

# **FINAL REPORT**

## **Evaluation of Component II of phase I of the Wider Europe Aid for Trade Project**

### ***Aid for Trade in Central Asia: Support to Economic Development Along Trade Corridors***

**Kazakhstan** (Semey Region)  
**Kyrgyzstan** (Batken Region)  
**Tajikistan** (Sughd Region)

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This Final Evaluation of Phase I of the UNDP project “Wider Europe. Aid for Trade in Central Asia: Support to Economic Development Along Trade Corridors” (Component II) was carried out between June 15 and July 31, 2011 with a field trip to Kazakhstan including the capital – Astana and the target areas in Eastern Kazakhstan (Semey and Ust-Kamenogorsk), Kyrgyzstan (Batken region) and Tajikistan (Khujand) undertaken on June 27 – July 10, 2011.

This evaluation was conducted for the Bratislava Regional Office of United Nations Development Programme with the involvement of Country Offices in the above mentioned countries by Alexander GRUSHEVSKY, 770 Bay St. #2602 Toronto, ON, M5G 0A6 Canada; e-mail: Alexander.Grushevsky@geoconsultingworld.com

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## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AfT - Aid for Trade

AIMS - Agricultural Information Marketing System

Akimat – Municipal Authority in Kazakhstan

AMFOK - Association of Microfinance Organizations in Kazakhstan

AWP – Annual Working Plan

BCI - Better Cotton Initiative

BMIC - Batken Market Information Center

BRC - Bratislava Regional Center

BSO – Business Support Organization

CAREC – Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation An alliance of eight countries: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, People’s Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan and multilateral institutions comprising ADB, EBRD, IMF, UNDP and World Bank. CAREC operates in partnership with other key regional cooperation programs and institutions, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Economic Community

CO – Country Office

FA – Farmer Association

IP – Implementing Partner

KBC – “KazBusinessConsulting” – training and consulting company in Kazakhstan, local implementing partner

NIS – Newly Independent States

PM – Project Management

PT – Project Team

RBM – Results Based Management

RRF – Results and Resources Framework

SPECA - United Nations Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia. Member states include: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

SME – Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

TDS - Trade Development Strategy

TEPC – Trade and Export Promotion Center in Khujand

UNCT – UN Country Team

UNDAF – United Nations Development Assistance Framework

WEA - Women Entrepreneurs Association

## Executive Summary

The project was initiated by the UNDP Bratislava Regional Center in partnership with relevant UNDP country offices and with financial support from the Government of Finland, through its Wider Europe Initiative. The general objective of *Component II (Aid for Trade in Central Asia: Support to Economic Development along Trade Corridors)* was to enhance private sector capacity in order to increase exports along selected priority transport corridors in Central Asia with a focus on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Taking into consideration the national development priorities of these countries, as well as local developmental needs, the component targeted micro, small and medium entrepreneurs in agriculture, manufacturing and trade, their associations, and business services providers with the aim to strengthen their technical and business skills, increase production standards and improve access to markets. The component thus aims to create conditions for more active and sustainable SME involvement into trade, especially at the regional level. Particular attention was given to the facilitation of public-private dialogue and mainstreaming of trade/SME development issues at the sub-national level. All the project's activities were implemented considering principles of gender equality and inclusive growth.

The project activities were implemented in the following administrative units of the target countries:

- Kazakhstan (East Kazakhstan Region with a special focus on the Semey district – including the territory affected by nuclear testing during the Soviet period)
- Kyrgyzstan (Batken region – an administrative entity which was created about 10 years ago, bordering with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and suffering from the remoteness, poor transport infrastructure, complicated border crossing with Uzbekistan, rural under-development, de-industrialization after the collapse of the local industry, and rural under-development)
- Tajikistan (Sughd region – a territory with obvious agricultural, industrial, and trade potential, located in close proximity to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, but currently isolated from the traditional markets in Kazakhstan and Russia by the administrative barriers to border crossing imposed by the Uzbek side).

According to the Project document, activities (or interventions) carried out under Phase I of Component II should be considered pilot interventions, which have the purpose of testing the effectiveness of the proposed activities and of the overall approach to strengthening capacities of the private sector at the local level, promoting inclusive growth, and increasing regional trade.

The evaluation was carried out after the completion of Phase I of the project, and was initiated by BRC in consultation with the field personnel and the COs. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide the Donor and UNDP with information on project implementation, to ensure accountability for the expenditures to date and progress in the implementation of the activities; to analyze strength and weaknesses of the Project; success stories and lessons learned. The results of the evaluation should allow managers

to make any necessary corrections under Phase II of the initiative.

The results of this evaluation will be shared with the Project Board, including the Donor, and relevant UNDP country offices, and will inform project implementation under Phase II.

The evaluation covered the full implementation period of Phase I of the project (August 2009 - February 2011), all the geographic areas in the three countries covered by the component, and all categories of beneficiaries involved (SMEs, business associations, business service providers, public sector representatives, and NGOs).

Both project activities and project management were considered within the wider developmental context of the countries and territories.

The project activities were evaluated with respect to:

- a/ Relevance;
- b/ Effectiveness;
- c/ Efficiency;
- d/ Sustainability, and
- e/ Impact.

Project management was assessed with a special focus on:

- a/ Project design;
- b/ Project approach;
- c/ Scale and level of interventions;
- d/ Project management structure, and
- e/ Internal and external project communication and reporting.

The methodology used for the evaluation consisted of the following stages:

1. Information gathering:

- a. A desk review of existing documentation (AWPs, RRFs, quarterly reports, visibility materials, and project briefs);
- b. Interviews with project staff, selected stakeholders and partners; both individual and group interviews with direct beneficiaries, and;
- c. On-site observations and visual data collection (field/project sites visits) to record accurate information on-site.

To ensure consistency and comparability of data collected in all the areas, standardised questionnaires were used for interviews with project/country office staff, stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries.

2. Information analysis:

- a. Comparison of anticipated and actual results;
- b. Understanding reasons for deviations and modifications to the original project design;
- c. Evaluating the relevance of activities;
- d. Analysis of effectiveness and efficiency of implementation of various interventions;

- e. Gap analysis, identifying unmet needs and opportunities;
- f. Sustainability and impact assessment, and
- g. Cross-country comparisons.

3. Formulation of findings and conclusions, analysis of lessons learned and development of recommendations.

### ***Major Findings and Conclusions:***

**Relevance** - Activities implemented under Phase I of Component II were fully aligned with national development priorities and UNDAF outcomes. The initial project design, recommendations of the base-line assessments, as well as contribution of the project personnel both in BRC and in the field offices created a set of interventions consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and Donor's policies.

**Effectiveness** - Phase I met its objectives; all the tasks planned by the Project Document were completed without major delays and in the most cases the target indicators were exceeded (with the exception of *promotion of environmentally friendly technologies* to support export in Kazakhstan). The pilot character of Phase I, Component II allowed to test the effectiveness of the interventions in different developmental contexts. The stakeholders and beneficiaries interviewed during the evaluation mission found that the project activities were implemented in an effective way.

**Efficiency** - The implementation of Phase I may be considered as efficient: the key tasks were completed in due time; the basic indicators were met and exceeded across all the target areas.

**Sustainability** – At this stage it is difficult to assess the sustainability of the different activities, as Phase I was only recently concluded. In general, interventions bringing immediate and/or obvious results for beneficiaries, such as the creation of storage facilities, packaging line, and apricot nursery in Kyrgyzstan (grants facility), as well as those meeting effective local demand (supported with the ability to pay), such as microfinance activities, training and information sharing systems in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have a better chance to remain sustainable. The activities targeting the development of the Batken Market Information Center, as well as Trade and Export Promotion Center in Khujand, are more fragile because of limited solvency of local micro and small entrepreneurs, and also the limited capacities of these Centers (due to the fact that they are still “young”).

**Impact** - Taking into consideration the overall relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of Phase I activities, and their contribution to local capacity strengthening and economic/trade potential development, the conclusion may be made that Component II/Phase I contributed to the improvement of the socio-economic situation and poverty alleviation on the local level in all target areas.

Component II had a strong focus on **gender issues**, and some key activities, including business skills development/capacity building interventions (training and advice) and assistance in getting access to microcredit paid particular attention to women-entrepreneurs, including those in the rural areas.

The design of the **project management** structure was operational. Phase I was implemented in collaboration between BRC (PM, Team Leader and Project Assistant) and the field offices (Project Officer and Project Assistant/Specialist in each of the three locations) with international domestic consultants and local implementing partners contracted upon project needs. The security situation in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was complicated during Phase I: in Batken, for instance, the project personnel was evacuated in April and June 2010; the security phase III was announced in both countries.

No serious issues in the working communication with the BRC were reported by the personnel in the country offices: all the interventions were implemented in accordance with the AWP (with the exception of the environmental component in Kazakhstan); the BRC was fast in reacting to a changing situation in the target areas and responsive to the requests of the countries' project teams. A good practice of information and experience sharing within AfT team was introduced and supported by the project management.

**The major recommendations include the following, some of which have already been addressed in Phase II:**

At the project design stage:

1. Ensure more active participation of local experts in the base-line assessment in order to have a reality check on the relevance/ appropriateness of recommended interventions for the local context;<sup>1</sup>
2. Take a clear managerial decision regarding the intended focus of interventions: geographic concentration vs. widespread activities; focus on leaders (i.e. areas/ business which already show promise) vs. focus on disadvantaged; focus on specific priority target groups or not. Regarding the latter, consider a focus of project activities on leading local companies with a bigger export potential, and promoting links between them and local suppliers to support local clusters;
3. Be realistic about in-country operational expenses when planning budget allocation to the target areas;
4. Study the local market (supply and demand) for business services, to ensure that planned interventions do not distort the market and undermine local business services providers;<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Project management response: the author refers to the initial design phase of the project (phase I). Country offices questioned the use of international consultants for the baseline assessments under component II and highlighted the lack of local knowledge in the baseline assessment. National ownership does not refer to the implementation of the activities, where national ownership was ensured. The above issues were addressed during the design of phase II. (Written response provided by BRC project manager on the 03.08.2011)



In planning future activities/ project interventions:

5. Consider the considerable need for capacity building interventions aimed at the public sector;
6. Pay more attention to possibilities for facilitating public-private dialogue and mechanisms for institutionalising this;<sup>3</sup>
7. For critical developmental<sup>4</sup> situations, provision of grants– rather than loans - to initiate income generation activities should continue to be used;
8. Ensure more transparency in selecting beneficiaries, especially, when providing grants or providing subsidized loans;<sup>5</sup>
9. Strengthen cooperation and information-sharing within UNDP and with other UN agencies;<sup>6</sup>
10. To ensure continuation of good project management and a good practices sharing within the AfT PT.

More detailed findings are presented in the sections below and more recommendations may be found at the pages 42-45.

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<sup>2</sup> Project management response: This refers to the microfinance loans and capacity development activities. The author highlights that these activities create market distortions. The microfinance loans do not work on a profitable basis allowing them to offer cheaper loans to farmers. The projects perspective is that the activity endeavours to create access to financial means. Farmers would otherwise not have access to loans in Tajikistan because they are too expensive and in Kazakhstan because farmers cattle and land cannot be used as collateral. With regards to the trainings, the author finds that by providing free trainings for the farmers and entrepreneur community, the project discourages the establishment of pay for service mentality. In Batken, currently no company exists that could provide these services. In both Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, the project used well established IPs that provide these services, thereby supporting local companies. In addition, the trainings were very often highlighted as being unique and targeting actual needs of the clients. The fact remains, that our target audience (both from the private and public sector) can mostly not afford paying for trainings. (Written response provided by BRC project manager on the 03.08.2011)

<sup>3</sup> Project management response: The author refers to the fact that in all three countries actual communications between the private sector and local government structures is a novelty. The component II, under phase I, started to support this dialogue. The recommendation emphasises the need to further strengthen this, as it was highlighted as very positive by stakeholders. (Written response provided by BRC project manager on the 03.08.2011)

<sup>4</sup> Project management response: The author stresses the fact that in certain development situation (low development levels) grants are perceived as good intervention methodology to counteract lack of financial resources of beneficiaries. (Written response provided by BRC project manager on the 03.08.2011)

<sup>5</sup> Project management response: This refers to the microfinance activities in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. As noted on page 39 of this report, the process as such was transparent. The project needs to increase its efforts to also make this transparency visible to the greater public. In all cases, the project publicly advertised the availability of financial support (loans and grant). Selection of the beneficiary was through committees representing different stakeholders. (Written response provided by BRC project manager on the 03.08.2011)

<sup>6</sup> Project management response: the project has made strong efforts to link within UNDP and with outside agencies – as demonstrated by the collaboration with ILO. (Written response provided by BRC project manager on the 03.08.2011)

## Introduction

The goal of Component II of UNDP's „Wider Europe“ initiative (*Aid for Trade in Central Asia: Support to Economic Development along Trade Corridors*) was to develop trade and trade capacities of entrepreneurs and local government structures along selected priority transport corridors in Central Asia. The Phase I of this Component was implemented over the period of Q3, 2009 – Q1, 2011 in the following three geographic areas:

- Semey region of Kazakhstan;
- Batken Region of Kyrgyzstan;
- Sughd Region of Tajikistan.

To meet national development goals and UNDAF objectives, special attention was paid to social and gender aspects of programmatic activities targeting poverty alleviation and inclusive growth promotion in these target areas. Phase I was intended to improve the implementation of pro-poor trade reforms and trade capacity development measures by formulating trade-related needs and capacity gaps, and piloting technical assistance interventions with a special focus on:

- 1) Mainstreaming trade development and trade promotion on the sub-national level;
- 2) Strengthening trade capacities of SMEs and farmers through technical and business skills building, improving access to market and market information, supporting business services providers/export promotion centers and business associations for export promotion;
- 3) Facilitating access to finance, including microfinance and special production facilities development grants;
- 4) Promoting environmental friendly technologies and green production to be supply to the regional market.

An external evaluation of Phase I of Component II was initiated by UNDP BRC and the Donor after its completion and during the transition to Phase II with the following major purposes:

- to provide information about project implementation, including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of interventions;
- to ensure accountability for the expenditures to date and the implementation of the activities;
- to analyze lessons learned, successes and failures so that AfT managers could make any necessary adjustments and corrections under Phase II to be implemented in 2011-2014 in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as under anticipated project expansion to other NIS.

The current evaluation of the AfT Component II was carried out on June 22 - July 20, 2011 and was based upon a desk study review (UNCT documents, project documents, reports, briefing materials), consultations with the PM and PT, interviews of the major stakeholders, implementing partners and direct beneficiaries, and on-sites visits in the three target areas of Phase I.

This final evaluation is based on five major criteria as outlined in the UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Policy:

1. Relevance – the extent to which the activity is suited to development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time.
2. Effectiveness – the extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it is to be achieved.
3. Efficiency – the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible.
4. Results – the positive and negative, and foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effects produced by a development intervention. In RBM terms, results include direct project outputs, short- to medium-term outcomes, and long-term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects and other, local effects.
5. Sustainability – the likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially and socially sustainable.

This evaluation was implemented according to the following procedure:

1) Preliminary documentation review:

The initial stage involved a general review of project documentation and associated documents (Listed in Annex 4). The documents were provided by the UNDP CO, the Project Manager, the BRC, or downloaded from the internet.

2) Preparations for the mission:

Through discussions with the Project Manager, Ms. Daniele Gelz and in-countries AfT personnel, representatives of key stakeholders and beneficiaries were identified and contacted for interviews. Additionally, a general evaluation methodology was finalized with evaluation matrix and interview questionnaires drafted and forwarded to the Project Manager prior to the mission for review, and shared with the PT in the different countries (see Box 3 below and Annex 5).

3) Mission:

The mission to the three target areas in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was conducted between June 27 and July 9, 2011. The itinerary (Annex 2) consisted of interviews with project management, key stakeholders and beneficiaries as well as

excursions to pilot project sites. The PT in each country assisted the evaluator by arranging meetings and translation as necessary.

4) Post-mission telephone briefing and consultations:

On July 11, 2011 a telephone briefing was conducted with the Project Manager, Ms. Daniele Gelz, and Ms. Sheila Marnie, UNDP Regional Advisor on Poverty Reduction, who was attending the in-country final evaluation meetings, visits, and interviews.

5) Data analysis:

Following the mission, the collected documentation, data and opinions were compiled and analyzed. Multiple, sources of information were assessed to ensure an evaluation according to the UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Policy.

6) Reporting:

The final evaluation report presents the major findings of the desk study, in-countries meetings and visits, and consultations with the project implementation team both in Bratislava and in target areas. The structure applied in this evaluation is based on a performance assessment approach guided by the principles of Results-based Management. It consists of:

- Overview of Phase I interventions in a wider developmental context;
- Situational analysis including outcomes and outputs and partnership strategy;
- Presentation of the evaluation methodology, scope and objectives;
- Analysis of the project implementation in the three target areas focused on evaluation questions;
- Cross-countries comparisons;
- Major lessons learned and recommendations for the further stages of the Project.

The report is supported with additional information put in annexes, including Terms of Reference, mission itinerary, list of persons interviewed, list of documents reviewed, interview questionnaires, summary tables of findings, CV of the evaluator.

The results of this evaluation should be shared with the Project Board and relevant UNDP country offices, and will inform the project implementation under the AfT Phase II.

# **1. The Project and Its Developmental Context**

## ***Background Information***

Component II of the AfT initiative was designed to support the economic development of the areas located along selected priority transport corridors in Central Asia and to disseminate at a later stage the acquired experience with the needed modifications in other countries of the region. Transport corridors link production centers and markets within Central Asian countries and enhance access to neighbouring markets (including China and Russia). Reducing trade costs, improving sales channels, and creating skills needed to successfully benefit from trade (within and outside the region) should support farmers and small enterprises to increase income and to create new jobs, and thus will have a positive impact on economic activity and poverty alleviation in the region.

