

Final evaluation of the Kyrgyzstan Joint UN Women/ FAO/ IFAD/ WFP Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women



Final Report

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List of Acronyms

CDA	Community Development Alliance
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
EMG	Evaluation Management Group
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GEWE	Gender Equality & Women Empowerment
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NSC	National Statistical Committee
NSC	National Steering Committee
PO	Producer organization
RWEE	Rural women's economic empowerment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHG	Self-help group
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WEAI	Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WFP	World Food Programme

Glossary of local terms used in the evaluation report

Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE regularly uses a number of local terms transliterated into English. The evaluation report is also using these terms. The following glossary provides explanations of these terms for readers outside Kyrgyzstan.

Aiyl aimak	Rural municipality
Aiyl okmotu	Municipal office
Kenesh	Local council
Som	Kyrgyzstan currency. In March 2018 one some was equivalent to USD 0,0147.
Sotka	A measure of land area equal to 100 square meters widely used in the CIS region

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Though the evaluation process was highly participatory and collaborative, the evaluation team has maintained independence through all of the evaluation process.

Natalia Kosheleva and Elmira Kerimalieva, evaluation consultants

Executive Summary

Background

Kyrgyzstan is one of seven countries where UN Women, FAO, IFAD and WFP implement the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE). This report presents findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations of the evaluation of the implementation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE) in Kyrgyzstan. The evaluation covered the period from November 2014 till March 2018 in all five regions where the JP RWEE was implemented: Naryn, Chuy, Jalal-Abad, Osh and Batken. The evaluation looked at all aspects of the programme implementation.

Rural women play a central role in the development of Kyrgyzstan, providing a significant proportion of agricultural labour force, playing a key role in food production and nutrition, and performing most of the unpaid care work, thereby supporting reproduction of the Kyrgyzstani society. At the same time rural women and girls have significantly less access to productive resources, which limits the efficiency of the agricultural sector. They face more difficulty than men in gaining access to public services, social protection, decent employment opportunities, and local and national markets and institutions. Unpaid care work further hampers rural women's ability to take advantage of on- and off-farm employment and market opportunities in the agricultural sector. These challenges facing rural women have been further amplified by the combined impact of the recent economic and financial crises, high and volatile food and fuel prices, climate change, the insufficient investment in rural development and agriculture, and demographic changes.

In Kyrgyzstan the programme works towards achievement of three Outcomes:

- Outcome 1. Rural women have increased income, better livelihoods and food security from enhanced agricultural productivity.
- Outcome 2. Rural women have mastered leadership and actively participate in shaping laws, policies and systems of service provision at local and central levels.
- Outcome 3. A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women.

The JP RWEE activities were implemented in 73 villages located in five regions and reached women in 2731 poor rural households. Programme villages belong to two cohorts. In the first cohort of 45 villages programme implementation started in 2015, the second cohort of 28 villages joined the programme in 2016.

The operational models used by the JP RWEE in the first and second cohorts are somewhat different. For example, GALS was applied only in the first cohort of villages. Group economic initiatives were initiated also only in the first cohort of villages.

Evaluation purpose

A final evaluation of the JP RWEE was conducted with a special focus on lessons learnt both from programmatic and coordination perspectives. The main purpose of this final evaluation was to assess in more detail the programmatic progress and performance of the above described intervention from the point of view of relevance, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency and sustainability.

Targeted users of the evaluation are the personnel of the participating UN agencies in Kyrgyzstan, at HQ level, and in the six other countries where the JPRWEE is being implemented, the responsible parties, and the government counterparts at local and national levels, CSOs, and other UN agencies, donor community and development partners present in Kyrgyzstan, programme beneficiaries, and other

development partners that are implementing joint programmes aiming at supporting the economic empowerment of rural women.

Methodology

The evaluation was a transparent and participatory process involving relevant stakeholders and partners under the JP RWEE in Kyrgyzstan. The evaluation team reached 143 women and 30 men who shared their experiences and perspectives on the programme.

The evaluation was based on gender and human rights principles and adhered to the UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct and UN Women Evaluation Policy and guidelines.

The evaluation used both a summative approach focusing on capturing the lessons learned during the implementation and assessing the achievement of the results at output and outcome levels, as well as a formative, forward-looking approach assessing the applicability of the results. The evaluation methodology followed a Theory of Change approach and employed mixed methods including semi-structures interviews, focus groups and phone survey as well as analytical approaches to account for complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes.

Evaluation findings

Relevance

1. JP RWEE design had an explicit focus on alignment with national strategic documents in the areas of gender equality, agriculture, food security and sustainable development. JP RWEE is also well aligned with the Agenda 2030: the programme contributes towards implementation of ten targets under seven SDGs.
2. The JP RWEE design and results are well-aligned with the needs of its target beneficiaries, rural women. The programme component that is most valued by rural women is agricultural training delivered by professionals.
3. The selection of target region is aligned with existing needs: Osh, Jalalabad, Naryn and Chuy regions have the highest numbers of people who are food insecure.
4. The JP RWEE strategy of recruiting 30-40 eligible people per village contributes to the programme effectiveness, because the programme ends up working with people who are most open to new ideas and apply all knowledge they get through the training activities. But because in a particular village the JP RWEE recruits participants only once, eligible people who are less open to innovations are left behind. In addition, the JP RWEE recruitment strategy leaves behind people who either don't have the sufficient amount of land, money or unable to work, e.g. because of the disability, that is the most vulnerable.

Effectiveness

5. The JP RWEE has reached targets for most of its key performance indicators. The programme created intended positive changes leading to increased income, better livelihoods, food security and leadership role of participating rural women. Factors that facilitated these results include the promotion of solidarity economic models like self-help groups and group economic initiatives, as well as providing access to training and interest-free commodity and cash loans. Community members who were not directly involved in the programme benefitted from the transfer of skills and knowledge from program participants and development activities implemented by local authorities upon request from the program participants. One of important results of the JP RWEE is that its direct beneficiaries and community members broadened their perspectives and adopted more advanced practices.

6. Adding GALS into the implementation model considerably increases the JP RWEE positive impact on women empowerment and even to some extent offsets the disempowering effect of the reduction in leisure time available for women because of greater engagement in income generating activities due to more equal distribution of domestic tasks.
7. While the JP RWEE has made significant contributions towards better livelihoods, increased income, food security and leadership role of participating women, its impact on the situation of poor rural women and rural women in Kyrgyzstan is small. If the JP RWEE intent was reframed as developing a viable model for economic empowerment of rural women and the transfer of this model to relevant national institutions, this would better justify programme working with a limited number of villages and households and facilitate focus on the exit strategy, which is lacking in the current formulation of the JP RWEE.

Sustainability

8. Implementation model applied in the first cohort of villages leads to higher sustainability of the collective institutions created with the JP RWEE support. As a result, the positive changes experienced by rural women who are members of these institutions are more likely to be sustained and even expanded. Regional producer organizations appear to play the key role in sustainability of the JP RWEE results on the community level, but these organizations are not yet ready to “graduate” from the programme and require continued support.
9. Extent of ownership of the JP RWEE model and results by national governmental and non-governmental entities working in the public sector depends on the degree of their involvement with the programme design and implementation. Involvement of the National Ministries is limited to participation in quarterly meetings of the National Steering Committee and hosting several working meetings of rural women activists with policy makers. Local authorities directly support the programme by providing premises and renting public land to group economic activities. The strongest degree of ownership is demonstrated by NGO Community Development Alliance that was directly involved in the programme implementation and benefitted by the programme by developing GALS application expertise.

Joint Delivery

10. Combining FAO, WFP and IFAD expertise on building capacity of individual farmers with the UN Women expertise with normative and community work enables the JP RWEE to promote both individual capacities of rural women and a more favorable social context for them. In Kyrgyzstan this multilevel approach is used only by the JP RWEE and differentiates it from the government and USAID projects that were also contributing to economic empowerment of rural women in 2014-2018. Joint delivery created synergies by combining activities based on the expertise of separate agencies leading to better results for rural women.
11. Due to complementary mandates of the partner UN agencies, the JP RWEE beneficiaries got a comprehensive set of services that mutually reinforced each other leading to better results for rural women.
12. Joint delivery increased management costs in terms of time and efforts spent on communication and coordination by the staff of the partner UN agencies involved in management of the JP RWEE because the JP RWEE design had to ensure that each partner agency contributed towards implementation of its specific mandate. At the same time, complementarity of mandates of the partner UN agencies facilitated the development of joint design of the Kyrgyzstan model of the JP RWEE. And joint delivery led to increased efficiency due to centralization of recruitment as well as village-level coordination and monitoring processes. The principle that the JP RWEE shall build on ongoing initiatives embedded in the global programme also contributed to reduced operational costs.

