will be reimbursed. The BSAFE course must be successfully completed before the commencement of travel. Individual Consultant is responsible for ensuring they have vaccinations/inoculations when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director. A Consultant is required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under <https://dss.un.org/dssweb/>.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

#	Assessment of Candidate's qualifications, experience and competences	Maximum score
1	University degree or equivalent in social sciences, management, public administration, development studies, or other relevant area: [Bachelor's Degree – 7 points; Master's Degree or higher – 10 points]	10
2	At least 7 years of demonstrated work experience in the field of project implementation, monitoring, evaluation and/or project design in development sectors: [7-8 years – 7 points; 9-10 years – 9 points; 11 years and more – 10 points]	10
3	Demonstrated experience of conducting similar evaluations on development projects related to civil registration reform, good governance, public administration, development, gender and human rights confirmed by at least two documents covering these aspects where the candidate was an author or a co-author: [no documents or 1 document – 0 points; 2 and more documents – 5 points]	5
4	Proven knowledge of monitoring and evaluation methodologies including gender equality, development, and cross cutting issues (summary of a proposed evaluation methodology is to be provided): [- acceptable quality and relevance of the methodology (methodology is based on the information, provided in TOR) - 16 points; - intermediate level of quality and relevance (methodology is based on previous successful experience with the following examples of its use for such tasks) - 18 points;	20

	- highly relevant methodology (methodology is based on previous successful experience with the following examples of its use for such tasks, adapted to the needs of the target audience and ToR) – 20 points]	
5	At least two accomplished complex evaluations of Projects where the Candidate was the author or co-author, especially in economic development, public administration fields, digitalization, understanding of gender aspects (a reference to previously prepared programme/project evaluation reports to be provided): [2 highly relevant evaluation projects – 16 points; 3 highly relevant evaluation projects – 18 points; 4 and more highly relevant evaluation projects – 20 points]	20
6	Language proficiency, excellent written and oral communication skills with demonstrable experience in analytical reports writing (at least two (2) program/project evaluation reports prepared).	5

EVALUATION METHOD:

Cumulative analysis

Contract award shall be made to the incumbent whose offer has been evaluated and determined as:

- a) responsive/compliant/acceptable, and
- b) having received the cumulative highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria specific to the solicitation.

* Technical Criteria weight: 70%

* Financial Criteria weight: 30%

Only candidates obtaining a minimum 70% of the maximum available technical score (49 points) would be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

The maximum number of points assigned to the financial proposal is allocated to the lowest price proposal and will be equal to 30. All other price proposals will be evaluated and assigned points, as per the below formula:

30 points [max points available for the financial part] x [lowest of all evaluated offered prices among responsive offers] / [evaluated price].

The proposal obtaining the overall cumulatively highest score after adding the score of the technical proposal and the financial proposal will be considered the most compliant offer and will be awarded a contract.