## ***Project Start and Duration***

Component II was officially launched on the 1st of August 2009, and became operational on September 10, 2009 when funds provided by the Donor were entered in the UNDP Enterprise Resource Planning System. A kick off mission to Central Asia was organized at the end of August 2009 to discuss with stakeholders the implementation of the project and identify potential partners. This preparatory process produced a business model of cooperation with UNDP country offices and UNDP area based development projects and provided the legal background for the implementation (i.e. approval from local and national authorities).

Two baseline assessment missions were organised to support the development of a detailed project plan in selected geographical areas: the first, focused on trade development (led by Andrea Spears) and on microfinance (led by Tanner Chaiken) was carried out in October 2009 with recommendations produced in November 2009, and the second, focused on the promotion of environmentally friendly technologies and green commodities production (implemented by Pekka Alhojarvi), took place in December 2009 with the report produced by February 2010. This led to the identification of country action strategies for key activities, including (1) capacity building on trade mainstreaming, (2) establishing regional export promotion centers/price information systems, (3) expanding SMEs' access to financial services, and (4) promoting green technologies and approaches. As a result of these missions, an overall framework for the implementation of Component II in selected areas was established starting November 2009 and became fully operational in February 2010.

The implementation of Phase I lasted for one year and was completed by February 2011, with the exception of Kazakhstan where an extension was granted by the Project Board until May 2011.

## ***Immediate and Development Objectives of the Project***

The developmental context differs in the three target countries due to a broad range of reasons – from geographic location, to available natural resources, to the structure of the national economy, and to efficiency of governance on the national and sub-national levels, but all of them face issues of regional disparity in socio-economic development, poverty (especially in rural and remote areas), unequal access to markets, goods, and services, and environmental vulnerability.

Based on the national development priorities, the UNCT in each country has identified UNDAF outcomes, which should support human development, inclusive growth and poverty alleviation, effective governance, and environmental sustainability, and to contribute to the positive changes in people's life in the coming years (see table below):

### ***Box 1. AfT-Related UNDAF Outcomes in the Target Countries***

Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan
Vulnerable groups, especially women, children, migrants, refugees, young and aged people, people with disabilities have improved access to markets, goods, services and quality social safety nets	Increased employment and income generation, with special emphasis on women and the disadvantaged, to expand choices of the poor	Good governance and economic and social growth are jointly enhanced to reduce poverty, unlock human potential, protect rights and improve core public functions
Government, educators, communities, civil society and the academic community practice an integrated approach to sustainable development, natural resources management in national and trans-boundary perspectives	Good governance reforms and practices institutionalized at all levels of Government, civil society organizations and the private sector toward poverty reduction, protection of rights and sustainable human development	There is a more sustainable management of the environment and energy and natural resources

An important role in the improvement of developmental conditions in Central Asia and Kazakhstan belongs to trade, which constitutes one of the main leverages for a long-term sustainable and inclusive human development. In line with national development strategies and UNDAFs, the AfT project seeks to reduce poverty, particularly in the targeted geographic areas by increasing trade potential and enhancing capacities of local SMEs in rural and urban areas in the context of environmentally and socially sustainable development.

## ***Problems that the Project Has Addressed***

According to the project document, Phase I was considered as a pilot aimed to validate the effectiveness of the proposed activities and of the overall approach to strengthen capacities of the private sector (local level) to increase exports and to gain from new transport infrastructures.

Inclusive and sustainable trade development in Central Asia faces various obstacles, the majority of which result from a lack of market information, knowledge (e.g. international quality and sanitary standards, trade procedures), management skills (e.g. business planning, marketing, financial management), access to international business partnerships, and access to financial and non-financial business support services. Information and institutional constraints on producers identifying the best market opportunities and lack of knowledge of potential and existing value chains are especially severe for farmers and other micro and small entrepreneurs in both urban and rural areas of Central Asian countries and Kazakhstan.

Component II is aimed at inclusive and sustainable trade development in the region through:

- Trade constraints removal (administrative, marketing, informational, product quality, etc.);
- Capacity building of the private (especially farmers and SMEs), public (mostly on the sub-national level), and civic sectors (business services providing NGOs, especially working with vulnerable groups);
- Facilitation of access to finance (credit and microfinance);
- Support to business services providers and export promoting organizations, and
- Innovation dissemination with a focus on quality control and environmental sustainability.

The experiences acquired under Phase I are planned to be replicated (with adaptation as needed) under Phase II in other target geographic areas of the AfT.

### ***Key Activities of the Phase I***

Activities of Component II, Phase I in the selected areas included:

1) Conducting a trade marketing baseline assessment for export promotion interventions (based on a human development and gender sensitive approach identifying the principal obstacles to trade for the private sector, including individual producers and small and medium-sized enterprises outside the main cities along selected trade corridors, and a comprehensive trade flow analysis in order to identify priority products/services having the biggest trade and human development potential).

2) Capacity building on trade mainstreaming targeted at local public authorities, and support to set up alliances with business associations individual entrepreneurs for trade and export promotion.

3) Establishing regional export promotion centers in identified regions to provide customised services, including:

- (a) Advisory services to local producers and farmers' cooperatives to think beyond existing value chains and their current retail channels (i.e. communication and marketing strategies, business planning, sale support, identification of partners);

(b) Distribution of market information (e.g. price changes, information on highly profitable products, etc.) and establishing links with national and international trading partners;

(c) Provision of trainings for local businesses and cooperatives (i.e., improving business skills, knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements for foreign trade, understanding of international standards, quality standards, etc.);

(d) Facilitation of business-to-business contacts, to strengthen trade and partnerships between local SMEs and bigger national and international companies, through the organization of specific events for products/services for which trade corridors provide opportunity to explore their full trade potential.

4) Expanding SMEs' access to financial services by developing trade-focused microfinance products through already operating non-profit microfinance institutions to support small agro-processing/fruit drying/packaging and bio-energy enterprises with export potential.

5) Promotion of environmentally friendly technologies and green commodity production to develop customized solutions (supply chain strategies) for producing and exporting key green commodities originating in Central Asia and to provide financial support for piloting initiatives. Support had to be provided for the creation of new types of local enterprises, providing services to green commodity production (e.g. nurseries, organic matter compost, wild fruits and nuts); increasing access to markets for green commodity producers through platforms for marketing of sustainable products and associated traceability systems; exploring options for private sector to finance sustainable farm practices, through certification or others tools.

According to the project document, not all the activities should be implemented in all the target areas. The baseline assessment, taking into consideration needs assessments, capacity gaps, marginal impact of intervention and likelihood of success, recommended, and the PM approved the decision to support:

- Price information systems in Batken (Kyrgyzstan) and Sughd (Tajikistan), and
- Microfinance interventions in Sughd (Tajikistan) and Semey (Kazakhstan).

The anticipated results of the Phase I are presented in the table below:

*Box 2. Anticipated Results of the Phase I*

<i>Intended Outputs</i>	<i>Output Targets</i>	<i>Indicative Activities</i>
2.1. Number of trade marketing baseline assessments for export promotion interventions developed	Targets 2.1 [2009] 3 baseline assessments conducted in 3 regions of project implementation	1. Trade marketing baseline assessment for export promotion interventions.
2.2. Number of export alliances	Targets 2.2 [2009] An export alliance	2. Capacity building on trade mainstreaming:



composed by local government institutions and business institutions established	composed by local government institutions and business institutions established in three areas of project implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Conduction of one seminar/training targeted to local public institutions;</li> <li>b. Conduction of one seminar/training for business associations, farmers associations and cooperatives and business support institutions;</li> <li>c. Advisory support for the establishment of “an export alliance”.</li> </ul>
2.3. Number of price information systems for key commodities established	<p>Targets 2.3 [2009] A plan for establishing a price information system is prepared in at least 2 areas of project implementation</p> <p>Targets 2.3 [2010] 2 price information systems are established in at least 2 areas of project implementation</p>	<p>3. Establishing regional export promotion centers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Hiring of implementation team;</li> <li>b. Establishment of a trade export promotion center;</li> <li>c. Gathering of price information for selected products/commodities;</li> <li>d. Deployment of a price information system;</li> <li>e. Development of curricula for 3 training modules (SMEs/farmers);</li> <li>f. Training of trainers;</li> <li>g. Conduction of at least 3 training courses (SMEs/farmers);</li> <li>h. Creation of a database of exporting or ready to export firms;</li> <li>i. Establishments of contacts with sister institutions in identified target export countries;</li> <li>j. Facilitation of an B2B event with at least enterprises from 2 countries;</li> <li>k. Identification of information about the potential impacts of climate change on agricultural commodities and available insurance products.</li> </ul>
2.4. Number of microfinance schemes established and number of enterprises receiving a loan	<p>Targets 2.4[2009] In at least 2 areas of project implementation: microfinance service deliverer is selected; microfinance product design is finalized; microfinance service deliverer staff is trained.</p> <p>Targets 2.4 [2010] Microfinance scheme is established in at least 2 countries; at least 50 enterprise/entrepreneurs receive a microloan</p>	<p>4. Expanding SMEs' access to financial services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Design of suitable microfinance product(s);</li> <li>b. Identification of a microfinance service provider through a competitive bid (Microfinance Institution);</li> <li>c. Provision of ad-hoc training for the service provider;</li> <li>d. Provision of microfinance products/services in the selected regions of project implementation by the selected Microfinance Institution.</li> </ul>
2.5. Number of governmental officers and entrepreneurs trained	<p>Targets 2.5 [2009] Identification of at least 3 trainings or capacity building interventions in each area of project implementation [including terms of</p>	

	reference/curricula]  Targets 2.5 [2010] The target will be set after the identification of trainings [by the second quarter of implementation]	
2.6. Number of workable and sustainable solutions (supply chain strategies or production) for producing and exporting key green commodities originating identified	Targets 2.6 [2009] Baseline study developed.  Targets 2.6 [2010] 3 solutions identified for each area of project implementation	5. Promotion of environmentally friendly technologies and green commodity production:  a. Mainstream environment considerations in project implementation; b. Identification and customization of workable and sustainable solutions (supply chain strategies, production techniques) for producing and exporting key green commodities originating in the region; c. Establishment of partnerships with environment related projects to scale up the impact.

## ***The Main Direct Stakeholders and Beneficiaries of the Project***

The main stakeholders and beneficiaries of Component II, Phase I are the following organizations and groups of individuals:

- 1) Private sector, including national business and trade associations, sectoral business associations, SME business associations, associations of farmers, artisans and traders, financial and non-financial business support organizations and business services providers, individual entrepreneurs (urban and rural micro, small and medium entrepreneurs, farmers);
- 2) Public sector representatives:
  - a. Sub-national (regional administration) and local (municipal) administrations;
  - b. Specialized agencies: Customs Agency, Free Trade Zones Administration, etc.
- 3) Civil society and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including environmental NGOs, associations of NGOs, women and sub-population groups' associations, independent think- tanks, national and local media.

## ***Partnership Strategy***

The implementation of Phase I of Component II was undertaken in close collaboration with the following UNDP area based development projects recently implemented in the target areas:

- Kazakhstan: UNDP Project “Enhancing Human Security in the Former Nuclear Testing Area”, funded by the Government of Japan in Semey region (project budget: USD \$ 1,978,698, time frame: 2008-2010); “Business Skills and Support Training for Small Businesses”, Semey region (2002-2005);
- Kyrgyzstan: UNDP Project: “The Batken Area-Based Development Project”, funded by UNDP and Republic of Korea (project budget: USD 1,800,000; time frame: August 2008 – July 2010);
- Tajikistan: UNDP project “Addressing the Social Consequences of Transition in the Ferghana Valley” funded by EU/TACIS and implemented by UNDP in Sughd Region (project budget: EUR 550,087, time frame: February 2008-December 2009) and the Rural Growth Programme (project budget: US\$ 18 000 0000; time frame: 2010- 2013).

The different activities of Component II were implemented in coordination with the “Promoting Economic and Social Integration of Oralmen” project (funded by UNDP and UNV - 2009-2011) in Kazakhstan; the “Poverty Reduction Program” (2005 - 2006); the “Enhance the Capacities of Localities in Public Service Delivery” project (2009-2012) in Kyrgyzstan; the “Rural Growth Programme in Sughd Region of Tajikistan” (jointly funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), GIZ and UNDP - 2010-2012) and some other technical assistance initiatives implemented by the UN Agencies, like, for instance, with ILO’s “Decent Work Programme” in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, establishing joint trainings. In addition, BRC and national teams liaised with bi-laterals working in the region (e.g. USAID, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, GTZ/GIZ), cooperated closely with institutions in the beneficiary countries (regional/sub-national and local administrations, business associations and business services providers), and projects funded by international organizations (like the World Bank-led agribusiness competitiveness strengthening project in Kyrgyzstan).

### ***The Scale of Interventions***

Phase I of Component II was a piloting stage with a limited duration (one calendar year for the implementation of activities), and with a budget equal to \$1,105,224.02 allocated to the three target areas and covering diverse components, including:

1. Base-lines economic and environmental assessments (\$86 957.15);
2. Capacity building on trade mainstreaming (Kazakhstan - \$8,150; Kyrgyzstan - \$12,241; Tajikistan - \$11,599.26);
3. Capacity strengthening of trade supporting centers (Kazakhstan - \$189,606; Kyrgyzstan - \$97,272; Tajikistan - \$ 217,302);
4. Provision of grants for microfinance non-profit organizations and their capacity strengthening; provision of grants to support technological innovation at the selected agribusiness cooperatives (Kazakhstan - \$141,700; Kyrgyzstan - \$80,800; Tajikistan - \$145,325);

5. Promotion of environmentally friendly technologies and green approaches to economic development (Kazakhstan - \$17,700; Kyrgyzstan - \$23,501; Tajikistan - \$23,406);

Phase I was implemented with project personnel located in BRC (PM, Team Leader and Project Assistant) and in the field offices (Project Officer and Project Assistant/Specialist in each of the three locations) with international domestic consultants and local implementing partners contracted upon project needs.

### ***Changes in the Project Design and Implementation Strategy***

Overall, Component II was implemented in accordance with the initial design reflected in the project document with certain adjustments based on local needs and gaps assessment and consultations with key stakeholders.

The most important among them was the substitution of the South Kazakhstan Region with the East Kazakhstan as an area for the project implementation. This decision was taken as a result of the inception mission conducted in Kazakhstan in September 2009. The reasons for this change was related to the presence of UNDP area based programmes in the Eastern Kazakhstan and their capacity in supporting the implementation of the AfT activities, especially with respect to microfinance and business advisory services. In addition, the inception mission clearly highlighted the unmet export potential of the region, which is strategically placed between Russia and China.

The pilot nature of Component I allowed the testing of the various approaches to the project implementation, what resulted in the following minor adjustments:

- In accordance with the project document, price information systems were established in two target areas: in Batken (Kyrgyzstan) and Sughd (Tajikistan). In addition, a Trade and Export Promotion Center focused on training and consulting support to local SMEs was initiated in the administrative centre of Sughd region and in Eastern Kazakhstan, the decision was taken to strengthen capacities of existing business services providers in trade promoting activities.
- In accordance with the project document, microfinance operations were supported in two countries – Kazakhstan and Tajikistan; in addition, the effectiveness of grants distribution was tested in Kyrgyzstan as a specific form of facilitation of access to finance for SMEs.
- At the project design stage, it was planned to issue at least 50 micro-loans for enterprises/entrepreneurs in 2 countries of the region (equal in average to 5-6 thousand USD). After a re-assessment of local needs, the decision was taken to increase the credit (to 10 – 15 thousand USD), and the target number of direct beneficiaries decreased respectively (22 loans were provided by non-profit

microfinance organizations in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan). At the same time, more than 100 farmers in Kyrgyzstan benefitted from 2 grants issued to support export potential of local farmers associations.

- Three environmentally friendly solutions to support green technology promotion should be identified for each target area. In Kazakhstan, the decision was taken to focus not on specific model-solutions but rather on the mainstreaming of environmentally friendly approach into regional economic development.

The changes mentioned above had an impact on the project implementation and anticipated results and were considered during the Phase I final evaluation.

## **2. Evaluation Focus, Scope, Objectives and Criteria**

The final evaluation is focused on Phase I of Component II of the “Wider Europe” project and covers its full implementation period (Aug 2009 - Feb 2011), all the geographic areas in three target countries, and all the beneficiaries (in public, private and civic sectors) involved in the project.

**Objectives** of the final evaluation are formulated as follows:

Assess the extent, to which the component achieved its overall objectives and outputs as identified in the project document and national annual working plans:

- Review the effectiveness of the overall project interventions, their main achievements, compliance with expanding country’s needs;
- Review and evaluate the extent to which project activities have reached the intended beneficiaries;
- Assess the likelihood of the continuation and sustainability of project outputs and benefits after completion of the project - analyze how far the system of exit policy in the project ensures the sustainability of the project benefits;
- Identify gaps/weaknesses in the project design and provide recommendations as to their improvement;
- Identify lessons learnt from projects interventions.