13. JP RWEE monitoring system involved programme participants in data collection which allowed tracking progress on individual level. This data was further used to calculate values of 14 key performance indicators tracking progress on six programme Outputs. The monitoring system could benefit from having output, outcome and impact level indicators, though existing Logical Framework template used to describe expected results is not conducive for this.
14. Focus of women who meet poverty criteria established by the Ministry of Social Protection and Labor and are eligible for the WFP “Food for Training” scheme unintentionally sends the message that only poor women shall be economically and socially active.

Lessons learned

The report presents the lessons learned about specific components of the JP RWEE model, including their relevance for rural women and ease of replication. While agro and group economic initiatives are time and labor intensive which creates a barrier for participation of the most vulnerable women, e.g. those that have disability or take care of disabled children, other element of the JP RWEE model, e.g. participation in the self-help groups and GALS sessions, require less commitment in terms of time and physical effort, but still produce empowering effect.

Conclusions

1. **Relevance:** Complementarity of mandates of partner UN agencies involved in the joint delivery of the programme and the JP RWEE focus on engaging women in income generating activities makes the JP RWEE highly relevant to national strategic priorities and needs of rural women.
2. **Effectiveness:** Programme effectiveness in achieving better livelihoods, increased income, food security and leadership role of participating women is facilitated by promotion of solidarity economic models like self-help groups and group economic initiatives, providing access to training and interest-free commodity and cash loans, as well as recruiting participants who are eager and able to allocate a lot of time and effort to work. The negative side of this programme model is that most vulnerable women are not able to join the programme, and participating women lose their leisure time which is disempowering. The latter unintended negative effect is mitigated by the use of GALS instruments.
3. **Sustainability:** The JP RWEE established a number of mechanisms to ensure sustainability of its results, including creation of village associations of SGHs and regional producer organizations. But these mechanisms are not yet fully sustainable themselves. Explicit exit strategy could enhance sustainability of the JP RWEE results.
4. **Efficiency:** Relying on shared processes increases efficiency of joint delivery. The JP RWEE could benefit if this approach was consciously used in the next programme phases.

Recommendations

1. For the next stage of the JP RWEE implementation the partner UN agencies shall use the operational model that enhances all aspects of rural women economic empowerment as defined by the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index.
2. In the second phase of the JP RWEE GALS shall be applied in the second cohort of villages to mitigate the negative JP RWEE impact on women leisure time.
3. Under the second phase the JP RWEE shall continue supporting four producer organizations until they are fully self-sustainable.

4. Partner UN agencies shall consider developing and testing the strategy for replication of women economic empowerment model in the villages and ayl aimaks where the programme has already worked.

1 Introduction

101. Kyrgyzstan is one of seven countries where UN Women, FAO, IFAD and WFP implement the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE). This report presents the findings, conclusion and recommendations of the evaluation of the implementation of the JP RWEE in Kyrgyzstan from November 2014 till March 2018. The evaluation covered the period from November 2014 till March 2018 and looked at all aspects of the programme implementation.

102. Evaluation was conducted in February – April 2018 by a team made of International and National Consultants. Evaluation was jointly commissioned and managed by four partner UN agencies and supported by Evaluation Management and Reference Groups.

103. Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendation presented in this evaluation report are based on the analysis of information provided to the evaluation team by 143 women and 30 men who participated in this evaluation, inputs of the Evaluation Management Group and the Evaluation Reference Groups made in the course of the data validation workshops, and comments provided in the draft versions of this report.

2 Global JP RWEE

2.1 Context

201. Women are central to the development of rural areas and to national economies: they account for a great proportion of the agricultural labor force, especially in subsistence farming, and perform most of the unpaid care work in rural areas. However, rural women and girls have restricted access to productive resources, such as land, agricultural inputs, finance and credit, extension services, and technology, which in turn limits agricultural output. They face more difficulty than men in gaining access to public services, social protection, employment opportunities, information, innovations and local and national markets and institutions, due to cultural norms and security issues. Unpaid care work further hampers rural women's ability to take advantage of on- and off-farm employment and new market opportunities in the agricultural sector. Their leadership and participation in producer organizations, decision-making and local governance remains low and rural and agricultural policies insufficiently address their needs and priorities.

2.2 Joint Delivery

202. To address challenges faced by rural women in 2012 four UN agencies – UN Women, FAO, IFAD and WFP – launched the JP RWEE. Each agency brings a distinct comparative advantage to the programme: FAO's specialist technical knowledge and policy assistance on agriculture and food security, IFAD's co-financing of rural investment programmes and strong presence in the rural areas, WFP's food assistance innovations and UN Women's technical knowledge on women's economic empowerment, its strong linkage with the women's movement, and its leadership for gender equality and women's empowerment within the UN System. Joint implementation shall respond to the diversity of issues constraining rural women's economic empowerment which go beyond the mandate of any individual UN entity to tackle alone. By bringing together their know-how, resources, experiences and constituencies, the four entities have the potential to greatly enhance the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of their work on rural women's economic empowerment.

2.3 Global JP RWEE Design

203. The global JP RWEE aims to secure rural women's livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the post MDGs, based on four outcome areas:

- improved food and nutrition security;
- increased income to secure their livelihoods;
- enhanced leadership and participation in rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies and programmes; and
- gender responsive policy environments for the economic empowerment of rural women.

204. The JP RWEE design is based on five pillars:

- **Linking the normative and operational work of the four entities** to foster a comprehensive approach for the economic empowerment of rural women.
- **Strengthen macro, meso and micro linkages** in the way the four entities address rural women's economic empowerment.
- Enforcement of a **dual accountability framework** for securing rural women's food and nutrition security, and their access to decent wage employment and other income opportunities by:
 - strengthening the capacity of rural women's constituencies to demand accountability for full access to productive resources, services, infrastructures, and decision-making positions in producer organizations and local governance structures, linking their advocacy platforms with those of the broader women's movement;
 - strengthening the capacity of government institutions, structures and systems to adequately respond to rural women's needs and priorities.
- Enhancing **different dimensions of rural women's economic empowerment**:

- rural women’s asset building and wealth accumulation, ensuring a more equitable balance in the sharing of economic and social benefits, and workloads between women and men;
- the social context within which such accumulation occurs including changes in social norms, and in political and social institutions both in terms of how they impact individuals and institutional culture;
- rural women’s agency through their collective action to demand positive and meaningful change in their condition and status.
- **Breaking the intergenerational transfer of rural women’s poverty and disempowerment:** through educational and skill enhancement opportunities of both women and girls to improve their access to livelihood options, strengthening their confidence and self-respect in the communities, and engagement in local governance systems and leadership positions.

2.4 Global JP RWEE Intended Results

Table 1 presents the intended results of the global JP RWEE.

Table 1. Global JP RWEE intended results.

Outputs→	Outcomes→	Goal
Output 1.1: Rural women have increased access to resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security.	Outcome 1 Rural women have improved food and nutrition security	To secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the post MDGs.
Output 1.2: Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves.		
Output 2.1: Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products.	Outcome 2 Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods.	
Output 2.2: Rural women have increased access to decent wage employment opportunities.		
Output 3.1: Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance.	Outcome 3 Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes.	
Output 3.2: Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions.		
Output 3.3: Rural women including young women have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels.		
Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment.		
Output 4.1: Policy makers and parliamentarians have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender	Outcome 4	

into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural employment policies, laws and budgets.	A more gender responsive	
Output 4.2: Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women.	policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women.	
Output 4.3: An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women’s priorities in regional policy processes.		

2.5 National Adaptation

205. The JP RWEE is implemented in seven countries: **Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda**. Countries were selected based of the following criteria:

- Strong presence of the four agencies and an environment conducive to the implementation of a joint programme.
- Enabling political environment evidence by the government commitment to support rural women;
- Economic profile of the country, including levels of poverty in rural areas.
- Existence of ongoing initiatives on which the agencies feel they can build on.
- Opportunity for a UN Joint Programme on rural women.
- Priority countries for major donors for agriculture/rural development.

206. In each country the four agencies focus on a limited number of field sites. The JP RWEE is expected to generate synergies that capitalize on each agency’s mandate, comparative advantage and institutional strength to generate more lasting and wider scale improvements in the livelihoods and rights of rural women.

207. Each country had to define its specific detailed programme implementation plan based on the local context, in partnership with the government and other national stakeholders and in line with the government priorities.

2.6 Financial arrangements

208. Estimated budget of the global JP RWEE was USD 35 million. When the programme was launched, it had only USD 375 thousand, and the rest of the budget had to be mobilized. Mobilized resources were accumulated in the central fund and were then shared between participating countries on an annual basis based on their performance. As a result, the amount of money the country would have for the programme implementation in the next year was unpredictable.

3 Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE

3.1 Social and Economic Context

301. Kyrgyzstan is a small mountainous country located in the Central Asia. Total population is 6.14 million with slightly over 4 million living in the rural areas¹. The number of rural women is slightly over 2 million, or one third of the population. The number of the working age rural women (16-57 years old) is about 1.12 million (18% of the total Kyrgyzstan population).

302. As a result of land privatization after the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, 576 collective and state farms were replaced by over 300 thousand individual small-hold farms and the number of small-hold farms keeps growing (in 2014 there were 384 thousand farms, in 2017 – 420 thousand)². Majority of these small-hold farms (80% in 2014 and 81% in 2017) are led by men.

303. The share of economically active working age rural women – those who have or seek paid employment – is gradually declining: from 51.7% in 2014 to 47.6% in 2016. The share of actually employed rural women is also declining: from 46.9% in 2014 to 43.4%. At the same time the share of rural women who identify themselves as house wives is growing: from 17.6% in 2014 to 21.3% in 2017³. Level of poverty in rural areas is declining but is still higher than in urban areas. In 2016 29% of rural women lived below the poverty level.

304. Poverty often leads to food insecurity because poor households lack the resources required to access enough nutritious food to live a healthy active life. Poor households have to spend a high share of their expenditure on food, and they are likely to be more vulnerable to shocks, such as high food prices, loss of employment, and natural disasters. Rural households are more likely to be food insecure than urban ones.

305. The 2015 study of the time use by people in the 12+ years age group conducted by the National Statistical Committee found that on the average a rural woman was spending considerably less time on paid work and considerable more time on household activities and child care and had considerably less free time than a rural man (Table 2 and Fig. 1)⁴.

Table 2. Time budget (in minutes) of rural residents.

Activity type	Men	Women
Paid work	156	76
Work-related activities	22	11
Household activities	101	293
Studying	55	45
Attending to a land plot near the house	62	28
Child care	8	17

¹ As of January 1, 2017. National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (2017). National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (2017). Women and men of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012 - 2016. 124 p.

² Abdurasulov, Y. (2009). Состояние сельского хозяйства Кыргызстана. Retrieved from http://www.cawater-info.net/review/agri_kyrg.htm; National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Women and men of the Kyrgyz Republic – 2015 and 2017.

³ Data of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic or calculated based on these data.

⁴ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (2015). Women and men of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Free time	369	311
Attending to physiological needs (sleeping, eating, etc.)	651	648
Helping friends and relatives	11	6
Other activities	5	6

Figure 1. Difference in time use between rural women and man: time spent by women on various activities as % of time spent on these activities by men.



306. In 2015 USAID/Kyrgyz Republic Economic Growth Project conducted a baseline study in four regions: Batken, Jalal-Abad, Osh, and Naryn. Among other things the study looked at the level of rural women using Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). The WEAI was measured using the sample of 1080 households.

307. The study found that only in 4.4% of household people lived on less than USD 2 per day. Households with only a female adult were in a better situation than only male adult households and both female and male adults ones: the share of households with people living on less than USD 2 per day was 3.1%, 8.4% and 4.4% respectively.

308. The study also found that 63% of women were empowered across all five WEAI domains. Table 3 summarizes findings of the study in relation to individual WEAI domains. In addition, the study found that almost 70% of women had a gender parity in relation to WEAI domains with the primary male in the household.

Table 3. Extent of women empowerment.

WEAI domains	Indicators	Results – gaps in empowerment
Sole or joint decision-making over food and cash-crop farming, livestock, and fisheries as well as autonomy in agricultural production	Input in productive decisions	4% of women reported inadequate input into production decisions
Ownership, access to, and decision-making power over productive	Ownership of assets	14% of women did not own any assets

resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables, and credit	Purchase, sale and transfer of assets	7% of women lacked decision-making power in terms of purchases, sale or transfers of asset
	Credit	Over one third of women reported lack of access to and absence of decision-making power with regard to credit
Sole or joint control over income and expenditures	Control over use of income	Few women (4%) did not have control over use of income within the household
Leadership in the community: membership in economic or social groups and comfort in speaking in public	Group membership	31% of women did not belong to any economic or social group or association
	Speaking in public	10% of women were not comfortable speaking in public
Allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks and satisfaction with the available time for leisure activities	Workload/ Domestic tasks	About one-fifth of women worked more than 10.5 hours per day
	Leisure	Only 7% of women were satisfied with amount the time allocated for leisure activities within their day

3.2 Political Context

309. Kyrgyzstan is a signatory of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Kyrgyzstan Fourth Periodic Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women covering the period of 2008-2012 was submitted in 2013. The report highlights that the Kyrgyzstan government recognizes the special status and needs of rural women. The problems of rural women in general were made a priority in the National Gender Development Strategy to 2020, approved by Government Decree No. 443 of 27 June 2012, which promotes access to non-formal education through improved technical infrastructure (the development of Internet access throughout the country) and by expanding the functions of existing institutions (schools, rural health centers and family health centers). The report also recognizes that having a permanent income-generating activity is a primary condition for rural women's material and social well-being, and this is where they are least protected.

310. UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in its Concluding Observations to the Fourth Periodic Report have called upon the Kyrgyzstan state:

- To formulate and implement specific measures to combat poverty among rural women, including effective measures to ensure rural women's access to justice, education, health services, housing, safe drinking water, sanitation, formal employment, skills development and training opportunities, income-generating opportunities and microcredit, and ownership and use of land, taking into account their specific needs;
- To ensure the participation of rural women in decision-making processes at the community level on an equal basis with men.

311. The latter recommendation is prompted by the fact that women are grossly underrepresented in the decision-making processes in rural areas. For example, out of over 450 rural municipalities (aiyl aimaks), only 15 are headed by women. There are no female heads of rural districts. Number of female members of local councils (keneshes) is steadily declining: from 19% in 2008 to 13% in 2012 and to 10% in 2016⁵.

3.3 Intended Results of Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE

312. The JP RWEE was officially presented in Kyrgyzstan in 2012. Implementation started in November 2014. The design of Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE was adapted based on the consultation with the national stakeholders working in the public sector, both governmental and non-governmental. Table 4 presents the framework of the intended results for the Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE.

313. The Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE combined two outcomes of the global programme – Outcome1: Rural women have improved food and nutrition security and Outcome 2: Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods – into one joint outcome. This has been done because in Kyrgyzstan these two outcomes of the global programme are achieved through the same set of activities, namely the provision of comprehensive training package covering agricultural techniques, nutrition and business skills; provision of high quality seeds and modern agricultural equipment; provision of enriched flour and oil under the “Food for Training” scheme.

Table 4. Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE intended results.

Outputs→	Outcomes
Output 1.1. Rural women are equipped with the skills and knowledge to run economic activities	Outcome 1 Rural women have increased income, better livelihoods and food security from enhanced agricultural productivity
Output 1.2. Rural women have increased opportunities for remunerated work at village level	
Output 2.1. Rural women have mastered leadership skills to participate in and influence decision making at local and central levels	Outcome 2 Rural women have mastered leadership and actively participate in shaping laws, polices and systems of service provision at local and central levels
Output 2.2. Local governments have increased capacities to ensuring transparent and gender responsive planning and budgeting system	
Output 3.1. Policy makers have enhanced capacities to mainstream gender into food, agriculture and rural employment policies, laws and budgets	Outcome 3 A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women
Output 3.2. Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women	

⁵ В Кыргызстане нет ни одной женщины-мэра или акима. December 25, 2017. <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/kyrgyzstan-politics-women-gender/28937131.html>

3.4 Implementation Models

3.4.1 Working towards Outcome 1

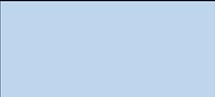
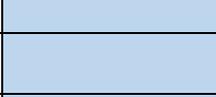
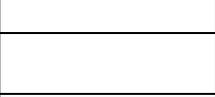
314. Initially Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE was implemented in 45 villages located in 32 aiyl aimaks (rural municipalities) in Naryn, Chuy, Jalal-Abad and Osh regions (hereinafter this group of villages is referred to as the first cohort of villages). In the end of 2016 JP RWEE expanded its reach and started working in additional 28 villages located in 14 aiyl aimaks in Batken, Jalal-Abad and Osh regions (hereinafter this group of villages is referred to as the second cohort of villages).

315. The first cohort of villages was selected based on the criteria of being involved in the previous UN Women projects, for example, the Regional Migration Programme jointly implemented by UN Women, ILO, UKAid and World Bank. The second cohort was selected from the pool of villages where the WFP was already working through its Development Project “Support for the National Productive Safety Nets and Long-Term Community Resilience”.