**Criteria** of the final evaluation correspond to the requirements of the UNDP RBM/M&E policies and include:

a/ *Relevance*-this is directly related to the consistency of activities and targets with national and local development programmes and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries. This also relates to the relevance to UNDP’s corporate and human development priorities.

b/ *Effectiveness*, which measures the manner in which the intended output targets were achieved. Measuring effectiveness involves an assessment of cause and effect in that how far can observable changes be attributed to project activities.

c/ *Efficiency* measuring how economically resources (funds, expertise and time) are converted into results.

d/ *Sustainability* is a key issue for the activities implemented under Phase I of the Component II. Assessing sustainability involves evaluating to what extent the capacity can be maintained.

e/ *Impact*, especially from UNDP's perspective, measures the changes on human development that are caused by the projects activities. Impact evaluation not only provides useful information for the implementation of the Phase II, it will also allow evaluating the success of the projects.

The information gathered for the purpose of the final evaluation was generated based on the following **evaluation questions**, addressed in each country of the Phase I:

- The project contribution made towards achieving the Output (as per country AWP and RRF)?
- Were the stated targets achieved?
- To what level were the different interventions effective?
- What factors (external, project design, project management, project approach, levels of intervention) have contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
- How do the beneficiaries and other partners perceive the project interventions?
- What factors have contributed to relevance or irrelevance?
- To what measure have the different interventions been sustainable? What factors have contributed to sustainability or non-sustainability?
- To what extent do the country office staff and national project staff perceive the workflow between them and BRC as satisfactory – management structure? What was unsatisfactory? What can be done to improve this?
- What were the reasons for implementation delays and was UNDP's response satisfactory to mitigate these?
- What is the evidence on impact and success stories? What has/have been the critical factors to the success?
- Were the outputs of the international consultants (conducted during the inception period) beneficial in project design and implementation?
- What effects have the activities had on women's status and empowerment?
- Other donors' activities and complementarities with them?

The **evaluation methodology** incorporated the following major steps:

1. Information gathering;
2. Information analysis;
3. Formulation of findings, development of recommendations and lessons learned (in consultations with the PMT).

1. Information gathering consisted of:

- a. Desk review of existing documentation (UNDAF, National Development

Strategies, project document, base-line assessments, AWP, RRFs, country teams presentations, quarterly reports, visibility materials, and project briefs)

- b. Interviews with the project staff, selected stakeholders and implementing partners; both individual and group or interviews with direct beneficiaries;
- c. On-site observations and visual data collection (field/project sites visits) to record accurate information on-site.

The sampling criteria applied for the data collection were based on the suggestions in the TOR<sup>7</sup> adjusted to the local conditions, and availability and accessibility of direct beneficiaries. The list of interviewed partners and beneficiaries is presented in the Annex 3.

To ensure consistency and comparability of data collected in all the areas of the project implementation the standardised questionnaires were used to obtain information from project/country office staff, stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries (see Annex 5).

2. Information analysis included:

- d. Comparison of anticipated and actual results;
- e. Analysis of possible deviations and project modifications;
- f. Understanding of reasons for delays and accelerated implementation;
- g. Assessment of activities' relevance;
- h. Gap analysis, unmet needs and opportunities assessment;
- i. Sustainability projection;
- j. Analysis of effectiveness and efficiency of implementation of various tasks;
- k. Understanding of transparency of implementing partners and beneficiary selection;
- l. Cross-countries comparison, and;
- m. Cross tasks comparison.

Key approaches to the evaluation are presented in the evaluation matrix below:

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<sup>7</sup> Activities that have more than 100 direct beneficiaries need to have a sample of at least 10% of the beneficiaries. This sample needs to consist of at least 50% women. In addition, indirect beneficiaries need to be consulted. Activities that have less than 100 direct beneficiaries need to have a sample of at least 20% of the beneficiaries. This sample needs to consist of at least 50% women. In addition, indirect beneficiaries need to be consulted.

*Box 3. Evaluation Matrix*

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Key Questions</b>	<b>Specific Sub-Questions</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Data Collection Methods</b>	<b>Methods for Data Analysis</b>
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How do the beneficiaries and other partners perceive the project interventions?</li> <li>•What factors have contributed to relevance or irrelevance?</li> </ul>	<p>How relevant was the selection of target areas?</p> <p>How relevant were the activities: very relevant, relevant, somehow relevant, not relevant for the target area?</p> <p>Most relevant/less relevant activities?</p> <p>Needed technical assistance not covered by the program?</p>	Project document, UNDAF, National Strategies, AWP, stakeholders, partners, beneficiaries, PMT	Desk study, Interviews	Interview analysis, comparison with project document
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How do the beneficiaries and other partners perceive the project interventions?</li> <li>•Were the stated targets achieved?</li> <li>•To what level were the different interventions effective?</li> <li>•What factors (external, project design, project management, project approach, levels of intervention) have contributed to effectiveness of ineffectiveness?</li> <li>•What were the reasons for implementation delays and was UNDP's response satisfactory to mitigate these?</li> <li>•How transparent were the IPs and beneficiaries selection?</li> <li>•To what extend do the country office staff and national project staff perceive the workflow between them and BRC as satisfactory –</li> </ul>	<p>Dissemination of information about the program?</p> <p>Outreach of the beneficiaries?</p> <p>Selection of direct beneficiaries (transparency, clear requirements, obligations, access to the vulnerable groups)?</p> <p>Strengths/Weaknesses of the program What would you do in other way? Why?</p> <p>How you would recommend organize interventions?</p> <p>Most successful/ less successful activities?</p> <p>Awareness of the training program?</p> <p>Transparency of selection process?</p> <p>Quality and relevance of training provided?</p> <p>Accessibility to the vulnerable groups?</p>	Project document ation, interviews with PMT, stakeholders, IP, beneficiaries	Desk review, interviews with beneficiaries, consultations with the project staff and IPs	Analysis of project document, reports, M&E docs, success stories and lessons learned



	<p>management structure? What was unsatisfactory? What can be done to improve this?</p>	<p>Gender composition of trainees?</p> <p>Trade support center (Awareness? Transparency? Usefulness? Accessibility? Gender structure of customers?)</p> <p>Microfinance (Awareness? Transparency? Usefulness? Accessibility? Gender structure of customers?)</p> <p>Green technologies (Awareness? Transparency? Usefulness? Accessibility? Gender structure of customers?)</p>			
Efficiency	<p>•How do the beneficiaries and other partners perceive the project interventions?</p> <p>•To what extent do the country office staff and national project staff perceive the workflow between them and BRC as satisfactory – management structure?</p> <p>What was unsatisfactory?</p> <p>What can be done to improve this?</p> <p>•Were the outputs of the international consultants (conducted during the inception period) beneficial in project design and implementation?</p> <p>•Other donors' activities and complementarities with them?</p>	<p>Time and resources invested into programming</p> <p>Budget revisions; reasons for them</p> <p>Most and less efficient interventions?</p> <p>Recommendations to increase efficiency?</p>	<p>Project documentation, interviews with PMT, stakeholders, IP</p>	<p>Desk review, interviews, consultations with project staff</p>	<p>Analysis of Prodoc, reports, M&amp;E docs, and lessons learned</p>
Sustainability	<p>•How do the beneficiaries and other partners perceive the</p>	<p>Sustainability plan?</p> <p>Readiness of target</p>	<p>Project documentation;</p>	<p>Interviews, consultations with project</p>	<p>Analysis of project document, reports, M&amp;E</p>

	<p>project interventions?</p> <p>•To what measure have the different interventions been sustainable? What factors have contributed to sustainability or non-sustainability?</p>	<p>groups to pay for the services?</p> <p>Possibility of partially subsidized vouchers?</p> <p>Other possibility to provide services to low income customers?</p>	<p>document ation of IP, site visits</p>	<p>staff</p>	<p>docs, interviews, and IP documentation, success stories and lessons learned</p>
Impact and Gender Dimension	<p>•The project contribution made towards achieving the Output</p> <p>•What is the evidence on impact and success stories? What has/have been the critical factors to the success?</p> <p>•What effects have the activities had on women' status and empowerment?</p>	<p>What kind of tangible changes may be attributed to the project interventions?</p> <p>What was changed as a result of the project activities?</p> <p>How in your opinion the project has changed the life of people in the target area?</p> <p>How important are these changes to the local development?</p> <p>How sustainable are these changes?</p> <p>Specific project's success stories?</p> <p>Persistent issues with women empowerment in the target areas?</p> <p>Interest of women in program's activities</p> <p>% of women among direct/indirect beneficiaries</p> <p>Number of women in business in the target area before and after the program</p>	<p>UNDAF, UNCT, project documents, interviews with PMT</p>	<p>Desk review, interviews, consultations with project staff</p>	<p>Analysis of UNCT docs, project document, reports, M&amp;E docs, success stories</p>

3. On the basis of data analysis, success stories and lessons learned, major findings were formulated and recommendations were developed in consultations with the PMT.

### 3. Evaluation Findings and Conclusions

The evaluation findings and conclusions presented in the Final report are based on the analysis of information obtained during the desk study and evaluation mission to the target areas. The finding and conclusions are structured around the evaluation criteria and questions.

#### *Relevance of Interventions*

The initial project design, recommendations of the base-line assessments, as well as the contribution of the project personnel both in BRC and in the field offices created a set of interventions consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and Donor's policies.

The project interventions in all three areas are needs-driven, and the project design was based upon recommendations made as a result of the in-depth base-line assessments and intervention-tailoring exercises carried out in the target areas. The three target areas differ in demographics, level of socio-economic development, contribution of the national government to the economic development, export/trade potential, access to the markets in neighbouring countries, etc., and these differences were considered during planning and implementation stages of Phase I.

The private sector and the business environment are more mature in **Eastern Kazakhstan** in comparison to the other two areas of project implementation. The Government of Kazakhstan launched a series of initiatives aimed at the development of the private sector/SME and trade promotion, business support services are well established in the country, the region is located in the geographic proximity of two large markets – China and Russia, and possesses an easy access to transport infrastructure. On the other hand, the local export potential of the Semey sub-region is currently limited, and the majority of local micro and small entrepreneurs are involved into wholesale/retail trade in local markets. Taking into consideration these specific features of the primary target area in Kazakhstan and as a result of consultations with the Semey administration, the AfT at its Phase I was focused first of all on the:

1. Trade and export issues mainstreaming in sub-regional socio-economic development to complement efforts of the Government of Kazakhstan in the private sector development and poverty reduction;
2. Trade/export potential development of local SMEs in urban and rural areas to support the export base of the sub-region;
3. Business/trade skills building of women-entrepreneurs and other vulnerable groups in remote and rural areas to alleviate current social and geographic disparities and to ensure an inclusive economic growth (including Oralmen - people of Kazakh origin recently immigrated to Kazakhstan from China);

4. Facilitation of access to finance for micro and small entrepreneurs in rural areas and provision of specific microfinance product to support trade potential.

With respect to one more intervention envisaged by the project document - “Establishing Regional Export Promotion Center”, the Project Board approved the decision to modify it to the more relevant for the Phase I:

- capacity strengthening of existing local business services providers with an established client base (both commercial companies and NGOs), and
- feasibility study of the logistical export hub creation in the Semey vicinity.

At the same time, the project in Kazakhstan faced some difficulties in identifying relevant interventions for the green activity, and the dissemination of the results of the study. The study focused on “green approaches” to local economic/trade potential development: the switch to the environmentally friendly but more expensive technologies was not perceived as a timely and relevant task by the local SME community. As a result, the decision was taken to contract a local consulting company to carry out an analytical survey on creating the opportunities for entrepreneurs and employment possibilities considering the ecological factor in the East Kazakhstan oblast, and to highlight promising solutions to the attention of local entrepreneurs and authorities. In December 2010, the project announced a competition to conduct an analytical study on the potential of environmentally friendly technologies and green commodity production in the East-Kazakhstan oblast. The study was produced in March 2011 by “Analytical Center” operating under the Almaty city Akimat, and its results may be used in Phase II of the project implementation.

The project personnel, from its side, did not leverage enough at Phase I the success of other UNDP-led environmentally sound interventions in Kazakhstan and specifically, in Eastern Kazakhstan, to identify and implement green solutions to enhance regional trade. The following initiatives could be mentioned in this respect:

- “Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Kazakhstani Sector of the Altai-Sayan Eco-Region” (the project’s objective is to enhance the sustainability and conservation effectiveness by demonstrating sustainable and replicable approaches to alternative livelihood development in the Katon-Karagay with a use of small grants to support sustainable wild herbs and berries gathering for further exporting, wool processing, traditional craft development, production of energy efficient ovens and heaters, etc.);
- “Energy-Efficient Design and Construction of Residential Buildings”;
- “Wind Power Market Development Initiative”;
- “Adaptation of Packaging Waste Recovery and Recycling Trust in Kazakhstan”;
- “Sustainable Rangeland Management for Rural Livelihood and Environmental Integrity”.

**Batken region of Kyrgyzstan** could be considered as the least developed among the three target areas of the project with a high demand for all kind of technical assistance, including interventions supporting local economic/trade potential development (in

capacity building, training, business services promotion, financial services, etc.). The project activities in Batken were designed and implemented with a pro-active involvement of the region's administration. As a result of intense consultations with local stakeholders, the major efforts of the project in Kyrgyzstan were tailored to meet the local needs with a focus on the following four areas:

1. Trade mainstreaming and capacity building in the trade promotion for representatives of private and public sectors to strengthen the role of trade in local socio-economic development and inclusive growth, including Regional Trade Strategy development;
2. Support to the Batken Market Information Center with the aim to facilitate access to markets to a larger number of local producers in agriculture and agribusiness;
3. Strengthening competitiveness of pilot farmers associations including their technical and business skills development, improving understanding of market opportunities, contributing to the improvement of their production and storage facilities, etc.;
4. Promotion of environmentally friendly technologies and green commodities production to create a basis for sustainable growth.

Taking into consideration a fragile financial situation of the majority of local micro- and small businesses and their limited access to formalized loans, the project decided to provide grants to local pilot cooperatives to support the development of their productive capacities.

The project also supported the participation of the AfT stakeholders and beneficiaries in study tours and trade shows (in Osh, Kyrgyzstan; Khujand, Tajikistan; Novosibirsk, RF) – an important and relevant intervention in this remote area.

During the interviews the stakeholders and beneficiaries considered the interventions as very relevant.

The leaders of the farmer associations (Abdilamit Toychiev, “Aikok” and Abdurashit Khalmurzaev, “Mol Tushum”) especially appreciated:

- Grants provided for the development of the association's production facilities – these funds allow them to improve their access to the market and increase income of the association's members;
- Training targeting technical skills development;
- Opportunity to participate in trade fairs and business trips to Khujand and Novosibirsk.

According to the local farmer Mr. Emilbek Toktonazarov, the project's support to rural brokers and BMIC is relevant, thanks to their assistance he was able to finalize a contract for a sale of 10 tonnes of barley in the fall of 2010.

**Sughd region of Tajikistan** has an impressive export potential, which is currently affected by a fragmented production with inconsistent quality, insufficient technical and

business skills of the majority of producers, limited access to foreign market information, lack of SME-friendly financial products, and by the difficulties in accessing traditional markets in Kazakhstan and Russia due to an unmanageable border-crossing with Uzbekistan.

In response to the local needs, the project designed a series of relevant and mutually complementary interventions, which were well received by the stakeholders, implementing partners and direct beneficiaries, including:

1. Capacity Building on Trade Mainstreaming - organization and delivery of a series capacity building trainings for entrepreneurs and local authorities on the development of trade and trade relations;
2. Development of technical and marketing skills of members of selected farmer associations to enhance their contribution to the regional trade;
3. Establishing the Regional Export Promotion Center to offer business- and trade-related services to the local business community;
4. Support the extension of reliable and timely market information to a larger number of farmers and agribusinesses in the region;
5. Expanding SMEs access to financial services;
6. Promotion of environmentally friendly technologies and green commodity production.

Unfortunately, one of the most relevant issues for trade development in the region – easing the border-crossing for people and goods - could not be facilitated by the AfT project as it goes beyond the project mandate and requires extensive consultations and negotiations at the international and inter-governmental levels.

Factors, which in the evaluator's opinion contributed to the Phase I intervention relevance/irrelevance are summarized in the matrix below:

*Box 4. Relevance Factors*

	<i><b>Kazakhstan</b></i>	<i><b>Kyrgyzstan</b></i>	<i><b>Tajikistan</b></i>
Relevance	Needs-driven approach  Well-established relations with local authorities and NGOs  Existing demand for trade/regional trade promotion	Understanding of local developmental context  Needs-driven approach; building-up activities on the experience gained in the UNDP Area Based Development project  Good working relations with local authorities  High unmet demand for all types of interventions	Well-established presence in the region  Working relations with local communities, entrepreneurs, NGOs  Needs driven approach to the project interventions

## ***Achievement of Intended Results***

The analysis of the documents related to Component II/Phase I activities, interviews with key stakeholders, implementing partners, and selected beneficiaries, and site visits carried out during the final evaluation mission to the target areas in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan allowed to conclude that **Phase I met its objectives**: all the tasks planned by the Project Document were completed without major delays and often the target indicators were exceeded (with the exception of promotion of environmentally friendly technologies to support export in Kazakhstan).

The summary of major achievements of the Phase I for each country are presented in the matrix below:

### ***Box 5. Summary of Phase I Achievements***

<b><i>Output Targets</i></b>	<b><i>Kazakhstan</i></b>	<b><i>Kyrgyzstan</i></b>	<b><i>Tajikistan</i></b>
Targets 2.1 [2009] 3 trade development baseline assessments conducted in 3 regions of project implementation	Completed as planned; recommendations applied in the work-plan development	Completed as planned; recommendations applied in the work-plan development	Completed as planned; recommendations applied in the work-plan development
Targets 2.2 [2009] An export alliance composed by local government institutions and business institutions established in three areas of project implementation	<p>2 roundtables on trade development were organized in the target area with participation of public, private and civic sectors</p> <p>Public-private dialogue initiated</p> <p>Local authorities requested a feasibility study of the logistical center for the Semey sub-region</p>	<p>Round table organized with participation of public and private sectors</p> <p>Public-private dialogue initiated</p> <p>AfT contributed to the development of the Batken Oblast (Region) Trade Strategy for 2011-16 (endorsed by local authorities)</p> <p>One of the Regional Trade Strategy interventions – the Free Trade Zone in Batken region – was supported with a Law adopted by the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan (Law on Creation of Free Economic Zone Leilek of June 30, 2011)</p> <p>Trademark for the Batken region is developed and</p>	<p>Public-private dialogue was initiated</p> <p>Working Group for the Regional Trade Strategy development is under formation</p> <p>8 training sessions for public and private sector representatives on trade mainstreaming delivered (170 attendees)</p>

		endorsed by local authorities, its use initiated by local producers	
<p>Targets 2.3 [2009] A plan to establish a price information system is prepared in at least 2 areas of project implementation</p> <p>Targets 2.3 [2010] 2 price information systems are established in at least 2 areas of project implementation</p>	<p>Information on access to the markets and on basics of the foreign trade disseminated as result of knowledge-sharing sessions with the participation of representatives of tax and custom authorities (51 enterprises and private entrepreneurs attended)</p>	<p>Price information system is supported with training, consultancies, equipment (about 2000 persons benefited);</p> <p>Information system personnel visited similar organization in Khujand</p>	<p>Price information system (AIMS) supported with equipment and information sharing (about 5500 customers)</p> <p>Trade and Export Promotion Center was initiated in Khujand (personnel trained and paid, equipment provided)</p>
<p>Targets 2.4[2009] In at least 2 areas of project implementation: microfinance service deliverer is selected; microfinance product design is finalized; microfinance service deliverer staff is trained.</p> <p>Targets 2.4 [2010] Microfinance scheme is established in at least 2 countries; at least 50 enterprise/entrepreneurs receive a microloan</p>	<p>The IP in microfinance – fund „Bereke“ was selected</p> <p>Microfinance product (“Asar” – “Assistance”) was designed for farmers and entrepreneurs in agri-business</p> <p>11 loans were issued (\$141,700 total, \$10-15 thousand each); revolving funds will be used to support agribusinesses in the area</p> <p>Capacity strengthening seminar was organized together with the Association of Microfinance Organizations of Kazakhstan for funds operating in Semey area</p>	<p>About 100 farmers benefited from 2 grants supporting post-harvesting activities of local farmer associations (\$80,800 total)</p>	<p>The IP in microfinance – fund „Sughd Microfin“ was selected</p> <p>Dedicated microfinance product was designed for farmers and entrepreneurs in agri-business</p> <p>11 loans were issued (\$145,325 thousand total, \$10-15 thousand each); revolving funds will be used to support agribusinesses in the area</p> <p>Capacity building seminars organized with „Rushd Consulting“ for the „Sughd Microfin“ personnel</p>
<p>Targets 2.5 [2009] Identification of at least 3 trainings or capacity building interventions in each area of project implementation</p>	<p>14 topics identified and training modules developed and delivered by local IPs: „KazBusinessConsulting“, „Zubr“, „Saluat“, Women Entrepreneurs Association (1028 participants)</p>	<p>Series of training on modern and environmentally sustainable agro-techniques, quality standards, access to the market, legal and regulatory requirements for trade, basics of marketing, principles of business planning organized for 20 agro-brokers, and 204</p>	<p>12 training modules developed, more than 100 farmers and rural entrepreneurs trained in modern agro-technologies, marketing, business planning, regulatory requirements for foreign trade, etc.</p> <p>Study tours/trade missions organized to</p>



		<p>farmers and entrepreneurs in agri-business</p> <p>Study tours/trade missions organized to Osh (Kyrgyzstan), Khujand (Tajikistan), Astana and Almaty (Kazakhstan), Novosibirsk (RF) – 120t of onions were supplied to the RF as a result of this trip</p>	<p>Dushanbe (Tajikistan), Batken (Kyrgyzstan), Ekaterinburg (RF)-MOU with the Russian trader was signed during this visit to supply 60 t of onions and for the purchase of tractor spare-parts</p>
<p>Targets 2.6 [2009] Baseline study developed.</p> <p>Targets 2.6 [2010] 3 environmentally friendly solutions identified for each area of project implementation</p>	<p>Base-line study developed</p> <p>The decision was taken to focus on the green technology mainstreaming, and the analytical study was ordered to the Kazakh, Almaty based consulting company as a result of open tender</p> <p>Results of the study are too general to be recommended for the mainstreaming</p>	<p>Base-line study developed</p> <p>Training for 150 beneficiaries on organic fertilizer</p> <p>Three interventions supported (Traditional variety of apricots nursery; Sustainable green-house; Conservation of eco-system of the Chulpon source)</p> <p>Potato-growing association „Aikok“ carried out testing of productivity depending on the type of fertilizers (organic vs. chemical); results demonstrated better performance of organic-fertilizers and higher yields for the majority of varieties of potato</p>	<p>Base-line study developed</p> <p>Demonstration plot to support bio-cotton production established; 2 workshop to train farmers on using environmentally friendly production methods carried out; lower production costs and higher yields of cotton were proven; results of demonstration disseminated</p> <p>5 seminars on organic-fertilizers and organic-protection carried out; acquired knowledge is applied</p> <p>Success story of environmentally friendly green-house was disseminated</p>

### ***Effectiveness of Phase I Interventions***

The stakeholders and beneficiaries interviewed during the evaluation mission shared the opinion that the project activities were implemented in an effective way.

**Kazakhstan.** Ms. Zhibraeva, National Director, Representative of Semey Administration: “The project was effective: it brought a new vision to the Semey administration and to the local private sector, we started thinking about trade potential

development in a wider regional context and initiated competitiveness strengthening of our businesses”.

**Kyrgyzstan.** Mr. Abdilamit Toychiev, “Aikok”: “The project helped our cooperative to better understand current requirements for product quality and provided tools to achieve it; we moved even further and currently we are creating our own consulting center for local farmers with a focus on two areas: potato/vegetables and cattle growing – our specialists will work there, providing services for a reasonable fee”.

**Tajikistan.** Mr. *Rakhmon Zoidov*, Head of the Trade Unit, Sughd Administration: „Effectiveness of the AfT may be proven by the fact, that after the training on trade development, which we attended, efforts were made to improve the quality of trade services in the region, and the competition for the best local market was launched“.

The difference in developmental context in the three target areas makes it difficult to carry-out cross country comparisons of project’s interventions effectiveness. However, the comparison of achieved results in the three countries allow to conclude that despite less favourable economic environment in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the development intervention’s objectives of Phase I in these countries were achieved in a more efficient way and with more obvious positive institutional development impact than in more advanced Kazakhstan.

**In Kazakhstan,** the project’s component focusing on *facilitating the access to finance* for rural SMEs may be considered among the most effective interventions in this country, especially taking into account the fact that due to certain normative restrictions, rural entrepreneurs have no opportunities to use regular credit services of banks (banks cannot consider livestock or machinery as a collateral, land is not a private property, and houses/buildings in rural area have low liquidity and no clear market value). The fund “Bereke”, selected as an IP for this task, took the decision to maintain the product, developed within the context of the Aid for Trade project, in its portfolio for the coming years with the aim to support agribusinesses/post-harvesting manufacturers operating in the rural areas.

The fund „Bereke“, servicing rural entrepreneurs in the Semey sub-region, launched with the support of the AfT project a special micro-credit product - “Asar” (“Assistance”) targeting the specific needs of SMEs operating in post-harvesting processing. The loans for this specific group of clients will be based on the revolving fund initiated with the AfT project grant (\$141,700). The terms of the loans foresee lower than average interest rates and longer repayment period. According to the „Bereke“ Director Ms. Zhumagul Hairlibarayeva, the organization is keen to contribute to the development of processing capacities of local business: to ensure affordability of the credit to local producers, „Bereke“ will be operating with a break-even approach with respect to this specific product.

The loans designed under the AfT intervention allowed Orisanber Umirbekov, a farmer from Bukeuchi village of the Semey sub-region, to expand the production capacities of his farm with the construction of a winter shelter for cattle (otherwise hardly affordable). This will allow the farmer to increase the productivity and weight of his cattle supplied to the Semey market.

*Training* provided to- and *information shared* with- local urban and rural entrepreneurs on key areas of trade promotion and business planning and management was also effective due to a need-driven approach to the training module selection and the use of highly professional implementing partners.

The Semey-based Women-Entrepreneurs Association organised business skills development training and information-sharing sessions with a focus on business/trade promotion for 360 women (having micro and small enterprises or considering launching a business) in urban and remote rural areas of Semey sub-region with a limited access to business and market information.

Activities related to *trade mainstreaming* were less efficient in Kazakhstan during Phase I: they included two round-tables with the participation of public and private sectors to present the project and to discuss its perspectives, as well as the initiated discussions with Semey administration about the feasibility of a regional logistical hub. Such a limited progress in this specific component may be explained both by a subordinated position of Semey within the administration of Eastern Kazakhstan with limited decision-making regarding regional trade promotion, and insufficient focus of the project management on trade issues mainstreaming under these circumstances.

The least effective was the intervention targeting the promotion of *environmentally friendly technologies* and green commodity production: during Phase I the intervention's objectives were not achieved. In the evaluator's opinion, the idea to promote green jobs – considered as not completely relevant and timely in Eastern Kazakhstan, was not articulated clear enough in the project design, and the national AfT staff was not provided with additional external capacities to bring this issue to the attention of local private and public sectors.

**In Kyrgyzstan,** the *trade mainstreaming* intervention in the Batken region may be considered as very effective. The highlights of this intervention consist of the Regional Trade Development Strategy and the promotion of the products of the Batken region in national and regional markets (Dary Batken).

The project in Kyrgyzstan supported the development of the Batken Oblast (Region) Trade Development Strategy (TDS) – the document was prepared in a participatory manner in consultation with the private sector and community representatives. The strategy establishes priorities and proposes concrete budget lines for the proposed activities. The document was endorsed by the Batken regional authorities and is part of the Oblast Development Strategy and is linked to the Oblast budget. The suggested creation of a free trade zone (in the TDS) in the Batken region was supported at the

national level: the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan adopted the relevant Law on June 30, 2011 (“On Creation of Free economic Zone Leilek”). The Batken Trade Development Strategy is a novelty, as it is very rare in Central Asia to have a dedicated trade strategy at the Oblast level.

The development of a regional trade mark to differentiate Batken products in the national and regional markets was led by AfT Phase I. The design was selected in a participatory manner; the marked products were presented during trade shows in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. In June 2011, the rice with the Batken trade mark (packed by the farmers association „Mol Tushum“) was offered for sale in Bishkek supermarkets.

Support to *pilot farmers associations* also was effective: the intervention objectives were met and the production capacities and technical skills of selected farmers associations were strengthened both through grants and trainings in a sustainable fashion and with a positive institutional development impact.

The farmers’ association „Aikok“, supported with technical and marketing training, constructed a storage facility for potatoes and vegetables with the support of an AfT grant. After the completion of the trainings and the storage facility, the association seems to become a local hotbed for innovations. They have held demonstrations on the effectiveness of various types of fertilizers and they are planning to establish an agri-technique consulting center to serve the needs of local farmers.

The processing department of the “*Mol Tushum*” cooperative installed the packaging line purchased with an AfT grant and started its operations. Currently, rice and beans are processed into plastic packages under the brand “Dary Batkena” to be sold through the supermarkets and traditional markets of in Kyzylkiya, Osh, and Bishkek.

Interventions aimed to *building the skills* needed for a competitive participation in regional trade is considered effective too (through better production techniques, improved quality, more efficient business planning and marketing, easier access to the market, participation in the regional trade shows, etc.).

As a result of the projects interventions, despite unfavorable conditions to trade (remoteness, lack of transport infrastructure, difficulties in border-crossing with Uzbekistan), local producers managed to export their products although mostly later, under Phase II.

In April – June 2011, trade brokers provided assistance to 65 farmers of the Batken oblast to sell their fresh vegetables and fruits (65 tons of bird-cherry, 53 tons of apricots and 29 tons of onions).

The project facilitated the participation of Batken producers to the international exhibition INTERFOOD Astana 2011 in Kazakhstan in April 2011. A contract was signed with Ms. Alma Utigenova (private entrepreneur) from Almaty; 100 tons of

preserved products – jams, compotes, assorted vegetables – will be shipped to Kazakhstan by the Batken-based processing enterprise “Agroplast” in July, the 2<sup>nd</sup> in September.

As a result of a business trip to Novosibirsk (RF) organized by the AfT during Phase I, 120 tons of fresh onions were exported to Novosibirsk through the cooperative “Moltushum” in partnership with the private company “Calibre Luk” in November 2010. The owners of the onions are two groups of farmers-members of the cooperative “Moltushum” from Kadamjai district.

However, it needs to be highlighted that during phase I trainings strongly targeted technical skills over business skills. The next stages of the intervention should consider addressing the identified needs in business skills development of local entrepreneurs, including better understanding of competitiveness, marketing mix, business planning and financial management.

The *support to BMIC* was effective as the intervention objectives of Phase I were achieved with a positive institutional development impact. However, the mid- and long-term effectiveness of this specific intervention is currently unclear for the evaluator, as the Center still goes through a complicated process of establishing itself as a business services and market information provider in the Batken region, facing limited effective demand for its services and having limited internal capacities. Taking into consideration the fact that BMIC is servicing otherwise not-met local demand in market information, low operational costs, contribution from the local administration and commitment of BMIC personnel, this initiative may be supported further, with additional focus on BMIC capacity building at the later stages of the AfT.<sup>8</sup>

*Environmental interventions* supported by AfT are straightforward and easy to replicate in other areas, and they are considered as effective.

The environmental component of the project supported the establishment of a nursery for an old kind of apricots, which can be easily dried and is known in CIS markets for its high quality. The project is led by three associations headed by women and also utilizes a drip irrigation system. The drip irrigation system was quite a novelty in the region and was also integrated in a loans activity in Tajikistan after the farmer saw it in Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, neighbouring farmers also start to use it for their orchards.

**In the Sughd region of Tajikistan, the micro-loans to rural SMEs, training provided to farmers and rural entrepreneurs** by the NGO ICPO „Jovid“, and *support to Agro-*

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<sup>8</sup> Project management response: as per the previous definition (p. 22) of effectiveness the objective to provide services was achieved. The mid-term to long-term effectiveness question refers more to the financial sustainability of the center. Please refer to the project management response under the sustainability chapter. (Written response provided by BRC project manager on the 03.08.2011)

*Information Market System* (AIMS) could be considered as the most effective interventions

Although the AIMS is still on the way towards financial sustainability, this information system may be considered as an efficient intervention and potentially – as a success story of the project. The aim of the system is to provide the target group (entrepreneurs in agriculture, agribusinesses and trade) with timely and reliable market information needed for more efficient access to the market and better business planning. The most demanded AIMS products among local SMEs are: the information newsletter „Agro-inform TJ“ (more than 800 subscribers since July 2010), SMS packages (158 subscribers), electronic information boards; internet portal focused on the trade of agricultural products attracts more than 2000 visitors monthly.

Due to the AIMS services – the publication of advertisements in the agricultural newspaper “Agroinform TJ” and on AIMS web-site, the production cooperative „Chorkuh“ (Head – Nematboi Olimov, Isfara district) was able to ensure a large contract in 2010 (worth of \$60,000) selling its production to a wholesale buyer.

With the information received during a training provided by the AFT IP „Jovid“ and with a loan specially designed for rural entrepreneurs by „Sughd Microfin“, Mr. Mukim Dadokhojaev, the Chairman of the farm cooperative “Sulaimonkhuja” (55 farmers, 10 of which are women) was able to start developing environmentally effective greenhouses (based upon use of solar heat (using clay), drop irrigation and organic fertilizers and bio-protection of crop). The demand for his products is high (especially off season). Currently, there is no price difference in the local market between organic and regular products but due to predictable, all-seasonal output, and high quality of the products, Mr. Dadokhojaev ensured up-from contracts for cucumbers and tomatoes. In addition, the “Sulaimonkhuja” experience received a lot of interest from the neighbouring farms.

Due to an affordable credit offered by „Sughd Microfin“ the private entrepreneur Mr. Sodiqov was able to start developing his cafe providing national food close to the border-crossing to Kyrgyzstan: he added new production lines such as baked goods and „manty“ (local dumplings) so to revive traditional recipes Mr. Sodiqov hired 2 retired culinary specialists, who train the younger generation on-site. Thanks to the renovation and improvements to products, the sales of the cafe went up, and Mr. Sodiqov plans to expand his operations to other locations along transport corridors, for instance, to the town of Chkalovsk.

The promotion of *environmentally friendly cotton-growing techniques* (demonstration, supported with training and dissemination of printed handouts and manuals) was an effective intervention, which generated a lot of interest from local farmers, especially because of increasing prices for synthetic chemical fertilizers.

The information about environmentally friendly technologies in cotton production was well received by the local farmers and applied to their agricultural practice. Ms. Ahmadjonova Saodat – the Chairman of the farm “Saodat Sarkor”, mentioned both environmental and financial impacts of using organic fertilizers and bio-protection for cotton growing: side by side with improving soil quality, the use of environmentally friendly techniques helped to increase productivity and save farmers’ funds (especially when the price of chemical fertilizers is dramatically rising).

The experience of “Saodat Sarkor” is replicated by neighbouring farms.

It is too early to make conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the two other key interventions: *mainstreaming of trade issues* in regional development and the *creation of Trade and Export Promotion Center*: both initiatives met their Phase I objectives and had positive institutional impacts, at the same time these initiatives were only initiated during Phase I, they are at the early stages of implementation, and their results will be more obvious at the completion of Phase II of the project.