316. The operational models used in the first and second cohorts are somewhat different. The difference stems from a stronger focus on working through local authorities in the second cohort. For example, in the first cohort the JP RWEE focal points in the villages were local activists elected by local people who were participating in the programme. In most cases these activists were not employees of aiyl okmotu. Activists were supported and supervised by regional coordinators who were members of the NGO Community Development Alliance, one of the responsible parties under the JP RWEE. In the second cohort aiyl okmotu (municipality office) social workers were the JP RWEE focal points in villages. Social workers were supported and supervised by WFP field specialists. Other operational differences between JP RWEE implementation in the first and second cohorts of villages are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Differences in JP RWEE implementation in the first and second cohorts of villages.

 Indicates application of a specific activity.

Activity	First cohort	Second cohort
Social mobilization: establishing self-help groups (SHG) and village level associations of SHGs		
Agrotechnology training and supervision		
Value-chain training		
Nutrition training		
Provision of food assistance (fortified wheat flour and vegetable oil)		
Support to group economic initiatives		
Establishment of and support to regional producer organizations		
Application of Gender Action Learning System (GALS)		

3.4.2 Working towards Outcome 2

317. Activities leading to achievement of the Outcome 2 involved representatives of local authorities and women representing self-help groups from 20 aiyl aimaks in Naryn, Chuy, Jalal-Abad and Osh regions that were selected from the 32 aiyl aimaks of the first cohort. Key activities included:

- Leadership training;
- Training on development of gender-sensitive local strategies and budgets;
- Workshops on organization of budget public hearings;
- Participatory processes to develop aiyl aimaks strategies;
- Grants to aiyl aimaks to implement their projects developed through participatory processes.

318. The JP RWEE also supported female members of SHGs to run for local keneshes (councils) and provided training to women who were elected.

319. In addition, the JP RWEE supported participation of active female members of SHGs in the National Forum of Kyrgyzstan's Women and in the parliamentary hearings on the state budget for 2017 and the forecast for 2018-2019 as well as several working meetings of rural women activists with policy makers at ministries and agencies, public hearings on draft law on social insurance tariffs, advocacy event on introduction of gender quotas in local councils, etc.

320. Activities were implemented by responsible parties: the Alliance for Budget Transparency and the Center of Gender Research.

3.4.3 Working towards Outcome 3

321. Activities leading to achievement of this Outcome included training to the key staff of the Ministry of Agriculture on how to integrate gender dimension of SDGs in the sectoral policies and strategies, and support to the National Statistical Committee with the development of data collection instruments that allow for gender disaggregation.

3.5 Key Performance Indicators

322. Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE established a set of performance indicators for all Outputs. Table 6 presents information about the progress made on these indicators over the course of the programme implementation.

Table 6. Progress on the JP RWEE key performance indicators.

 Indicators where the targets were not achieved.

Numbers are cumulative, e.g. 2731 rural women under Indicator 1.1.1. in 2017 include 1731 women mobilized earlier.

Output	Indicator	Target by 2017	2014	2015	2016	2017*
Output 1.1. Rural women are equipped with the skills and knowledge to run economic activities	Indicator 1.1.1. Number of rural women mobilized in self-help groups for joint economic activities	2000	231	1731	1731	2731
	Indicator 1.1.2. % of families of SHGs having increased access to diversified diet both during harvest and lean seasons (% of families with improved food consumption indicators)	Min 95%		n/a	99%	97%
	Indicator 1.1.3. Number of women organizations (Community Funds, cooperatives, CBOs) running economic activities	Min 40	7	39	45 community funds, 2 cooperatives	73 community funds, 2 cooperatives, 2 associations
	Indicator 1.1.4. Average % of increase household income among members of self-help groups	Min 20%		n/a	20% on average	32.2%
Output 1.2. Rural women have increased opportunities for remunerated work at village level	Indicator 1.2.1. Number of rural women trained on professions in demand at village level through Food for Training activities	Min 50		0	140	220
	Indicator 1.2.2. Percentage of trained women establishing their own enterprise/business, producing agro/livestock/craft. etc.	Min 50%		0	9%	32.2%
Output 2.1. Rural women have mastered leadership skills to participate in and influence	Indicator 2.1.1. Number of rural women leaders participated in the process of local planning and budgeting	60		0	60	60
	Indicator 2.1.2. Number of rural women participated in policy lobbying activities at central level	10		0	30	30

decision making at local and central levels						
Output 2.2. Local governments have increased capacities to ensuring transparent and gender responsive planning and budgeting system	Indicator 2.2.1. Number of local development plans/budgets developed based on participatory process	15		0	15	15
	Indicator 2.2.2 Number of joint local government-communities initiatives addressing specific needs of rural women	10		0	0	12
Output 3.1. Policy makers have enhanced capacities to mainstream gender into food, agriculture and rural employment policies, laws and budgets	Indicator 3.1.1. Agricultural Development Strategy integrates gender priorities, including in its Action Plan and budget	Adoption of the Strategy with gender priorities integrated throughout the text, plan and budget		0	0	Target was not reached because the Ministry of Agriculture does not plan to develop the strategy for agricultural development.
	Indicator 3.1.2. Gender priorities integrated in the Employment Policies (rural development) of the Ministry of Economic Development, including its Action Plan and budget	Target: Adoption of the Policy with gender priorities integrated throughout the text,		0	0	National long-term strategic planning is ongoing.

		plan and budget				
Output 3.2. Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women	Indicator 3.2.1. % of recommendations for filling in data gaps in rural gender statistics integrated	Min 60%		0	0	Recommendations for 14 SDG indicators provided, indicator passports developed
	Indicator 3.2.2. The census and agriculture units of NSC integrate gender-inclusive methodologies in agricultural census and/or surveys on rural populations			Done		

*January – June 2017

3.6 Human Rights

323. Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE had a strong human rights focus. Under Outcome 2 the JP RWEE was building capacity of rural women as **rights-holders** to demand attention to and promotion of their rights from local and national authorities. The JP RWEE was also building capacity of local and national authorities as **duty-bearers** to support and promote the rights of rural women (Table 7).

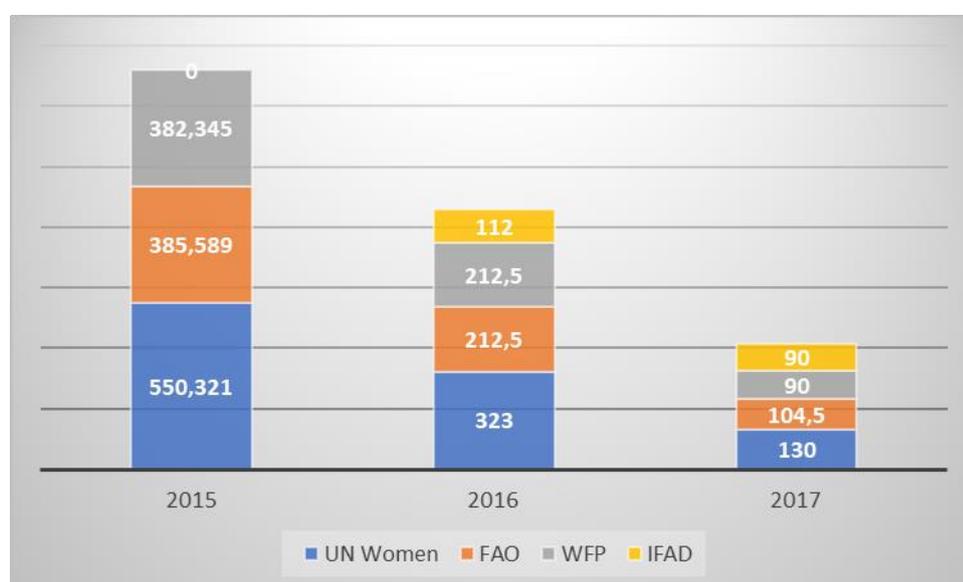
Table 7. Intended human-rights results of the Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE.

Target group	Status	Intended capacity changes
Rural women	Rights-holders	Rural women have mastered leadership skills to participate in and influence decision making at local and central levels.
Local authorities in 20 rural municipalities	Duty-bearers	Local authorities know how to develop gender-sensitive development strategies and plans.
Staff of the Ministry of Agriculture	Duty-bearers	Ministry staff has capacity to develop gender-sensitive national strategies for agricultural sector.

3.7 Programme Budget

324. The total budget of JP RWEE in 2014 – 2017 amounted to USD 2,592,755. USD 2,538,255 were contributed by the Government of Norway and SIDA, USD 54,500 – by UN Women and FAO. Figure 2 presents division of funds between partner UN agencies.

Figure 2. Budget allocations to partner UN agencies.



325. Annual allocation of funds for implementation of the Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE from the central fund of the global programme was unpredictable, so partner agencies were not able to establish a long-term operational plan and were developing annual plans upon receiving information about the available funds.

3.8 Programme Management

326. The programme management was based on a principle of dual leadership by the four partner agencies:

- One agency was selected to lead the implementation of the JPP RWEE in the country;
- Different agencies were to lead specific activities based on their comparative advantages.