The following factors contributed to effectiveness/ineffectiveness of specific interventions:

*Box 6. Effectiveness/Ineffectiveness Factors*

	<i><b>Kazakhstan</b></i>	<i><b>Kyrgyzstan</b></i>	<i><b>Tajikistan</b></i>
Effectiveness	<p>Creative and devoted project team</p> <p>Good knowledge of the region, understanding of local needs</p> <p>Well established relations with sub-regional and local authorities</p> <p>Efficient local IPs</p> <p>Transparent selection of IPs and beneficiaries</p>	<p>Focused and devoted project team</p> <p>Good knowledge of the region, understanding of local needs</p> <p>Well established relations with local authorities and key stakeholders</p> <p>Transparent selection of IPs and beneficiaries</p>	<p>Focused and devoted project team</p> <p>Complex, mutually complementary approach to the design of interventions</p> <p>Good knowledge of the region, understanding of local needs</p> <p>Concentration of efforts, sufficient level of intervention</p> <p>Efficient IPs</p> <p>Transparent selection of IPs and beneficiaries</p>
Ineffectiveness	<p>Limited export potential</p> <p>Budget constraints, resources are allocated without consideration of local costs and</p>	<p>Weak local private sector, limited export potential</p> <p>Geographic isolation of the Batken region,</p>	<p>Close border with Uzbekistan</p> <p>Almost exclusive concentration on rural development</p>

	<p>operational expenses</p> <p>Lack of geographic focus, spread of interventions over large territory</p> <p>Fragmented, not always mutually complementary interventions</p> <p>Focus on micro- and small entrepreneurs; decision of the project not to target medium and large producers and exporters</p>	<p>broken transport infrastructure, issues with border-crossing with Uzbekistan</p> <p>Predominance of micro- and small entrepreneurs in the local SME structure; limited number of medium and large producers with export potential</p>	<p>Focus on micro- and small entrepreneurs; decision of the project not to target medium and large producers and exporters</p>
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### *Efficiency of the Phase I*

The implementation of Component II in Phase I may be considered **as efficient**: tasks were completed in due time (with the exception of the promotion of environmentally friendly technologies in Kazakhstan); the basic indicators were met and exceeded across all the target areas.

A pro-active approach of the PT, establishment of productive cooperation with other international technical assistance projects, as well as with local authorities, NGOs and business services providers has contributed to the overall efficient Phase I implementation.

The Project in **Kazakhstan** was implemented with a relatively small budget (especially, taking into consideration higher cost of living in Kazakhstan in comparison with the other two target areas), supporting varied activities over an extended geographic area (the distance between Semey city and Oblast center Ust-Kamenogorsk, for instance, is 180 km, and some of the Project beneficiaries were located more than 300 km away from the Project team office).

The Project team in Kazakhstan demonstrated a lot of creativity so that they could meet and outperform the indicators:

- Cooperation with other UNDP and donor-funded projects, like for example, UNDP Oralmen supporting intervention;
- Cost-efficient involvement of local partners (sometimes with a certain indirect contribution from their part, like in the case of “Bereke”, KBC, “Zubr”, WEA interested in supporting and promoting local businesses and strengthening its own professional networks);



- Partnership building with local authorities, which allowed the project to reach out to remote communities in the Semey sub-region in an effective and efficient way;
- Sound project management decisions, like for example, the decision not to build from scratch a resource/information center in Semey with unclear sustainability perspectives but rather use and strengthen capacity of existing training organizations and business services providers.

At the same time, certain factors and approaches to the project design and implementation affected project efficiency in Kazakhstan, including the following:

- Complicated local governance in the target area of the project implementation in Kazakhstan: according to the local administrative structure, Semey and neighbouring territories are subordinated to Ust-Kamenogorsk – the regional capital of Eastern Kazakhstan; administration of the region has insisted in a bigger involvement onto project related activities and in wider project presence in Ust-Kamenogorsk despite the initial focus of the Phase I exclusively on the Semey sub-region;
- Lack of geographic focus in the Semey sub-region: following the demand of the Semey local government administration, the project interventions were implemented in a wide range of remote rural communities, which led to long commute hours for IPs, high transportation costs. As efforts were not bundle onto a smaller geographical area, it is more difficult to demonstrate the ‘impact’/outcome of the interventions;
- Insufficient focus on the target beneficiaries under conditions of limited resources and implementation time: too varied beneficiaries base – from medium-sized Semey- and Ust-Kamenogorsk- based companies, to micro and small entrepreneurs in remote rural areas, to women considering business start-up, and to Nomads-Oralman, was a reason of a certain fragmentation of the project’s efforts.

**In Kyrgyzstan,** good knowledge of the area and its developmental needs, pro-active involvement of regional and local authorities into project’s activities, use of local resources and cooperation with other UN Agencies and donor-funded projects contributed to the efficiency of the project operations: all the tasks were completed and exceeded. At the same time, similarly to Kazakhstan, more geographically focused concentration of interventions could provide for increased efficiency especially considering limited resources available.

**In Tajikistan,** the project’s decision to concentrate efforts on a limited geographic area, and on a selected group of farmers and small entrepreneurs in agribusiness, supported further the efficient use of limited resources, and produced visible and demonstrable effects. Only large funds provided for the creation of Trade and Export Promotion Center in Khujand with currently unclear sustainability perspectives look at the end of the Phase

I as a risky investment, which, in the evaluator's opinion, may undermine otherwise a highly efficient project implementation.

### ***Sustainability of Phase I Interventions***

At this stage it is difficult to assess the sustainability of the different activities, as Phase I had a limited duration (one year) and was only recently concluded. In general, interventions bringing immediate and/or obvious results for beneficiaries, like the creation of storage facilities, packaging line, and apricot nursery in Kyrgyzstan, as well as those meeting effective local demand (supported with the ability to pay), such as microfinance activities, training and information sharing systems in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have a better chance to remain sustainable.

Among the activities designed for **Kazakhstan**, the grant supporting provision of *micro-credit* to rural SMEs has better chances for sustainability: the fund "Bereke" took the decision to retain the product designed under the AfT Phase I in its portfolio for the coming 3-4 years; the revolving funds will be used to provide loans to small manufacturers with a less than average interest rate to stimulate innovation and the improvement of the production base. During the evaluation mission to the target area, one micro-credit from the revolving fund was already issued, and two more were going through approval process (two borrowers out of the three applicants were women-entrepreneurs).

The *trade mainstreaming* and related public-private dialogue, initiated under Phase I will be continued in the future, although additional advice and expertise from the AfT project will be needed, especially with respect to the Regional Trade Development Strategy.

Local *business services providers* both in Semey and Ust-Kamenogorsk have a good perspective to be sustainable leveraging growing local demand for training, information and consulting. At the same time, provision of business services to the vulnerable groups including youth, women, recent immigrants, etc. may require additional support from the state/regional budget and from donor-funded projects to fill the current gaps in the state's socio-economic policies. The evaluation mission also registered an unmet demand for a local Economic/Trade Development Consulting Center in Semey, which could be organized as a result of bringing together efforts of local public, private and civic sectors (under the umbrella of local administration, university, or business association like WEA).

Despite the difficulties with the *promotion of environmentally friendly technologies* under Phase I of the project, this type of intervention could be sustainable. The improved connections with UNDP-led environmental projects implemented recently in Eastern Kazakhstan may be recommended from this perspective with possible replication of the acquired good practices, as well as involvement of external expertise for the advocacy and lobbying of green commodities production and green jobs creation.

The region of Batken (**Kyrgyzstan**) is facing the most difficult and complex development challenges of all of the three regions, consequently the sustainability perspective of the different interventions is more complex. While hard investment can be considered most likely to be sustainable, soft interventions such as the business support services are more problematic mostly due to the inability to pay for such services.

The *trade mainstreaming* has better perspectives due to an involvement of the sub-regional authorities and initiated dialogue of the public and private sectors, already reflected in the Regional Trade Development Strategy. At the same time, more efforts should be undertaken with respect to further increase public sector capacity and continuing advice on the trade promotion measures to provide more sustainability to trade mainstreaming initiatives.

Despite the commitment of the *Batken Market Information Center's* personnel and support from the AfT during the Phase I implementation, this organization will not be able to reach self-sustainability in the near future. This is mainly due to the fact that there are very few farmers/entrepreneurs which are able to pay for market information. Continued support from the donor community, provision of certain funds from the regional budget, as well as facilitation of commercial links of BMIC with the farmers associations supported by the project could facilitate its transition to sustainability.<sup>9</sup>

The sustainability of the intervention targeting *pilot farmers associations* has good perspectives: their capacities were strengthened and both associations are currently implementing more cash generating activities for their members: “Mol Tushum” installed a packaging line and brought rice from the Batken region to the Bishkek market; “Aikok” took the decision to establish an agricultural consulting center (cost recovery basis) at its premises to serve the needs of local farmers. To support this trend, the leaders of these associations should be provided with additional business skills and business management training to ensure associations’ competitiveness in the local and regional markets.

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<sup>9</sup> Project management response: The project is aware of this both for the BMIC and TEPC. With regards to the BMIC, the matter of financial sustainability is clearly an issue. The demand for their services is existing; however the possibility of income generation from this demand is limited. The project is currently supporting the BMIC to reach sustainability. As the local government structures are heavily involved in the BMIC it is expected that the premises as well as part of the salaries will be provided for by the local budget. Remaining financial needs will need to be covered from commercial activities of the BMIC (service provision). The BMIC is innovative in trying to identify sources of income, may this be through the ‘single window’ services they are providing, the radio stations, the hotline, or other services. These services are all developed to support the center financially. The project’s role will be to further support the center in identifying new ways of income, as well as to continue to build the substantive capacities of the center’s staff. With regards to the TEPC, financial sustainability is achievable. The center needs to be firmly established and develop its capacities, as well as its client base. The TEPC is fortunate in that its possible client base is much larger than the Batken one, thereby vastly improving the possibility of financial sustainability. The BMIC clientele, unlike that of the TEPC, mostly consists of small rural farmers and entrepreneurs whose liquidity is extremely limited, reducing the possibility of income. Nevertheless, they are providing a vital service for this community. (Written response provided by BRC project manager on the 03.08.2011)

*Environmentally friendly technologies* have a natural appeal to local producers because of proved efficiency and easy replication of the solutions selected by the project. However, their further dissemination may require additional commitment from the beneficiaries and continuing support from the stakeholders and project's implementing partners.

The majority of activities implemented in **Tajikistan** has a reasonable sustainability perspectives. *Capacity Building on Trade Mainstreaming* will be continued during Phase II and should lead to the development and endorsement of the Regional Trade Development Strategy with participation of key local stakeholders.

*The development of technical and marketing skills of members of selected farmer associations* will be continued by the project implementing partner „Jovid“ both on a donor-funded and commercial basis.

The *agricultural market information system* (AIMS) supported by the project under Phase I, possesses a committed management with a clear vision towards financial sustainability, growing market demand, and established working relations with market information providers in Tajikistan and neighbouring countries, creating a good basis for reaching sustainability in the coming 2-3 years.

The sustainability perspectives of the regional *Trade and Export Promotion Center* in Khujand are currently less obvious: on the one hand, the TEPC is affiliated with the Association of Entrepreneurs of Sughd region, which provides an access to a wide client base; on the other hand, the Center still has limited capacities, especially with respect to business management skills, financial management and competitiveness strengthening.<sup>10</sup>

The grant provided by the project to the NGO micro-loan fund „Sughd Microfin“ *for expanding SMEs access to financial services* will continue as a revolving fund in the region in the coming years. The long-term sustainability of „Sughd Microfin“ operations are threatened though due to the provision of subsidised loans with interest rates often lower than the inflation: according to the NGO's Director, Mr. Madaminov, because of this reason „Sughd Microfin“ revolving funds were diminished by \$60,000 dollars over the three last years.

*The promotion of environmentally friendly technologies and green commodity production* may be considered as a sustainable intervention: information about good practices was widely disseminated in the region and will be further shared by the project's implementing partners and beneficiaries. At the same time, this specific activity may receive additional informational support at later phases of the project implementation.

Factors, contributing to sustainability/non-sustainability of selected interventions are presented in the table below:

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<sup>10</sup> For comments, please refer to the response under footnote number nine. (Written response provided by BRC project manager on the 03.08.2011)

### ***Box 7. Sustainability/Non-sustainability Factors***

	<b><i>Kazakhstan</i></b>	<b><i>Kyrgyzstan</i></b>	<b><i>Tajikistan</i></b>
Sustainability	Growing demand for financial and non-financial business services  Initiated public-private dialogue	Understanding of local needs  Relevance and quality of interventions  Initiated public-private dialogue	Relevance of intervention  Clear focus on client needs  Continued work with a client  Skills and capacities of services providers
Non-sustainability	Limited export potential  Non-sufficient purchasing power of rural entrepreneurs	Non-sufficient local capacities  Limited purchasing power of local entrepreneurs  Limited regional trade	Unrealistic sustainability plans; weak understanding of involved costs and needed marketing efforts due to weak capacities (TEPC)  <i>De-facto</i> closed border with Uzbekistan

### ***Impacts and Contribution to the UNDAF Outcomes and Project Output***

The limited duration of Phase I, geographical spreading of activities (with the exception of Tajikistan), the evaluation taking place shortly after the completion of Phase I, complementary character to some other donor-funded projects in the target areas<sup>11</sup>, - these and other factors do not allow to concretely measure the impact of Phase I interventions and contribution to the UNDAF Outcomes and the project output – it is more relevant to discuss impact and contribution trends.

Taking into consideration the general relevance and effectiveness of Phase I activities, confirmed by the interviewed stakeholders and beneficiaries, and contribution of the project to local capacity strengthening and economic/trade potential development, the conclusion may be made, that component II/phase I contributed to the creation of conditions for the improvement of the socio-economic situation and poverty alleviation on the local level in all target areas of the project through strengthening technical and business skills, sharing knowledge, supporting access to markets, testing the creation of models and approaches for income generation with a focus on trade promotion. The change in perception of trade, in attitude towards local micro and small entrepreneurs from the representatives of public sector, better understanding of regional developmental

<sup>11</sup> Project management response: this refers to the close collaboration of the Aid for Trade project with other projects. As interventions are joined efforts, so to maximize the impact and avoid duplication it sometimes is difficult to measure the exact contribution of the project. (Written response provided by BRC project manager on the 03.08.2011)

priorities, also represent important results of Phase I contributing to achieving the anticipated impact.

The contribution to the key project output: “private sector capacity is enhanced to increase exports and to gain from transport infrastructure“ was made almost exclusively with respect to micro and small entrepreneurs; medium-sized and large private companies received less attention and support from the project in Phase I.

Phase I of Component II had a strong focus on gender issues and some key activities, like business skills development/capacity building interventions (training and advice) and assistance in getting access to microcredit paid a lot of attention to women-entrepreneurs. For instance:

- About 60% of the total number of the 996 participants of the training/capacity building seminars, conducted in the Eastern Kazakhstan, were represented by women; 40% of 170 persons trained in Sughd region, and 41% of 204 trained in the Batken region;
- 5 out of 11 loans issued by the local microcredit organization „Bereke“ to the farmers and entrepreneurs in the Semey area of Kazakhstan went to women (during the life-time of the project), and 2 out of 3 issued afterwards (from January 2010 to June 2011 from the revolving fund initially supported with an AfT grant); 37% of the beneficiaries of the microloan programme in Tajikistan were women.

According to the interviews with direct beneficiaries, the participation in the project activities has contributed to strengthening the position of this specific vulnerable group, building its business-related skills, in some cases – supporting access to finance needed for business development, and overall – to the mainstreaming of gender equality on the local level.

## ***Lessons Learned and Recommendations***

Analysis of project documentation, consultations with the PT and interviews with key stakeholders and beneficiaries in all three areas of Component II / Phase I provided information for the lessons learned and recommendations, which are briefly summarized below:

### ***Box 8. Lessons Learned and Recommendations***

	<i><b>Lessons Learned</b></i>	<i><b>Recommendations</b></i>	<i><b>Project management response <sup>12</sup></b></i>
1.	The relevance of planned interventions is a key for their effective and efficient implementation. The relevance of recommendations of the environmental base-line assessment was not obvious for the local project personnel which affected the effectiveness of this project's component in Kazakhstan.	To ensure more active participation of local experts in the base-line assessment and ensure a full applicability of recommended interventions to local conditions.	This point is well taken and was considered during the design of phase II interventions.
2.	Resources allocated for the project implementation should be in line with local costs and prices to ensure project effectiveness. Equal budget distribution to the three target areas of Phase I, with different operational expenses and cost of living, put on the PT in Kazakhstan more severe budget constrains in comparison with the two other target areas and somehow limited involvement of more sophisticated local IPs.	Take into consideration the real in-country operational expenses while planning budget allocation to the target areas.	Noted
3.	Phase I provided different models with respect to selecting geographic areas for interventions and target beneficiaries: in Tajikistan interventions were geographically focused on a limited area and the rural entrepreneurs were considered as a prime target audience; in Kazakhstan the interventions were widespread over a large territory and varied beneficiaries were targeted – from rural start-up businesses to well established middle-sized companies in Ust-Kamenogorsk; and Kyrgyzstan being in the middle from this perspective – having the majority of interventions in Batken for the varied group of beneficiaries but also servicing well established entrepreneurs and farmers in the remote areas of the region. In the evaluator's opinion, geographically concentrated and well targeted interventions have more developmental impact, and the good practice	At the project design stage, considering local developmental priorities and needs, to take a managerial decision regarding interventions' focus: geographic concentration vs. widespread activities; focus on leaders vs. focus on disadvantaged; priority target groups. To consider expansion of project's activities to the leading local companies with a bigger export potential to promote links with them of local suppliers to support local clusters.	This is an excellent point, and we will ensure that this is disseminated to the new countries as soon as possible.

<sup>12</sup> Written response provided by BRC project manager on the 03.08.2011

	acquired during their implementation could be disseminated later in other geographic areas and be useful for other groups of entrepreneurs in the target countries.		
4.	Financial and non-financial business support services are under development in the target countries (especially in Kazakhstan and in a lesser degree in Tajikistan), and the local commercial companies and NGOs are trying to achieve sustainability operating in a competitive environment with a limited purchasing power. Donor-funded business supporting services (provided mostly for free) often undermine efforts of local organizations trying to be self-sustainable.	While planning business services provision to consider the situation in the local market, to consult key existing actors in the field with an aim to find solutions not undermining efforts of the local business services providers, to deliver free/subsidised services to target social groups and geographic areas currently underserved with local companies/NGOs.	This point is well take. Please refer to footnote number 2 for a response from the project.
5.	Working relations with local authorities on the regional and district levels proved to be critical for easing access to local communities and facilitating public-private dialogue. The public sector expressed a lot of interest in participating in capacity building interventions (both on a trainer and trainee sides) in such relatively new areas such as trade mainstreaming and trade contribution to the local socio-economic development.	To foresee for the later stages of the project more capacity building interventions for the public sector.	The project is foreseeing to a certain extend such capacity building interventions under phase II.
6.	The public-private dialogue initiated in the trade mainstreaming and capacity building interventions proved to be an output highly appreciated both by the private sector representatives and local governments. In some areas, like Khujand and Semey, such an informal communication took place for the very first time, and preconditions for its further development were created.	While considering project activities for the later stages, to foresee more attention to the public-private dialogue facilitation with its possible institutionalisation.	The project is planning to further support this public-private sector dialogue under phase II.
7.	The entry of new entities into business is complicated in all target areas of the project. It is especially true with respect to getting access to	This gap may be considered while planning interventions in the future, targeting employment creation and income generation for	Noted.



	start-up capital, which is <i>de facto</i> unavailable at local banking and non-banking financial institutions due to a high risks associated with start-up businesses.	vulnerable groups, as well as formalization of existing micro-businesses: non-for-profit micro financial institutions may be supported in developing special start-up product, business incubation for trade/export development companies may be also considered.	
8.	The least developed areas of the project implementation (first of all in the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan) have very limited internal resources, which cannot support the steady development of local production capacities; due to a lack of marketable collaterals, high interest rates and short repayment period, local entrepreneurs cannot consider a formal credit as a funding option.	For critical developmental situations, provision of grants to initiate income generation could be recommended.	Noted.
9.	Production cycles of entrepreneurs in agriculture and agribusiness are highly seasonal: farmers have more opportunities to participate in training and skills development after the completion of intensive field works; demand for credit correlate with periods when the investment is made into tools, fertilizers, etc.	This seasonality should be considered for planning of project activities targeting stakeholders and beneficiaries in agriculture and agribusiness.	This has been one of our main lessons learned in 2010. This lesson has been disseminated to the new countries under phase II.
10.	Various business information centers created by donor-funded projects in many transitional and post-conflict countries have limited demand (as clients do not possess the necessary solvency) for their services and face serious sustainability challenges. However, different SME representatives in Semey expressed interest in having an institutionalised center where they could receive trade related information, consultation and advise. The idea of organizing such a consultation center was formulated also in the Semey administration, which is ready to provide facility for a center. According to the interviewed beneficiaries, such a center may	To consider the idea of supporting the organization of a trade information center in Semey operating as a result of combined contribution of private, public and civic sectors.	The project is supporting under phase II the establishment of the SME Service Center in the oblast capital, as well as a network of 13 focal-points in the regions.

	operate as a SME business club or be created under the umbrella of a successful non-for-profit business service provider like WEA.		
11.	In certain cases, groups of trainees were composed of persons with different educational level, business experience and understanding of business and trade issues, often interested in different topics. Such heterogeneous groups' composition affected the quality of training, especially under the condition that the majority of sessions were short – one day long and widely varied expectations of participants hardly could be met by trainers during this limited time.	Better-focused training sessions and more homogeneous groups could be recommended for training and information sharing sessions for the upcoming project's activities.	This is noted and will be disseminated as lessons learned to our new countries under phase II.
12.	The analysis of training curriculum developed for Phase I in the target areas, review of the training handouts and interviews with implementing partners and beneficiaries led to the conclusion that the training sessions offered by the project were focused more on technical skills development (in agricultural production and post-harvesting, quality control, compliance with requirements of tax and custom legislation and regulations, etc.) than on understanding of the business side of trade and business management skills building; the majority of SMEs and farmers associations still face issues in business planning and managing their scarce resources, including basic financial management.	For future project interventions, training modules focused on business skills development may be recommended; the target audience for this specific training could be represented by the business/farmer associations' leaders, SMEs in agribusiness, local wholesalers and transportation companies.	This is noted. We will also try to work closely with ILO DWP to learn from their long-standing experience in business related trainings. The suggestion on further incorporating larger more experiences wholesaler in the elaboration of training curriculum is well taken.
13.	The majority of stakeholders and beneficiaries in the target areas had limited exposure to the experience of doing business outside regions of their origin, which has a negative effect on the understanding of regional and international markets and ways of reaching international clients.	For this specific developmental situation, the wider participation of stakeholders and beneficiaries in site-visits and trade shows outside the regions of their origin could be recommended for the later stages of the project to familiarize target groups with good international practice and facilitate new commercial contacts.	This is planned to be undertaken under phase II.

14.	The vast portion of stakeholders and beneficiaries, especially in rural areas, prefer local languages for training, information sharing and capacity building purposes.	Depending on the ethno-linguistic situation in the target areas, the local languages should be actively used in various project activities.	Under phase I, the project tried to identify trainers speaking the local language. However, there seems to exist a discrepancy in some countries where trainers prefer to speak Russian instead of the local language. Under phase II, the project will increase its efforts in this matter.
15.	Phase I activities received good media coverage in all target areas of the project. At the same time, often, the media channels selected by the project (normally, official newspaper of the regional administration, official TV and radio channels) do not correspond to the media channels preferred by the target audience – farmers and SMEs (local business newspaper, local news radio stations, internet), and the target audience is not fully informed about project activities.	For the later stages of the project, to re-assess the media channels used and to expand media coverage to the channels popular with the target groups.	Noted
16.	Various groups of beneficiaries were approached and selected during Phase I implementation in the target areas of the project. To reach a larger number of farmers and SMEs, the client bases of local IPs were used and information sessions were organized in the local communities, where the project agenda was presented to the broad audience. The information about the selection of beneficiaries often was not so transparent, which left some beneficiaries unhappy with the selection results (like in case of „Bereke“ microloans, for example).	To ensure more transparency in selecting beneficiaries, especially, in such sensitive areas as issuing grants or providing subsidized loans.	The project is of the opinion that in considering the context of operation the project used a maximum possible transparency in the selection of beneficiaries. A response to this was also provided under footnote 5.
17.	The cooperation with other UNDP programs (Area Based Development, Rural Growth, environmental initiatives), and UN agencies (ILO) provided more opportunities for achieving results in an effective and efficient way.	To strengthen cooperation and information sharing within UNDP and with other UN agencies: ILO, for example, could provide well structured basic business skills development training, as well as Get Ahead course (Gender and Entrepreneurship Together), designed specifically for women-entrepreneurs; UNDP implemented a series of projects promoting	This is an excellent and suggestion and the project will liaise with ILO to discuss this.

		green technologies and approaches to local development, including those in Eastern Kazakhstan, and this experience could be useful for AfT purposes, etc.	
18.	The project personnel acquired valuable experience during Phase I design and implementation; the information sharing within the project team could increase operations effectiveness and efficiency.	<p>To ensure continuation of a good project management and good practices sharing within the AfT PT, the existing system of intra-project communication could be supported with additional measures and tools (depending on the budget limits and available resources), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 week-long on-site consultations provided on a regular basis (for instance, semi-annually) by the Project management and international experts</li> <li>• AfT knowledge and experience-sharing sessions organized for the field personnel</li> <li>• Exposure of the PT to the wider developmental agenda of UNDP, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>The project will organise a retreat hoping to address the two last points.</p> <p>Considering the number of countries under phase II, it will be difficult to organise week-long missions every six months. The PM in BRC is currently visiting each country once a year. BRC will consider possibilities to address this recommendation.</p>

## Annexes



### *Annex 1: Terms of Reference*

#### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Evaluation of Component II of the Wider Europe: Aid for Trade for Central Asia, South Caucasus and Western CIS**

**Type of Contract:** IC (Consultant)  
**Languages Required:** English and Russian  
**Duration:** May 2011 (approximately 23 working days: 4 working days per country including writing of the final report)  
**Location:** home-based with travel to Semey, Batken and Khujand  
**Application Deadline:** from ASAP for 2 weeks

*Please note that UNDP is not in the position to accept incomplete applications - please make sure that your application contains all details as specified below in this notice.*

### **1. Background**

UNDP's Wider Europe project was initiated by the UNDP Bratislava Regional Center in partnership with several UNDP country offices. The purpose of this project was to improve the implementation of pro-poor trade reforms and **trade capacity development** measures by identifying trade policy responses to the global economic crisis, formulating trade-related needs and capacity gaps, and piloting technical assistance interventions.

The project focused on three sub-regions: **Western CIS** (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine), **South Caucasus** (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and **Central Asia** (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and consisted of the following components:

*Component I* (*Aid for Trade Road Map in Central Asia: Identification of national and regional AfT priorities*) - the goal of this Component was to identify a set **of policy recommendations and technical assistance needs** aimed at improving the contribution of trade to human development and poverty reduction in SPECA countries.

The main outputs of the project include: the development of national **Aid for Trade Needs Assessment** reports and the **AfT Central Asia Regional Review**, which highlight capacity gaps, present trade-related policy recommendations, and provide an action matrix for potential donor assistance on the national and regional level. Currently, all AfT Needs Assessments (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) and the Regional Review have been finalized.

The national studies provided an input to the *AfT Regional Review* (a document identifying regional needs). The *AfT Regional Review* constituted the main background document for the *AfT Ministerial Meeting* hosted by the Government of Azerbaijan in Baku on December 1-2, 2010.

*Component II (Aid for Trade in Central Asia: Support to Economic Development along Trade Corridors)* - the goal of this Component was to develop **trade and trade development capacities** of entrepreneurs and local government structures along selected priority transport corridors in Central Asia. Key obstacles (to trade) small and medium businesses in Central Asia face today result from a lack of market information, knowledge (e.g. international quality and sanitary standards, trade procedures), management skills (e.g. negotiation, marketing), access to international business partnerships, and access to services (e.g. financial services). Information and institutional constraints on producers identifying the best market opportunities and lack of knowledge of potential and existing value chains are especially severe for farmers or other small and medium-sized enterprises in both urban and rural areas of all Central Asian countries.

*Component III (Aid for Trade Needs Assessments in South Caucasus and Western CIS)* - the purpose of Component III is the identification of **capacity gaps** (institutional, human, etc.), and the **development of policy recommendations** and concrete project proposals for AfT interventions in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine. National studies will serve as background studies for national debates on trade policy issues, and provide background for and propose potential project interventions. Final papers will be presented during a meeting with ambassadors to trade organizations in Geneva. The meeting will be organized jointly by UNDP and UNECE in June 2011.

The project is implemented by the UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre and the respective UNDP country offices.

The present TOR focuses on the evaluation of component II of the Wider Europe initiative. A more detailed description of Component II can be found below:

#### **Component II - *Aid for Trade for Central Asia: Support to Economic Development along Trade Corridors***

##### *Activities*

*Component II* was implemented in three Central Asian Countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, in the following regions:

- Kazakhstan: Semey Region;
- Kyrgyzstan: Batken Region;
- Tajikistan: Soughd Region in Ferghana Valley.

Activities under project *Component II* in selected areas included:

- 1) Trade marketing baseline assessment for export promotion interventions;

- 2) Capacity building on trade mainstreaming<sup>13</sup> targeted at local public authorities, and support to set up alliances with business associations for export promotion;
- 3) Establishing *regional export promotion centers* in identified regions to provide customized services.
- 4) Expanding SMEs' access to financial services by developing trade-focused microfinance products (trade finance) for supporting small export oriented agri-processing/fruit drying/packaging enterprises.
- 5) Promotion of environmentally friendly technologies and green commodity production to develop customized solutions (supply chain strategies) for producing and exporting key green commodities - and to provide financial support for piloting initiatives.

### **EVALUATION PURPOSE:**

The project evaluation is being conducted at the request of the donor and UNDP to provide information about project implementation to ensure accountability for the expenditures to date and the implementation of the activities and so that managers can make any necessary corrections under phase II of the initiative. The results of this evaluation will be shared with the Project Board and relevant UNDP country offices, and will inform project implementation under phase II. Information specifically targeting the successes and failures of the Wider Europe project is especially sought after.

### **EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES:**

This evaluation is expected to evaluate component II of the WIDER EUROPE: AID FOR TRADE FOR CENTRAL ASIA, SOUTH CAUCASUS AND WESTERN CIS project. The evaluation will cover the full implementation period (Aug 2009- Feb 2011) of the project, all the countries covered by the component, and the beneficiaries involved in the project. Component I and III will also undergo an evaluation; due to their distinctive nature, separate Terms of References to address the specific needs of these components have been developed.

#### **Objectives of the evaluation are the following:**

Assess the extent, to which the component achieved their overall objectives and outputs as identified in the project document and national annual working plans:

- Review effectiveness of the overall project interventions, their main achievements, compliance with expanding country's needs;
- Review and evaluate the extent to which project activities have reached the intended beneficiaries;

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<sup>13</sup> Mainstreaming trade policies in national development strategies involves the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies, creating synergies in support of agreed development goals. Mainstreaming trade in local institutions involves the promotion of mutually reinforcing private sector development and export promotion support measures across different departments.

- Assess the likelihood of continuation and sustainability of project outputs and benefits after completion of the project - analyze how far the system of exit policy in the project ensures the sustainability of the project benefits;
- Identify gaps/weaknesses in the project design and provide recommendations as to their improvement;
- Identify lessons learnt from projects interventions.

Central to the evaluation are the following concepts:

**Relevance**-this is directly related to the consistency of activities and targets with national and local development programmes and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries. This also relates to the relevance to UNDP's corporate and human development priorities.

**Effectiveness:** measures the manner in which the intended output targets were achieved. Measuring effectiveness involves an assessment of cause and effect in that how far can observable changes be attributed to project activities. This includes the following steps:

- Measuring change in the observed output and outcome;
- Attributing observed changes or progress towards the project;
- Assessing the value of the change (positive and/or negative).

**Efficiency** measures how economically resources (funds, expertise and time) are converted into results.

**Sustainability** is a key issue for the activities implemented under component II. It is important to measure to what extent the benefits of the activities will continue after the project has ended. Assessing sustainability involves evaluating to what extent the capacity can be maintained.

**Impact**, especially from UNDP's perspective, measures the changes on human development that are caused by the projects activities. Impact evaluation not only provides useful information for the continuation of phase II, it will also allow evaluating the success of the projects. Impact evaluation faces a number of challenges, first of all it is very often difficult to attribute impacts to certain activities. Furthermore, it is difficult to evaluate impact in a certain time span. Indeed, an impact evaluation ideally should be conducted some time after the completions of the project.

Evaluations in UNDP are guided by the principles of **human rights** and **gender equality**. As a result, when collecting data, evaluators need to ensure that women and disadvantaged groups are adequately represented.

## EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

As component II was implemented in three different countries, the questions below need to be addressed for each country, as well as across the component as a whole:



- Measure the project contribution made towards achieving the Output (as per country AWP and RRF)
- Were the stated targets achieved?
- To what level were the different interventions effective?
- What factors (external, project design, project management, project approach, levels of intervention) have contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
- How do the beneficiaries and other partners perceive the project interventions?
- What factors have contributed to relevance or irrelevance?
- To what measure have the different interventions been sustainable? What factors have contributed to sustainability or unsustainability?
- To what extent do the country office staff and national project staff perceive the workflow between them and BRC as satisfactory – management structure? What was unsatisfactory? What can be done to improve this?
- What were the reasons for implementation delays and was UNDP's response satisfactory to mitigate these?
- What is the evidence on impact and success stories? What has/have been the critical factors to the success?
- Were the outputs of the international consultants (conducted during the inception period) beneficial in project design and implementation?
- Any other questions defined during the pre-evaluation process
- Other donors' activities and complementarities with them
- What effects have the activities had on women's status and empowerment

## **METHODOLOGY:**

In order to gather evidence to address the evaluation questions, the evaluation needs to:

- Assess existing documentation (mainly quarterly reports, AWP, RRFs, visibility materials, project briefs and information on Teamworks)-desk review;
- Use standardized questionnaires to obtain information from stakeholders;
- Conduct one to one interviews with stakeholders and project staff;
- Conduct on-site observation (field/project sites visits) to record accurate information on-site;
- Conduct group or individual interviews;
- Make a presentation of, and discuss, interim findings and recommendations with UNDP team members in the country and in BRC (online);
- Formulate practical and helpful recommendations for the second phase of the project;

Data will be collected by the consultant selected to conduct the evaluation.

Sampling criteria: each country activity needs to be represented in the sample for each of the countries participating in the project.