327. In Kyrgyzstan UN Women has been identified as a Lead Agency for JP RWEE implementation. UN Women established a Programme Management Unit (PMU) headed by a Programme Manager. PMU was responsible for the implementation of the JP RWEE.

328. Joint monthly co-ordination meetings of all agencies served as a platform to share progress, challenges, constraints, good practices and to discuss the way forward for each project site.

329. Programme implementation involved responsible parties that implemented specific activities under management of partner agencies (Table 8).

Table 8. Management of specific programme activities.

Activity	Lead agency	Responsible party
Social mobilization: establishing self-help groups (SHG) and village level associations in SHG	UN Women (first cohort), WFP (second cohort)	Community Development Alliance
Agrotechnology training and supervision	FAO	Chui-Talas Rural Advisory Services, Rural Advisory Service
Value-chain training	WFP	
Nutrition training	WFP	Republic Health Promotion Centre
Provision of food assistance (fortified wheat flour and vegetable oil)	WFP	
Support to group economic initiatives	UN Women	Community Development Alliance
Establishment of and support to regional producer organizations	UN Women	Community Development Alliance
Application of Gender Action Learning System (GALS)	IFAD	Community Development Alliance
Leadership component	UN Women	Alliance for Budget Transparency, Center of Gender Research
Gender responsive policy environment component	UN Women	

330. Strategic oversight was performed by the National Steering Committee made of representatives of UN Women, FAO, IFAD, and WFP; and Ministries of Agriculture, Labor and Social Development, Economics, Finance, and Foreign Affairs, State Agency on Local Self-governance, President's Office. Representatives of the beneficiaries of the targeted areas and representatives of local authorities were invited on an ad hoc basis to the meetings of the national SC.

331. The main tasks and responsibilities of the National Steering Committee included:

- To determine strategic direction for the JP RWEE;
- To oversee programme implementation;
- To oversee the allocation of funds to the different components of the programme.

4 Evaluation Purpose, Scope and Objectives

4.1 Purpose and scope

401. A final evaluation of the Kyrgyzstan Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment is conducted with a special focus on lessons learnt both from programmatic and coordination perspectives. The main purpose of this final evaluation is to assess in more detail the programmatic progress and performance of the above described intervention from the point of view of relevance, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency and sustainability. The final evaluation of the Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE covered the period from November 2014 till March 2018 and looked at all aspects of the programme implementation in five regions of Kyrgyzstan: Naryn, Chuy, Jalal-Abad, Osh and Batken.

402. The findings of the evaluation aim to contribute to effective programming, refining the approaches of participating UN agencies to women's economic empowerment, organizational learning and accountability. It will also be a key input to knowledge management on joint programmes and programmes for gender equality and women's empowerment. Moreover, the findings of the evaluation are intended to be used to engage policy makers and other stakeholders at local, national and regional levels in evidence-based dialogues and to advocate for gender-responsive strategies to promote inclusive local and national economic development with a particular focus on rural women.

403. Targeted users of the evaluation are the personnel of the participating UN agencies in Kyrgyzstan, at HQ level, and in the six other countries where the JPRWEE is being implemented, the responsible parties, and the government counterparts at local and national levels, CSOs, and other UN agencies, donor community and development partners present in Kyrgyzstan, programme beneficiaries, and other development partners that are implementing joint programmes aiming at supporting the economic empowerment of rural women. The evaluation should also provide specific recommendations as to the priority areas that should be considered to inform future work of participating UN agencies in the frameworks of Women's Economic Empowerment agenda and a potential Phase Two of the Joint Programme. This would include interventions that require continued support, successful interventions for expansion, and recommendations on prioritizing interventions to maximize impact. It should also define recommendations to improve project management and coordination and maximize ownership by national partners.

4.2 Objectives

404. The objectives of this evaluation are to:

1. Analyse the relevance of the programme objectives, strategy and approach at the local and national levels for the economic empowerment of rural women

2. Assess effectiveness and a potential measurable impact of the programme intervention on the target group across all five dimensions of empowerment as per the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI): i) decisions about agricultural production; ii) access to and decision-making power over productive resources, iii) control over use of income, iv) leadership in the community, and v) time use. Impact on off-farm production and other productive activities should also be considered.
3. Assess organizational efficiency and coordination mechanisms in progressing towards the achievement of the project results, including the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment results as defined in the intervention (if and how the Joint Programme’s organizational structure, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the programme).
4. Assess the sustainability of the results and the intervention in advancing gender equality in the target group
5. Analyse how human rights-based approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the programme implementation
6. Asses how the intervention and its results relate and contribute to the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals
7. Identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories and challenges within the project, to inform future work of participating UN agencies in the frameworks of Women’s Economic Empowerment agenda and beyond
8. Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project’s best practices
9. Provide actionable recommendations with respect to the work of all four partner UN agencies in Kyrgyzstan in the area of Women’s Economic Empowerment.

4.3 Evaluation Questions

405. The initial ToR included 33 evaluation questions. Based on the consultations with the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) evaluation questions were further clarified and grouped under the overarching key evaluation questions (Table 9).

Table 9. Evaluation questions.

Criteria/Key questions	Sub criteria	Sub-questions
Relevance: Is JP RWEE doing the right thing?	Focus on relevance throughout design process	To what extent key national partners were involved in the project’s conceptualization and design process?
		To what extent has gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the programme design and implementation?
	Alignment with policies	To what extent is the intervention consistent with the national development strategies in the area of gender equality and women’s empowerment, food and nutrition security, and economic development, and reflect national priorities and commitments on GEWE, new aid modalities and the UNDAF?
		To what extent is the intervention aligned with international agreements and conventions on

		gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of inclusive economic growth?
	Alignment with beneficiaries needs	To what extent was the design of the intervention and its results relevant to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries? Was the choice of interventions relevant to the situation of the target group?
		How the communities were selected for the project? Are these criteria relevant? How the participants were selected, what groups they represent? Are the criteria relevant? How community members were involved in activity selection and design?
Effectiveness: Is JP RWEE working as intended?		Achievement of intended results
		To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on both outcome and output levels?
		What evidence exist that the joint programme has delivered longer term results from processes through to benefits? Have any unintended results been delivered?
		How well did the intervention succeed in involving and building the capacities of rights-holders, duty-bearers, as well as the project partners?
		What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results? Has project achieved any unforeseen results, either positive or negative? For whom? What are the good practices and the obstacles or shortcomings encountered? How were they overcome?
		To what extent has the project been able to promote replication and/or up-scaling of successful practices?
	Impact on gender norms and empowerment	Is there a potential measurable impact of the programme intervention on the target group across all dimensions of empowerment?
		To what extent is the programme changing the dynamics of power in relationships between different groups?
		To what extent is the programme bringing about gender transformative changes that address the root causes of gender inequalities – including

		prevailing social norms, attitudes and behaviours, discrimination and social systems?
		To what extent has the project been catalytic in addressing some of the root causes of inequalities related to rural women's economic empowerment?
		What contribution are participating UN agencies making to implementing global norms and standards for gender equality and economic empowerment of rural women?
	Effectiveness of specific strategies	How effective have the selected programme strategies and approaches been in achieving programme results?
		To what extent are the programme approaches and strategies are innovative for achieving economic empowerment of rural women? What -if any- types of innovative good practices have been introduced in the programme for the achievement of GEEW results?
Joint delivery: Is joint operation producing more value for money?	Comparative advantage	To what extent did the participating agencies possess the comparative advantage in the programme's area of work in comparison with other UN entities and key partners in the Kyrgyz Republic?
	Quality of management arrangements	To what extent did the project's design process include a collaborative process, shared vision for delivering results, strategies for joint delivery and sharing of risks among implementing UN entities?
		Has there been effective leadership and management of the project including the structuring of management and administration roles to maximize results? Where does accountability lie?
		To what extent are the programme's individual entity and joint monitoring mechanisms in place effective for measuring and informing management of project performance and progress towards targets? To what extent was the monitoring data objectively used for management action and decision making?
		Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated and split between

	Efficiency in the use of resources	the four participating agencies strategically to achieve the project outcomes?
		Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?
		How has the joint nature of the project affected efficiency of delivery, including reduced duplication and increased cost-sharing, reduced/transferred burdens and transaction costs? What factors have influenced this?
		Has JP RWEE led to improved efficiency in the management of resources and what has been the relationship between increased/decreased efficiency and (potential) results on GEWE? Does the established levels or mechanism of “jointness” lead to better GEWE results?
	Impact on UN family in Kyrgyzstan	To what extent the joint programme modality led to improved communication, coordination and information exchange within the United Nations family in Kyrgyzstan?
Sustainability: Will the changes created by the JP RWEE last?	Quality of exit strategy	To what extent has the exit strategy been well planned and successfully implemented?
	National ownership	What voice and influence do key national partners including women’s movement etc. have within the programme’s decision-making structure and hierarchy?
		What local accountability and oversight systems have been established?
		What steps were taken to develop and/or reinforce the operating capacities of national partners during the implementation of the programme?
		To what extent the intervention succeeded in building individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices of local development?
		How effectively has the project generated national ownership of the results achieved, the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of national capacities to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits? What elements of JP RWEE are replicable for urban areas?