Activities that have more than 100 direct beneficiaries need to have a sample of at least 10% of the beneficiaries. This sample needs to consist of at least 50% women. In addition, indirect beneficiaries need to be consulted.

Activities that have less than 100 direct beneficiaries need to have a sample of at least 20% of the beneficiaries. This sample needs to consist of at least 50% women. In addition, indirect beneficiaries need to be consulted.

In addition, samples should not only include community/association/government high-level representatives, but also ordinary beneficiaries.

In addition to targeting direct partners, the evaluation will also include project staff, country office staff, relevant government partners, private sector, and relevant development partners.

#### **EVALUATION ETHICS:**

Evaluations in UNDP are conducted in accordance with the principles outlines in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’<sup>14</sup>. The evaluation needs to be compliant to the standards set forth in these guidelines.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS:**

Overall monitoring and implementation will be ensured by UNDP BRC, in close collaboration with the relevant UNDP COs and project staff in the country offices.

## **2. Description of Responsibilities:**

The Evaluation Team will consist of one independent short-term International Consultant (Evaluation Team Leader) and the UNDP’s Central Asian Economist. Under the overall facilitation of UNDP’s project manager, the Evaluation Team will conduct a participatory project evaluation.

The **Evaluation Team Leader** will have overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of the final evaluation report to UNDP. Specifically, the Team Leader will perform the following tasks:

- Lead and manage the evaluation mission;
- Design the detailed evaluation scope and methodology and approach;

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ethical+guidelines>

- Conduct the evaluation in accordance with the proposed objective and scope of the evaluation;
- Draft and communicate the evaluation report;
- Liaise with the UNDP regional economist;
- Finalize the evaluation report in English and submit it to UNDP.

#### **TIMELINE AND SCHEDULE (tentative):**

The mission will commence in May 2011. The duration of the assignment is up to 23 working days, (4 working days per country) including writing of the final report.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Desk review of relevant reports, Evaluation design, methodology and detailed work plan,	Two days	On-line	International consultant
Initial briefing	One day	On-line	UNDP BRC, International consultant,
Consultations, meetings as well as in-person interviews related to the evaluation including relevant partners	Four days per country	Khujand Batken Semey	UNDP, International consultant,
Preparation of draft evaluation report and recommendations	Four days	Home based	International consultant, UNDP
Finalization of evaluation report and recommendations incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and UNDP COs and submission of the final evaluation report	Four days	Home based	International consultant, UNDP

#### **DOCUMENTS TO BE STUDIED:**

UNDP corporate policy documents:

1. Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for results
2. UNDP Result-Based Management: Technical Note

Project related documents:

1. Project document;
2. Quarterly reports
3. Mission reports
4. AWP, RRFS
5. Evaluation report of the Area based development programme in Kyrgyzstan
6. Baseline assessments for the country interventions under component II

7. Mini-needs assessments for country activities under component II, where applicable
8. Other documents and materials related to the Project are evaluated (from the government, donors, etc.)

Useful links:

<http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/A659BADA-F203-1EE9-BFCED3F34E94AAF9>  
(public)

### **Outputs provided by the consultant:**

1. Evaluation inception report (prior to start of evaluation mission)
2. Draft evaluation report (2 weeks after the evaluation mission)
3. Final evaluation report with dedicated sections per country and per activity (across countries) (1 week after reception of comments from stakeholders)
4. Evaluation action points and other relevant knowledge products

## **3. Competencies**

- Strong analytical, communication and report writing skills
- Capacity to work in a team
- Good interpersonal/ communication skills to work with the target group representatives

## **4. Qualifications**

- A.** Higher education (post graduate) in a subject related to socio-economic development;
- B.** Minimum 7-10 years of professional expertise in international development co-operation, including programme/project evaluation, impact assessment and strategic recommendations for continued support/development of programming/strategies;  
Extensive experience in conducting evaluations, strong working knowledge of UNDP poverty reduction, rural development and trade development activities;  
Extensive knowledge of results-based management evaluation, UNDP policies, procedures, as well as participatory monitoring and evaluation methodologies and approaches ;
- C.** Excellent professional knowledge of the CIS region, especially Central Asia – Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan;
- D.** Fluency in written and spoken English and Russian;

## 5. Evaluation of Applicants

Individual consultants will be evaluated based on a cumulative analysis **taking into consideration the combination of the applicants' qualifications and financial proposal.**

The award of the contract will be made to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria (see below).

Only the highest ranked candidates who would be found qualified for the job will be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

Technical Criteria - 70% of total evaluation – max. 35 points:

- *Criteria A* (see Qualification A.) – max points: 5
- *Criteria B* (see Qualification B.)– max points: 12
- *Criteria C* (see Qualification C.)– max points: 10
- *Criteria D* (see Qualification D.) – max points: 8

Financial Criteria - 30% of total evaluation – max. 15points

## 6. Application procedures

Qualified candidates are requested to apply online via this website. The application should contain:

- **Cover letter** explaining why you are the most suitable candidate for the advertised position. Please paste the letter into the "Resume and Motivation" section of the electronic application.
- **Filled P11 form** including past experience in similar projects and contact details of referees  
(blank form can be downloaded from [http://europeandcis.undp.org/files/hrforms/P11\\_modified\\_for\\_SCs\\_and\\_ICs.doc](http://europeandcis.undp.org/files/hrforms/P11_modified_for_SCs_and_ICs.doc) );  
please upload only the P11 instead of your CV.
- **Financial Proposal\*** - specifying a total lump sum amount for the tasks specified in this announcement. The financial proposal shall include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (number of anticipated working days, travel costs including air ticket to the area and back home from the area that will be arranged by the consultant (UNDP will arrange and pay only for travel within the area), per diems and any other possible costs).
- **Incomplete applications will not be considered.** Please make sure you have provided all requested materials

*\*Please note that the financial proposal is all-inclusive and shall take into account various expenses incurred by the consultant/contractor during the contract period (e.g. fee, health*

*insurance, visa fee, vaccination and any other relevant expenses related to the performance of services...). All envisaged **travel costs** must be included in the financial proposal.*

***Payments** will be made only upon confirmation of UNDP on delivering on the contract obligations in a satisfactory manner.*

*Individual Consultants are responsible for ensuring they have **vaccinations**/inoculations when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director. Consultants are also required to comply with the UN **security directives** set forth under [dss.un.org](http://dss.un.org)*

***General Terms and conditions** as well as other related documents can be found under:  
<http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/jobs>*

*Qualified **women** and members of **minorities** are encouraged to apply.*

*Due to large number of applications we receive, we are able to inform only the successful candidates about the outcome or status of the selection process.*

## ***Annex 2: Mission Itinerary***

### ***Kazakhstan***

#### **Visit of AFT Phase I Evaluation Mission**

**27 June -1 July 2011**

Visit to East – Kazakhstan oblast (Semey city and Ust-Kamenogorsk)

**Purpose:**

The project evaluation is being conducted at the request of the donor and UNDP to provide information about project implementation to ensure accountability for the expenditures to date and the implementation of the activities and so that managers can make any necessary corrections under Phase II of the initiative.

<b>Monday 27 June 2011</b>		
	Arrival to Astana	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor
15:00	Briefing sessions with CO.	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Ainur Baimyrza Head of GLD a.i., Bakyt Zhexembay, Programme Associate, GLD Unit, Mira Yespenova, Project Manager
<b>Tuesday 28 June 2011</b>		
9:35	Departure to Semey	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor
11:15	Arrival to Semey	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader),

		Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor
12:30-14:00	Lunch	
14:10-14:55	Meeting with UNDP Semey projects National Director Ms. Zhibraeva Zh. Zh.	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.
15:05-15:50	Meeting with Head of Department for entrepreneurship in Semey city Mr. Medeov Suleimen Medeuovich.	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.
16:00-16:45	Meeting with Ms. Raushan Tlekeeva, Chair of Semey city branch office of Women Entrepreneurs Association, Ms. Almagul Maukhamedzhnova , WEA executive director, Lidia Mikovenko, WEA volunteer, Deputy Head of Tax Administration	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.
16:55-17:40	Meeting with Ms. Zhumagul Hairlibaiyeva, General Director of Public fund of MCO “Bereke”, Mr. Ardak Husainov, Manager for business development.	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.
17:50-18:35	Meeting with Mr. Aidin Kairbekuli, representative of Youth Public Union “Salauat”; Mr. Azat Azamat, Trainer, “Saluat”. .	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.



<b>Wednesday 29 June 2011</b>		
9:00 – 10:00	Meeting at “Berike”	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.
10:00:00-12:30	Field trip to borrowers of Public Fund of MCO “Bereke”, Bukenchi village. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Umirbekov Orinbasar, IE on livestock (loan for stall constriction)</li> </ul>	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager. Alfiya Valiylina, Credit Specialist, PF “Bereke”
12:30 – 13:30	Meeting at “Berike” with Ms. Zhumagul Hairlibaiyeva, General Director of Public fund of MCO “Bereke”, Mr. Ardak Husainov, Manager for business development.	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.
14:30 – 17:00	Field trip to borrowers of Public Fund of MCO “Bereke”, Glukhovka village. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rakhimova Almira (loan for bakery constriction, food store)</li> </ul>	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager. Rakhimberdin Daniyar, Credit Specialist, PF “Bereke”
<b>Thursday 30 June 2011</b>		
09:00-10:45	Meeting with project beneficiaries, participants of seminars conducted by Women Entrepreneurship Association (Individual Entrepreneurs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irina Darmina,</li> </ul>	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project

	<p>Bazhenova village</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lilya Grebelna, Akim of Shulbinsk village</li> <li>• Margarita Rybalkina</li> <li>• Natalya Gileva, Bazhenova village</li> <li>• Dinara Semagulova, Zharma village</li> <li>• Asel Kozhambetova, Abai</li> </ul>	Manager.
10:55-12:00	<p>Meeting with project beneficiaries, participants of seminars conducted by YPO “Salauat” (Individual Entrepreneurs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sati Rakhimzhanuly, Zharma village</li> <li>• Maira Kuchukova, Zharma village</li> </ul>	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.
12:10-13:00	Lunch	
13:10-13:55	<p>Meeting with project beneficiaries, participants of seminars conducted by Consulting -Center “ZUBR” :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alexander Timofeev, Director, “KX “Chekomanskiy”</li> <li>• Svetlana Rusakova, Director, RUNI COMPANY</li> <li>• Inna Beksheneva, Manager, “Tinana” beauty salon</li> <li>• Jamilia Galieva, Haed of Marketing Dept., “Semeienergotrade”</li> <li>• Andrei Trofimenko, Advertising Agency “SemStar”</li> <li>• Botabek Tokishkadirov, IE</li> <li>• Maxat Shilibekov, Construction company</li> </ul>	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.
14:05-16:50	Drive to Ust-Kamenogorsk. UN car	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant

		(Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.
17:00-17:45	Meeting with Mr. Vitalyi Kulik, Director of Consulting, Ms. Natalia Terekhova, Head of Training – Center “ZUBR”.	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.
<b>Friday 1 July 2011</b>		
9:30-10:30	Meeting with Ms. Elvira Allahverdieva, Director of “Kazbusiness-consulting” Ltd and meeting with project beneficiaries.	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.
10:30-11:40	Meeting with project beneficiaries participants of seminars conducted by “Kazbusiness Consulting” Ltd. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maxim Shmidt, “Kris Analit” Ltd.</li> <li>• Andrei Pichugin, “Kris Analit”</li> </ul>	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Shynar Imambekova, AfT Project Manager.
12:00-13:00	Lunch	
13:10-14:10	Departure to Almaty at 15.10 p.m.	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor

## *Kyrgyzstan*

### **Visit of AFT Phase I Evaluation Mission**

**3 -6 July 2011**

Visit to Batken oblast

**Purpose:**

The project evaluation is being conducted at the request of the donor and UNDP to provide information about project implementation to ensure accountability for the expenditures to date and the implementation of the activities and so that managers can make any necessary corrections under Phase II of the initiative.

<b>Sunday, 3 July 2011</b>		
10:30	Arrival to Batken (by plane)	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor
11:30 – 13:00	Meeting with Batken AfT staff Briefing session	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Talai Isaev, AfT Project Coordinator, Elvira Osmonalieva, Project Assistance
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:10 – 16:00	Meeting with Mr. Halmurzaev Abdirashit, Manager of Mol Tushum cooperative and meeting with cooperative's members.	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Talai Isaev, AfT Project Coordinator
15:40 – 17:30	Meeting with Ms. Mambetova Toktokan, Leader of Association of Business Women	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Talai Isaev, AfT Project Coordinator

<b>Monday, 4 July 2011</b>		
09:00	Departure to Kadamjai rayon	
11:00 – 13:00	Visit to processing department of cooperative Moltushum	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Talai Isaev, AfT Project Coordinator
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 16:30	Meeting with Mr. Toichiev Abdilamit, Manager of Aikok cooperative and meeting with cooperative's members.	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Talai Isaev, AfT Project Coordinator
19:00	Arrival to Batken	
<b>Tuesday, 5 July 2011</b>		
9:00 – 10:30	Visit to Batken Information Center (BIMC), meeting with BIMC staff Mr. Chagylgat Yusupov, Ms. Akbermet Bakirova, Mr. Bekbolot Madymarov	
11:00 – 12:00	Visit to apricot nursery, Karabulak village, meeting with Mr. Avaskan Chotbaev, Ms. Turgan Eshalieva, Ms. Gulsun Kalieva	
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 16:00	Visit to village information center in Samarkandek village Meeting with Mr. Duishobai Asanov, Leader of center Meeting with farmers:	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Talai Isaev, AfT Project

	Burkhan Mavliankulov, Emil Toktonazarov, Chyngyz Marazhapov	Coordinator
17:30	Arrival to Batken	
<b>Wednesday, 6 July 2011</b>		
8:00 – 10:00	Meeting with Batken AfT staff, debriefing	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor, Talai Isaev, AfT Project Coordinator, Elvira Osmonalieva, Project Assistant
10:00	Departure to Khujand	

## ***Tajikistan***

### **Visit of AfT Phase I Evaluation Mission**

**6 -9 July 2011**

Location: Sughd oblast (Khujand and districts)

**Purpose:**

The project evaluation is being conducted at the request of the donor and UNDP to provide information about project implementation to ensure accountability for the expenditures to date and the implementation of the activities and so that managers can make any necessary corrections under phase II of the initiative.

<b>Wednesday, 6 July 2011</b>		
10:00	Arrival to Khujand	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor
11:00 – 12:30	Briefing session with AfT team in Khujand	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch	

14:20 – 16:00	Meeting with Mr. A. Ibragimov, Director of NGO “Mushovir” and with beneficiaries – participants of seminars conducted by “Mushovir”	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor; Parviz Akramov, NC, Gulsara Mamadjonova, PS
17:00 – 17:45	Meeting with Mr. Rahmon Zoidov, Head of the Trade Unit at Soughd Administration	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor; Parviz Akramov, NC, Gulsara Mamadjonova, PS
<b>Thursday, 7 July 2011</b>		
08:30 – 9:30	Meeting with Mr. A. Madaminov, Director, MLF “SughdMicrofin”	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor; Parviz Akramov, NC, Gulsara Mamadjonova, PS
10:00 – 13:00	Visit to Kistakuz Jamoat, B. Gafurov district; meetings with borrowers of MLF “SughdMicrofin”	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor; Parviz Akramov, NC, Gulsara Mamadjonova, PS
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 14:00	Meeting with project beneficiaries (farmers received training)	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor; Parviz Akramov, NC, Gulsara Mamadjonova, PS
<b>Friday, 8 July 2011</b>		
8:30 – 10:30	Visit to TEPC, meeting with the TEPC staff	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor;

		Parviz Akramov, NC, Gulsara Mamadjonova, PS
11:00 – 13:30	Visit to AIMS, meeting with AIMS personnel and AIMS customers	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor; Parviz Akramov, NC, Gulsara Mamadjonova, PS
15:00 – 18:00	AfT Tajikistan debriefing	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor; Parviz Akramov, NC, Gulsara Mamadjonova, PS
<b>Wednesday, 6 July 2011</b>		
9:00	Departure to Tashkent	Alexander Groushevsky, International consultant (Evaluation Team Leader), Sheila Marnie, CA Regional Poverty Reduction Advisor



### ***Annex 3: List of Persons Interviewed***

#### **Kazakhstan, June 27- July 1, 2011**

1. Ainur Baimyrza, UNDP, Astana
2. Mira Yespenova, former Project Manager, AfT
3. Shynar Imambekova, National Coordinator, AfT
4. Bakyt Zhexembay, Programme Associate, AfT
5. Dinara Murzagaliyeva, Programme Associate, AfT
6. Ms. Zhibraeva Zh. Zh., National Director AfT, Representative of Semei Administration
7. Mr. Medeov Suleimen Medeuovich, Head of Entrepreneurship Department, Semei Administration
8. Ms. Raushan Tlekeeva, Chair of Semey city branch of Women Entrepreneurs Association (IP)
9. Ms. Almagul Maukhamedzhnova, WEA executive director (IP)
10. Ms. Lidia Mikovenko, WEA volunteer, Deputy Head of Tax Administration (IP)
11. Ms. Zhumagul Hairlibaiyeva, General Director of Public fund of MCO “Bereke” (IP, beneficiary)
12. Ms. Alfiya Valiylina, Credit Specialist, PF “Bereke” (IP)
13. Mr. Rakhimberdin Daniyar, Credit Specialist, PF “Bereke” (IP)
14. Mr. Ardak Husainov, Manager for business development, “Bereke” (IP, beneficiary)
15. Mr. Aidin Kairbekuli, representative of Youth Public Union “Saluat” (IP)
16. Mr. Azat Azamat, Trainer, “Saluat” (IP)
17. Mr. Umirbekov Orinbasar, IE on livestock (beneficiary)
18. Ms. Almira Rakhimova (beneficiary)
19. Ms. Irina Darmina, Bazhenova village (beneficiary)
20. Ms. Lilya Grebelna, Akim of Shulbinsk village (beneficiary)
21. Ms. Margarita Rybalkina, Semei (beneficiary)
22. Ms. Natalya Gileva, Bazhenova village (beneficiary)
23. Ms. Dinara Silagulova, Zharma village (beneficiary)
24. Ms. Asel Kozhambetova, Abai, (beneficiary)
25. Ms. Sati Rakhimzhanuly, Zharma village, (beneficiary)
26. Ms. Maira Kuchukova, Zharma village, (beneficiary)
27. Mr. Alexander Timofeev, Director, “KX “Chekomanskiy” (beneficiary)
28. Ms. Svetlana Rusakova, Director, RUNI COMPANY, Semei (beneficiary)
29. Ms. Inna Beksheneva, Manager, “Tinana” beauty salon, Semei (beneficiary)
30. Ms. Snezhana Mamleeva, “Tinana” beauty salon, Semei (beneficiary)

31. Ms. Jamilia Galieva, Head of Marketing Dept., “Semeienergotrade”, Semei (beneficiary)
32. Mr. Andrei Trofimenko, Advertising Agency “SemStar”, Semei (beneficiary)
33. Mr. Botabek Tokishkadirov, IE, Semei (beneficiary)
34. Mr. Maxat Shilibekov, Construction company, Semei (beneficiary)
35. Mr. Vitalyi Kulik, Director of Consulting, Center “ZUBR”, Ust-Kamenogorsk (IP)
36. Ms. Natalia Terekhova, Head of Training – Center “ZUBR”, Ust-Kamenogorsk (IP)
37. Ms. Elvira Allahverdieva, Director of “Kazbusiness-consulting” (IP)
38. Mr. Maxim Shmidt, “Kris Analit”, Ust-Kamenogorsk (beneficiary)
39. Mr. Andrei Pichugin, “Kris Analit”, Ust-Kamenogorsk (beneficiary)

### **Kyrgyzstan, July 3 – 6, 2011**

1. Mr. Talaybek Isaev, national Coordinator, AfT
2. Ms. Elvira Osmonalieva, Project Assistant, AfT
3. Mr. Abdurashit Khalmurzaev, “Mol Tushum”, General Manager (beneficiary)
4. Mr. Patta Tajibaev, “Mol Tushum”, Financial Manager (beneficiary)
5. Mr. Turgun Satkynov, “Mol Tushum” coop. (beneficiary)
6. Mr. Mital Orozaliev, “Mol Tushum” coop. (beneficiary)
7. Mr. Azzam Amiraliev, “Mol Tushum” coop. (beneficiary)
8. Mr. Esen Seidakhmatov, “Mol Tushum” coop. (beneficiary)
9. Mr. Nurgazy Amitaleiv, “Mol Tushum” coop. (beneficiary)
10. Mr. Musa Nishanov, “Ak Chechek” coop. (beneficiary)
11. Ms. Kasiet Amiralieva, “Ak zhol” coop. (beneficiary)
12. Ms. Toktokan Mambetova, Leader of Association of Business Women (beneficiary, IP)
- 13.** Mr. Duishobai Asanov, Leader of local market information center (beneficiary)
14. Mr. Burkhan Mavliankulov, Farmer (beneficiary)
15. Mr. Chyngyz Marazhapov, Farmer (beneficiary)
16. Mr. Emil Toktonazarov, Farmer (beneficiary)
17. Ms. Abibikhon Shakirova, Packaging facility, “Mol Tushum” coop. (beneficiary)
18. Mr. Abi Botobekov, Packaging facility, “Mol Tushum” coop. (beneficiary)
19. Ms. Elmira Rakhmonova, Packaging facility, “Mol Tushum” coop. (beneficiary)
20. Mr. Chagylgat Yusupov, BMIC (beneficiary, IP)
21. Ms. Akbermet Bakirova, BMIC (beneficiary, IP)
22. Mr. Bekbolot Madymarov, BMIC (beneficiary, IP)
23. Mr. Avaskan Chotbaev, Apricot nursery (beneficiary)

24. Ms. Turgan Eshalieva, Apricot nursery (beneficiary)
25. Ms. Gulsun Kalieva, Apricot nursery (beneficiary)
26. Mr. Abdilamit Toychiev, Leader of “Aikok” coop. (beneficiary)
27. Mr. Asan Zhoroiev, “Aikok” coop. (beneficiary)
28. Mr. A.Kudaykulov, “Aikok” coop. (beneficiary)
29. Mr. Niymat Bekmatov, “Aikok” coop. (beneficiary)
30. Mr. Zaynidin Bezabaev, “Aikok” coop. (beneficiary)
31. Mr. Kudayberdi, “Aikok” coop. (beneficiary)
32. Mr. Yisman Parpiev, “Aikok” coop. (beneficiary)
33. Mr. Patta Kalmurzaev, “Aikok” coop. (beneficiary)
34. Mr. Abdykalyk Anarkulov, “Aikok” coop. (beneficiary)

### **Tajikistan, July 6 – 9, 2011**

1. Parviz Akramov, National Coordinator, AfT
2. Gulsara Mamadjonova, Project Specialist, AfT
3. Mr. Ardasher Ibragimov, Director, PO “Mushovir” (IP)
4. Ms. Sanginova Dilobar, Association of Fruit and Vegetable Processors “Golden Valley” (beneficiary)
5. Mr. Iskandarov Fakhridin, Private Entrepreneurs (beneficiary)
6. Mr. Rakhmon Zoidov, Head of the Trade Unit, Sughd Administration
7. Mr. Rakhmon Khuseinov – TEPC, Director (IP, beneficiary)
8. Mr. Alijon Aripov – TEPC staff (IP, beneficiary)
9. Ms. Yusupova Manzura – Association of Entrepreneurs of Sughd Oblast /TEPC (IP, beneficiary)
10. Mr. Khusein Toshmatov – ICPO “Jovid”, Coordinator (IP)
11. Mr. Dadokhojaev Mukim – Chairman of DF “Sukaimonkhuja” (beneficiary)
12. Mr. Qodirov Shukhrat – Chairman of DF “Qodiri” (beneficiary)
13. Mr. Sodiqov – PE Sodiqov (beneficiary)
14. Mr. Boboev Farkhod - Chairman of PC after Umarov (beneficiary)
15. Mrs. Jalilova Baroat – DF “Temur Sarkor” (beneficiary)
16. Mr. Rabiev Negmat – DF “Isoev Ismonboy” (beneficiary)
17. Mrs. Ahmadjonova Saodat – Chairman of DF “Saodat sarkor” (beneficiary)
18. Mr. Abduhalim Rahmonov – Chairman of DF “Abdurahim sarkor” (beneficiary)
19. Mr. Dadokhujaev Abdullokhuj – Chairman of DF “Abdullokhuj sarkor” (beneficiary)
20. Mrs. Suleimanova Mahinakhon– AIMS, Director (IP, beneficiary)
21. Ms. Usmanova Rano, AIMS, staff (IP, beneficiary)
22. Mr. Habibulloev Asatullo, farmer from B. Gafurov district (beneficiary)
23. Mr. Olimov Numon – Chairman of PC “Chorkuh”, Isfara district (beneficiary)

- 24. Mr. Boymatov Khairullo – farmer from J.Rasulov district (beneficiary)
- 25. Mr. Nabijon Ahatov – farmer from J.Rasulov district (beneficiary)
- 26. Mr. Abdumannon Madaminov – MLF “Sughd Microfin”, Director (IP)

## ***Annex 4: List of Documents Reviewed***

### **UN CT Documents**

United Nations Development Assistance Framework, Kazakhstan, 2005 – 2009, March 2004  
United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the Republic Kazakhstan, 2010 – 2015, March 2009  
United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the Kyrgyz Republic, 2005 – 2010, March 2004  
United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Tajikistan, 2010- 2015, 2009

### **AfT Documents**

#### **Baseline Assessments:**

Europe Aid for Trade, Component II, Baseline Assessment in Central Asia, December 2009  
Kazakhstan Aid for Trade, Needs Assessment, July 2010  
Kyrgyzstan Aid for Trade, Needs Assessment, Bishkek, 2010  
Tajikistan Aid for Trade, Needs Assessment, July 2010  
Mission report of Pekka Alhojärvi in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan 25.11-19.12.2009 (Environmental Component)  
Report from the Regional Expert Meeting on Europe Aid for Trade Road Map, Bishkek 10-11 March, 2010

#### **Project Documents:**

Project document Wider Europe Aid for Trade, Phase I  
Project document Wider Europe Aid for Trade, Phase II  
Target Matrix Europe Aid for Trade, Phase I

#### **Annual Work-Plans for Phase I:**

November 2009;  
January 12, 2010;  
January 25, 2010;  
November 2010;  
January 20, 2011;  
January 21, 2011,  
January 28, 2011;  
February, 2011.

#### **Quarterly Reports (Substantive and Financial):**

Q3, 2009 (August – October)  
Q4, 2009 (November – January)  
Q1, 2010 (February – April)  
Q2 – 3, 2010 (May – September)

Q4, 2010 (October – December)  
Q1, 2011 (January – March).

**AfT Briefing Notes:**

Briefing Points, November 2010

AfT Briefing Notes – Wider Europe

AfT Briefing Note: Kyrgyzstan

Fast Facts: Wider Europe Needs Assessment in Central Asia, March 2011

Fast Facts: Wider Europe – Kyrgyzstan, March 2011

Fast Facts: Wider Europe: Aid for Trade for Central Asia, South Caucasus, and Western CIS, March 2011

Fast Facts: Wider Europe: Aid for Trade for Central Asia, South Caucasus, and Western CIS, May 2010

Fast Facts: Wider Europe: Aid for Trade for Central Asia, South Caucasus, and Western CIS, May 2011

Fast Facts: Wider Europe: Aid for Trade for Central Asia, South Caucasus, and Western CIS, November 2010

Fast Facts: Wider Europe – Tajikistan, March 2011

## ***Annex 5: Interview Templates***

### **5.1. PT Questionnaire**

Date

Time

Location

Name (optional)

Role in the project

Activities in which was involved

#### **1. Relevance:**

- How relevant do you think is the project? (if partially or totally not relevant, why do you think so?)
- What are the most relevant/less relevant activities? Why do you think so?
- Selection of the target area:
  - How the specific areas of the program were selected?
  - Do you believe it's a reasonable choice?
  - Why do you think so?
  - Was the process transparent?
  - What would you recommend to consider while selecting target areas in the future?
- What factors have contributed to the relevance or irrelevance?
- What lessons learned in the area of the intervention relevance?

#### **2. Effectiveness:**

- Did the project tasks were completed:
  - In full?
  - In time?
- If there are some deviations – reasons for them; lessons learned for the future.
- What kind of modifications/adjustments was made? Why?
- To what level were the different interventions effective?
- Most and least effective interventions?
- What factors (external, project design, project management, project approach, levels of intervention) have contributed to effectiveness of ineffectiveness?
- What were the reasons for implementation delays and was UNDP's response satisfactory to mitigate these?
- How effective was the dissemination of information about the project and outreach of the beneficiaries?
- How clear and transparent was the selection process? What lessons learned?
- How the gender-balanced the project was?
- Whether vulnerable groups had easy access to the project?

- What were the reasons for implementation delays and was UNDP's response satisfactory to mitigate these?
- What would you do in another way? Why?
- To what extent do the country office staff and national project staff perceive the workflow between them and BRC as satisfactory – management structure? What was unsatisfactory? What can be done to improve this?

### 3. Efficiency:

- Was the project overall cost-efficient?
- Was the budget revised? How often and why?
- Do you know the cost-efficiency of various activities (\$ per trainee, \$ per green technology participant, etc.)?
- What are the most and less efficient interventions? Why?
- Were the outputs of the international consultants (conducted during the inception period) beneficial in project design and implementation?
- What would you recommend to increase efficiency?
- The most important lessons learned?

### 4. Sustainability:

- Do all IPs have sustainability plan?
- Do they understand their costs?
- How do they market their services?
- Did specific training was provided to them? To which extend it was successful?
- Which activities do you think could be sustainable? Why?
- Do target beneficiaries consider paid services? To what extend? Do you see opportunities to provide sustainable services to low-income customers?
- To what measure have the different interventions been sustainable?
- What factors have contributed to sustainability or non-sustainability?
- The most important lessons learned?

### 5. Impact and Gender Dimension:

- What kind of tangible changes may be attributed to the project interventions?
- What was changed as a result of the project activities?
- How in your opinion the project has changed the life of people in the target area?
- How important are these changes to the local development?
- How sustainable are these changes?
- Specific project's success stories?
- Persistent issues with women empowerment in the target areas?
- Interest of women in program's activities?
- % of women among direct/indirect beneficiaries?
- Number of women in business in the target area before and after the program?
- Overall perception of the project? Strengths/Weaknesses of the project?
- What has/have been the critical factors to the success?
- What would you do in other way?
- Why? How you would recommend organize interventions?



- Are you aware of other donors' activities and complementarities with them?
- In your opinion, which are the most important lessons learned?

## 5.2. Stakeholders and Partners Questionnaire

Date

Time

Location

Name (optional)

Role in the project

Activities in which was involved

### 1. Relevance:

- How relevant do you think is the project? Relevant, partially relevant, not relevant (if partially or totally not relevant, why do you think so?)
- What are the most relevant/less relevant activities? Why do you think so?
- Selection of the target area:
  - How the specific areas of the program were selected?
  - Do you believe it's a reasonable choice?
  - Why do you think so?
  - Was the process transparent?
  - What would you recommend to consider while selecting target areas in the future?
- What factors have contributed to the relevance or irrelevance?

### 2. Effectiveness:

- Did the project tasks were completed:
  - In full?
  - In time?
- If there are some deviations – reasons for them; lessons learned for the future.
- What kind of modifications/adjustments was made? Why?
- To what level were the different interventions effective?
- Most and least effective interventions?
- What factors (external, project design, project management, project approach, levels of intervention) have contributed to effectiveness of ineffectiveness?
- How effective was the dissemination of information about the project and outreach of the beneficiaries?
- How clear and transparent was the selection process? What lessons learned?
- How the gender-balanced the project was?
- Whether vulnerable groups had easy access to the project?
- What were the reasons for implementation delays and was UNDP's response satisfactory to mitigate these?
- What would you do in another way? Why?

### 3. Efficiency:

- Do you believe the project was cost-efficient overall?

- What in your opinion are the most and less efficient interventions?
- What would you recommend to increase efficiency?

#### 4. Sustainability:

- Which activities do you think could be sustainable? Why?
- Does IP have sustainability plan?
- Do target beneficiaries consider paid services? To what extend? Do you see opportunities to provide sustainable services to low-income customers?
- To what measure have the different interventions been sustainable?
- What factors have contributed to sustainability or non-sustainability?

#### 5. Impact and Gender Dimension:

- What kind of tangible changes may be attributed to the project interventions?
- What was changed as a result of the project activities?
- How in your opinion the project has changed the life of people in the target area?
- How important are these changes to the local development?
- How sustainable are these changes?
- Specific project's success stories?
- Persistent issues with women empowerment in the target areas?
- Interest of women in program's activities?
- % of women among direct/indirect beneficiaries?
- Number of women in business in the target area before and after the program?
- Overall perception of the project? Useful, partially useful, not useful.
- Strengths/Weaknesses of the project?
- What has/have been the critical factors to the success?
- What would you do in other way?
- Why? How you would recommend organize interventions?
- Are you aware of other donors' activities and complementarities with them
- In your opinion, which are the most important lessons learned?

### 5.3. Direct Beneficiaries Questionnaire

Date

Time

Location

Name (optional)

Role in the project

Activities in which was involved

1. Overall perception of the activities in which the beneficiary was involved:
  - Useful, partially useful, not useful
  - Relevant, partially relevant, not relevant (if partially or totally not relevant, why do you think so?)
2. Strengths/Weaknesses of the program?
3. What would you do in other way? Why?
4. Selection of the target area:
  - Do you believe it's a reasonable choice?
  - Why do you think so?
  - What would you recommend to consider while selecting target areas in the future?
5. How did you get information about the project? Was this information easily available:  
Yes/No
6. Do you believe that the selection of participants was clear, logical and transparent?  
Yes/No
7. Women and vulnerable groups:
  - Was it difficult for women, handicapped, and other vulnerable groups to be involved into project activities?
  - Why do you think so?
  - What would you recommend for the future?
8. Most successful/ less successful activities in your opinion? Why?
9. Training:
  - Quality and relevance of training?
  - Would you participate in another training?
  - Which topic is especially interesting for you?
  - How easy it was get to the training facility?

10. Trade Support Center:

- Quality and relevance of services provided by the information center?
- How difficult to get to the center?
- How expensive are its services?
- Would you use it again?
- How much are you ready to pay for advice?

11. Microfinance:

- How relevant are the services?
- Are these services affordable?
- Do they provide loan long enough to meet your needs?
- Is it difficult to get to the organization?
- Are the application procedures understandable?
- Would you use it again?

12. Green technology:

- How relevant are the services?
- Did you apply knowledge to your job? Why so?
- Was it difficult to get to the facility?
- Would you participate again in such a demonstration?
- Are you ready to pay for this knowledge?

13. Persistent issues in your area/field of work?

14. Overall, were your expectations met?

- Very much, partially, not
- What was changed as a result of the project activities?
- How in your opinion the project has changed the life of people?
- How important are these changes?