	Sustainability of results	What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?
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4.4 Mechanisms used to ensure quality and usefulness of evaluation

406. Evaluation team was made of an International Consultant serving as a Team Leader and a National Consultant serving as a Team Member.

407. Overall management of the evaluation was done by the UN Women Kyrgyzstan National Programme Officer, who was providing overall programmatic support for the JP RWEE, but was not involved in direct management of the programme. This person served as the evaluation Task Manager responsible for the day-to-day management of the evaluation and ensures that the evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UN Women Evaluation Policy, United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations system and other key guidance documents.

408. To enhance the quality and credibility of the evaluation the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) were established. EMG included members from senior management and the focal point responsible for the Joint Programme that is to be evaluated from each of the participating agencies. ERG was made of representative of the JP RWEE stakeholders, including representatives of relevant Ministries, responsible parties and beneficiaries. More information on the composition and functions of EMG and ERG are provided in Annex X.

5 Methodology

5.1 Evaluation Design

501. The evaluation was a **transparent and participatory process** involving relevant stakeholders and partners under the JP RWEE in Kyrgyzstan. The evaluation was based on gender and human rights principles and adhered to the UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct and UN Women Evaluation Policy and guidelines.

502. The evaluation used both a summative approach focusing on capturing the lessons learned during the implementation and assessing the achievement of the results at output and outcome levels, as well as a formative, forward-looking approach assessing the applicability of the results will be employed. The evaluation methodology followed a **Theory of Change (ToC) approach** and employed **mixed methods** including **quantitative and qualitative data collection methods** and analytical approaches to account for complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes.

5.2 Theory of Change Workshop

503. In the beginning of the data collection mission to Kyrgyzstan, the evaluation team conducted the ToC Workshop with members of the EMG. The purpose of this workshop was to clarify the Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE Theory of Change based on the existing Logical Framework and to assess how and at what stages of implementation the JP RWEE could have impact on the different aspects of the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). (The evaluation team had to use this index as a framework for the analysis of the JP RWEE impact on empowerment of rural women.)

504. Key insights from the ToC workshop included:

- Most of the JP RWEE outputs are defined as changes in capacity – strictly in accordance with the UN guidance on framing results. These outputs are not time-bound because capacity building continues throughout the programme.
- To enter the programme, a woman had to have access to and decision-making power over productive resources such as land, as well as certain autonomy in agricultural production to grow crops recommended by the programme. This could mean that a woman had to be already empowered under these domains of the WEAI or that the JP RWEE was stimulating women to claim these access and autonomy to join the programme and thus was empowering women just by offering an opportunity to participate.
- Other domain of the WEAI were likely to be enhanced as the JP RWEE was working towards achievement of its outputs.

5.3 Data Sources and Data Collection Methods

505. In the course of this evaluation the evaluation team reviewed over 50 programme-related documents, including ProDocs, programme reports, reports of the responsible parties. The evaluation team has reached to 143 women and 30 men who shared their experiences and perspectives on the JP RWEE. Table 10 provides an overview of the data sources and data collection methods used by the evaluation team. The list of reviewed documents and data collection tools are provided in Annex Z.

Table 10. Data sources and data collection methods.

Data source			Data collection method
Implementing UN agencies	4	5	Semi-structured interviews
National partners	4	-	
Responsible parties	3	-	
Village activists	17	1	Phone survey
Field visits			
Aiyl okmotu staff	2	5	Semi-structured interviews
Village activists	1	2	
Critical case heroes	8	-	
Members of SHGs	91	1	Focus groups
Family members of SGH members	5	14	
Neighbors of SGH members	8	2	
Total	143	30	

5.2.1 Field Visits

506. The evaluation team visited six villages where the JP RWEE was implemented. Villages were selected to cover the variety of experiences participating rural women could have, including village location in the North or South of Kyrgyzstan, being part of the first or second cohort of villages, gender of the village activist in the case of the first cohort and being included in activities under Outcome 2 or not. Table 11 provides overview of the variations covered by the sample of villages.

Table 11. Sample of the JP RWEE villages.

Location	Cohort	Gender of the village activist/social worker	Participation in activities leading to development of local strategies	Region/ Village
North	First	Female	Yes	Naryn/ Ak-Jar
North	First	Male	No	Naryn/ Acha-Kayendy
South	First	Female	Yes	Jalal-Abad/ Blagovestchenko
South	First	Male	Yes	Jalal-Abad/ Beshik-Jon
South	Second	Female	N/A	Osh/ Bel

South	Second	Female	N/A	Osh/ Ana-Kyzyl
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5.2.2 Critical Cases

507. The JP RWEE provided participating women a variety of experiences. Women had opportunities to become village activists, leaders and bookkeepers of SHGs and village associations of the SHGs, start group economic initiatives, participate in leadership training and development of local development plans, successfully or unsuccessfully run for a kenesh, participate in budget hearings in the Jogorku Kenesh (a national parliament), become a GALS champion.

508. The evaluation team tried to capture these variety of experiences through using critical case approach: identifying women in the visited villages who were more than just regular members of SHGs and doing in-depth semi-structured interviews with them.

5.2.3 Focus Groups

509. Focus groups were used to capture perspectives of SGHs members, their family members and neighbors on the changes induced by the JP RWEE, usefulness of these changes and the quality of work done by the JP RWEE.

510. In each visited village the evaluation team invited both men and women to the same focus group. This approach definitely carried the risk that male participants would dominate the discussion, but it also offered the team an opportunity to observe interaction between male and female participants and to what extent this interaction complies with patriarchal social norms. In addition, the plan was that after the short introduction and recall of the JP RWEE activities in the village, focus group participants should be divided into small groups to work on change maps, and men would work separately from women.

511. The intended design of the focus group assumed that the number of male and female participants would be roughly the same. In reality very few men came, so in several cases the evaluation team had to allow for mixed (females and males together) groups of family members and neighbors. There was also one case when there was a male member of the SDG, and he also worked on a change map with female members of the group. Male participants were comfortable to work with female participants and did not attempt to dominate the discussion in the mixed groups.

512. Change maps that people were asked to create were structured to capture the changes related to the domains of the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI): (1) input in productive decisions; (2) input in decisions about use of income; (3) confidence of speaking in public; (4) leadership in community; (5) division of labor in the household; (6) free time. The maps also included the section "Other changes" so that participants could share all changes they see.

513. Small groups were encouraged to have a conversation about the changes they see with one of groups members writing them down on the map. People were also offered an option to record changes individually on sticky notes and post them of the map. In one of the villages a woman used this option to write a story about her experience with the JP RWEE.

514. Once the change maps were completed, evaluators gave each member of a small group three seeds and asked them to identify up to three priority areas of change "voting" with seeds.

515. To conclude the change maps exercise, small groups presented their maps in plenary. After that all participants were asked to assess the usefulness of changes induced by the JP RWEE and the quality of work done by the JP RWEE implementors in their community on a scale of 0 to 10, record assessment results of the sticky notes and submit these improvised questionnaires to the evaluation team.

516. Participants of focus groups developed 18 change maps. Table 12 shows distribution of maps by group composition and location.

Table 12. Number of change maps developed by focus groups' participants.

Participants	First cohort of villages			Second cohort of villages		
	 Female groups	 Male groups	 Mixed groups	 Female groups	 Male groups	 Mixed groups
Members of SHGs	6		1	5		
Family members	1	1			1	1
Neighbors	1		1			

5.2.4 Phone Survey

517. The evaluation team conducted a short (three questions) phone survey of the village activists. Respondents were asked to assess the usefulness of JP RWEE results for their communities and the quality of work done by the JP RWEE implementors in their community on a scale of 0 to 10 and assess the sustainability of the institutions created by the programme (SHGs, SHG associations). The evaluation team managed to reach 18 out of 36 activists (50%), including 17 out of 26 women (65%) and one out of ten men (10%).

5.3 Data Analysis

518. The evaluation team used **frequency analysis** to process the data of the phone survey, small survey conducted in the end of focus groups and prioritization of change areas on the change maps. Results of this analysis were used to determine shares of responses falling under specific categories, e.g. a specific score or area of change.

519. The evaluation team also conducted **content** and **thematic analysis** of interview and focus group records and change maps. Because GALS was used only in the first cohort of villages, this analysis allowed the evaluation team to identify differences in changes between the first and second cohorts that can be attributed to GALS with a high degree of confidence.

520. In the course of the data analysis the evaluation team triangulated evidence coming from different data sources and collected by different methods.

521. At the final stage of the data analysis the evaluation team conducted **Data Validation Workshops** with members of the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). Workshop participants contributed to interpretation of evaluation findings and arriving at evaluation conclusions and recommendations.

5.4 Gender and Human Rights

522. In compliance with the ToR, this evaluation was guided by the UN Women Evaluation Handbook: How to Manage Gender Responsive Evaluation and UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender into Evaluation.

523. The efforts made by the evaluation team to ensure that the evaluation was human rights and gender responsive included:

- Analysis of stakeholders to identify right-holders and duty-bearers and identification of JP RWEE activities contributing to the building their capacity to demand and ensure observance of human rights.
- Attention to possible influence of gender in the selection of the village sample.
- Gender-disaggregation of collected data.
- Providing options for verbal and written contribution to change maps to facilitate meaningful participation for people with different preferences.
- Attention to differences in JP RWEE experiences of male and female participants.

5.5 Ethics

524. The evaluation was guided by the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN. The evaluation team consciously made efforts to increase **utility** of this evaluation by involving members of the EMG that included UN Women, FAO, WFP and IFAD managers in interpretation of evaluation findings to increase ownership of evaluation conclusions and recommendations and facilitate their use.

525. Methodological decisions were made with consideration of the evaluators' obligation to **respect the dignity and diversity** of individuals reached by the evaluation team. All data collection activities started with informing participants about purpose of the evaluation and mandate of the evaluation team and obtaining informed consent. Participants were informed that they can decline to respond to any of the questions posed by the evaluation team.

5.6 Methodological Limitations

- The evaluation was not able to fully assess the JP RWEE performance, as some activities were still ongoing.
- Possible positive bias. Due to prevailing cultural norms rural people might have been sharing only positive experiences and changes with the evaluation team.
- Self-selection bias. The evaluation team had no control over who chose to participate in the focus groups and who chose to not participate by not coming.
- Evaluation managed to reach few husbands of women who participated in the programme.
- Because phone calls turned out to be the only way to reach the majority of village activists, the evaluation team had to use a very simple set of questions and limit answer option to numerical scores.

6 Evaluation Findings

601. This section presents the main findings of the evaluation of Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE. The Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) contributed to review and interpretation of the emerging evaluation findings through data validation workshops. The list of findings provided in this report incorporates input from these two workshops.

Relevance

Alignment with national and international policy documents

1

JP RWEE design had an explicit focus on alignment with national strategic documents in the areas of gender equality, agriculture, food security and sustainable development. JP RWEE is also well aligned with the Agenda 2030: the programme contributes towards implementation of 10 targets under 7 SDGs.

602. Design of the JP RWEE had an explicit focus of alignment with national strategic documents in the areas of gender equality, agriculture, food security and sustainable development (Table 13). Special attention was also given to programme alignment with the recommendations provided by the UN CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations to the Fourth Periodic Report submitted by Kyrgyzstan in 2013.

Table 13. National and international strategic documents referenced in ProDocs.

Sector/ Thematic area	Document
Gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Strategy on Gender Equality 2020 National Action Plan 2012-2014 Fourth Periodic Report of Kyrgyzstan to the CEDAW Committee (2013) UN CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations to the Fourth Periodic Report
Agricultural sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Strategy on Agricultural Development 2020 Law on Pastures (2006) Law on Agricultural Land Management (as amended in 2006 to incorporate gender issues)
Food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decree of the Kyrgyz Government on National Food Security Policy (1999)
Sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roadmap on Sustainable Development 2013-2017 National Sustainable Development Programme 2013-2017

603. Kyrgyz Republic Food Security and Nutrition Programme 2015-2017 (FSNP) is not explicitly referenced in the JP RWEE. But the JP RWEE is well aligned with the FSNP Priority 4 that calls for stimulating poor families to look for ways to increase their income. Nutrition training provided by the JP RWEE also contributes to building demand for healthy food, which is one of the tasks set by the FSNP.

604. Given that the global goal of the JP RWEE is to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the post MDGs, the evaluation team analyzed the alignment of the programme with the Sustainable Development Goals established by the Agenda 2030 (Table 14). This analysis indicates that Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE contributes towards implementation of 10 targets under 7 SDGs.

Table 14. JP RWEE contribution towards SDGs.

Goals and targets	JP RWEE contribution
<p>Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere</p> <p>1.2. By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions</p>	<p>JP RWEE aims to increase income of participating rural women through income-generating agricultural and non-agricultural activities.</p>
<p>Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</p> <p>2.1. By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round</p> <p>2.3. By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment</p> <p>2.4. By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality</p>	<p>JP RWEE aims to improve nutrition and food security of participating rural women through increased production of organic vegetables, use of safe vegetable preservation techniques, nutrition training and provision of food for training.</p> <p>JP RWEE provides training on efficient agricultural and food preservation techniques, access to high quality seeds, interest-free loans and opportunities to start non-agricultural income generating activities.</p> <p>All agricultural techniques taught within the framework of the JP RWEE are ecologically sound.</p>
<p>Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</p> <p>4.4. By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including</p>	<p>The JP RWEE gives women opportunities to learn agricultural and non-agricultural technical skills as well as business skills.</p>

<p>technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship</p>	
<p>Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</p> <p>5.4. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate</p> <p>5.5. Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life</p>	<p>Application of GALS leads to increased recognition of value of the unpaid domestic work and promotes more equal distribution of responsibilities in the participating households.</p> <p>JP RWEE has an explicit focus of promoting women leadership on local level.</p>
<p>Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</p> <p>9.3. Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets</p>	<p>JP RWEE provides access to interest-free loans through revolving funds.</p> <p>Regional producer organizations established with JP RWEE support shall facilitate access of rural women to regional markets.</p>
<p>Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p> <p>16.7. Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p>	<p>JP RWEE was building capacity of local authorities and rural women to work together to develop gender-sensitive local development plans and strategies.</p>
<p>Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development</p> <p>17.18. By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts</p>	<p>JP RWEE supported development of gender-disaggregated indicators for the agricultural sector by the National Statistic Committee.</p> <p>The JP RWEE also supported the working group made of representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Statistics Committee to finalize the analysis of 14 SDGs indicators relevant for the agricultural sector.</p>

Alignment with beneficiaries needs

2

The JP RWEE design and results are well-aligned with the needs of its target beneficiaries, rural women. The programme component that is most valued by rural women is agricultural training delivered by professionals.

605. The JP RWEE is well-aligned with the needs of rural women, its main target beneficiaries. All members of SHGs, members of their families, neighbors as well as village activists were positive about the changes induced by the programme: all scores on a scale of 0 to 10 were in the positive zone (5 or higher) and majority of people gave the score of 10 (Fig. 3 and 4).

Figure 3. Assessment of usefulness of changes induced by the JP RWEE by community members: the JP RWEE participants, their family members and neighbors.

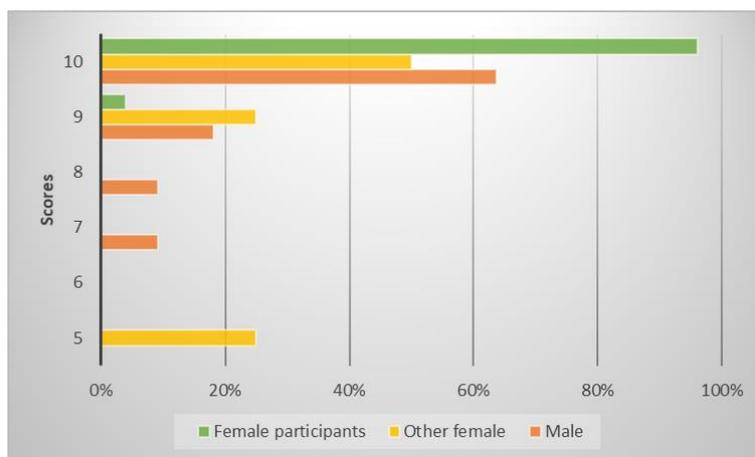
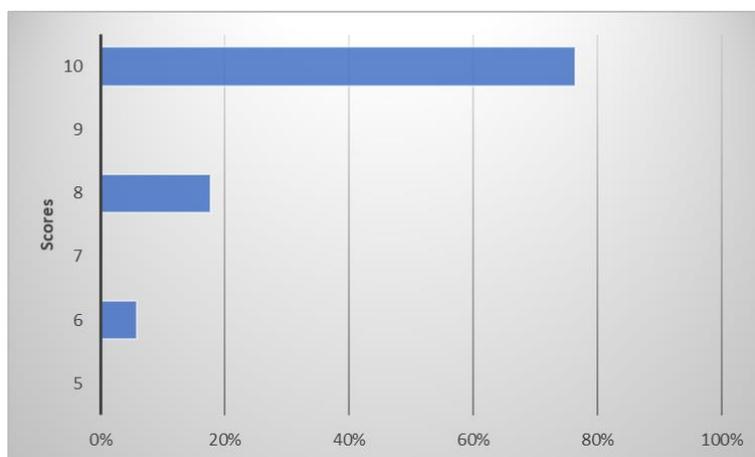


Figure 4. Assessment of usefulness of by village activists.



606. According to SHG members, training on how to grow vegetables was the most useful part of the programme. Neighbors who participated in the focus groups were saying that they would be ready to pay upfront for the seeds and plastic tunnels that the JP RWEE provided to the SHG members, but nothing can substitute learning from professionals. When given an opportunity, neighbors of the JP RWEE participants were even ready to pay for agricultural training. In the village of Bel, Osh region, after the neighbors saw the usefulness of agricultural training provided by the JP RWEE, the social worker recruited another 70 people (outside of the JP RWEE framework) who paid 100 soms each towards

hiring a trainer to deliver a series of workshops on agricultural technics. Local authorities administered the contract with the trainer and provided premises for training.

607. High interest in agricultural training delivered by professionals found in the course of this evaluation is consistent with the results of the baseline study done for the USAID/Kyrgyz Republic Economic Growth Project conducted in 2015. Households that participated in that study reported that they would be interested in more training programs, particularly on livestock and crop techniques, especially if training was held in the winter when people have time to attend.

Geographic targeting

3

The selection of target region is aligned with existing needs: Osh, Jalalabad, Naryn and Chuy regions have the highest numbers of people who are food insecure.

608. The first cohort of villages is located in Naryn, Chuy, Jalal-Abad and Osh regions. The second cohort of villages is located in Batken, Jalal-Abad and Osh regions.

609. The JP RWEE ProDocs explicitly refers to the Emergency Food Security Assessments (EFSA) and Household Food Security Assessments (HFSA) conducted by the WFP in 2012 and 2013 respectively. These studies measure level of foods security (severely food insecure, moderately food insecure and food secure) by combining by combining the Food Consumption Score and Food Access Groups. Food Consumption Score is calculated based on the information about the number of food groups that a household consumed over a reference period of seven days and measures the quality of the diet. Food Access Groups are based on the monthly per capita income of the household: poor – below the national extreme poverty line, average – below the national poverty line, good – above the poverty line.

610. Because the JP RWEE aims to improve both food security and income levels, information about food security levels is useful about identifying areas where the JP RWEE intervention is most needed.

611. EFSAs conducted in March and September 2012 provided information about the number of people who are food insecure in each of the Kyrgyzstan regions. HFSAs conducted in 2013 don't provide this information. The evaluation team analyzed information from 2012 EFSAs to identify regions where more people were food insecure. As there were substantial differences between March and September numbers, the evaluation team created a composite score that reflected the ranking of regions in March and September in terms of the total numbers of food insecure people and numbers of severely food insecure people to give the more disadvantaged group more weight. There are eight regions, so the region that ranked first for a specific parameter in a specific period was assigned a "priority for intervention" score of eight. The region that ranked eights, was assigned the score of one.

612. Table 15 presents results of this analysis. Regions are presented in the order from the highest to the lowest cumulative "priority for intervention" score.

Table 15. Regional "priority for intervention" scores.

Region	M2012 Number of food insecure	Score	S2012 Number of food insecure	Score	M2012 Number of severely food insecure	Score	S2012 Number of severely food insecure	Score	Total score
Osh	338363	8	521412	8	83204	8	133126	7	31
Jalalabad	228062	7	501736	7	37319	7	281967	8	29
Naryn	96466	5	59767	5	13631	5	734	3	18
Chuy	102271	6	6193	1	9897	4	9778	6	17
Talas	89018	4	18546	4	28746	6	0	1	15
Batken	61754	2	167618	6	1764	1	8822	5	14
Bishkek	33069	1	13757	3	3674	2	3439	4	10
Yssyk- Kul	76457	3	9246	2	7112	3	0	1	9

613. This analysis indicates that selecting Osh, Jalalabad, Naryn and Chuy regions as first target for the JP RWEE as well as further expanding the programme reach in Osh and Jalalabad regions was strategically aligned with existing needs.

Who is left behind

4

The JP RWEE strategy of recruiting 30-40 eligible people per village contributes to the programme effectiveness, because the programme ends up working with people who are most open to new ideas and apply all knowledge they get through the training activities. But because in a particular village the JP RWEE recruits participants only once, eligible people who are less open to innovations are left behind. In addition, the JP RWEE recruitment strategy leaves behind people who either don't have the sufficient amount of land, money or unable to work, e.g. because of the disability, that is the most vulnerable.

614. Participation in the JP RWEE was open mostly to women from households that are considered poor and eligible for social benefits as per the national standards. (Men from poor households could also participate, but their number could not exceed one-two men per SHG.) Only one person per household could join the programme.

615. Participation was voluntary, but a person had to commit to join a self-help group, contribute 20-50 soms (USD 0.3 – 0.7) per month to the SHG fund and 20-100 soms (USD 0.3 – 1.4) per month to a fund of the village association of SHGs, and allocate 5-10 sotkas (500 – 1000 square meters) of land for growing vegetables using seeds and techniques provided by the JP RWEE.

616. The target number of participants per village was about 30-40 people which is optimal for training. As a result, households of the JP RWEE participants constitute about 15-26% of the poor households (Table 16).

Table 16. The JP RWEE reach on a community level.

Aiyl Aimak	Villages	Number of households	Number of poor households	Number of the JP RWEE participants (households)	JP RWEE participants as % of poor households
Bel-Kairagach AA	Bel, Borbash	2243	365	70	19%
Tort-Kol AA	Ana-Kyzyl, Shoro-Bashat	5500	272	70	26%
Beshik-Jon AA	Beshik-Jon, Jon, Bay-Munduz	3115	700	108	15%

616. According to the JP RWEE participants, they joined the programme because they quickly realized the benefits they could get, immediately got the support of their husbands and other family members or managed to quickly persuade resistant husbands. The JP RWEE participants also shared with the evaluation team that many women who were eligible for the programme but did not join as well as their husbands regretted their decision after participants got good yields of vegetables.

617. “People who joined the project are those who were already making efforts to improve their lives, potential leaders, those who are eager for changes. They understood that they were poor and wanted to grab the opportunity offered by the programme. Those who did not join the programme did not understand the potential benefits or were in a difficult situation: having many children or children with disability, poor health. Some people were scared by the requirement to contribute money (to SHG and village association)”, noted one of the social workers interviewed by the evaluation team. “Only women who already had leadership qualities joined the self-help groups. The project gave them an impetus and helped to develop these qualities”, said one of the heads of aiyl okmotu.

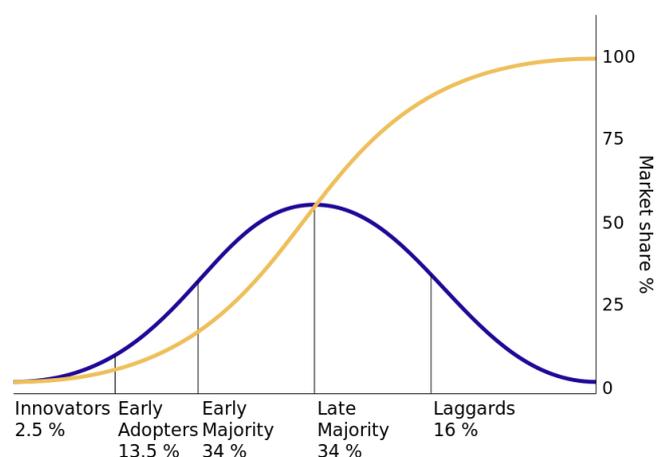
618. Common barriers to participation in the JP RWEE mentioned by the participants of the focus groups were: not having enough land, not being able to work on the land due to disability or

having to take care of small children and children with disability, resistance of the husband.

Box 1. Diffusion of Innovations Theory

The theory developed by Everett Rogers in the 1960s explains how products, technologies, behaviors and ideas spread in the society. People differ in terms of their readiness to accept innovations. About 13.5% of people are open to trying new things, hence they are called “early adopters”. The rest of the population made of early and late majority take longer to accept a new idea or technology. Laggards resist innovations for the longest period of time. Some people will never accept it.

According to the theory, introduction of innovations succeeds if early adopters are targeted first.



619. Evaluation data indicates that the JP RWEE is recruiting “early adopters” (see Box 1), that is those 13- 16% of population who are open to new ideas. “Early adopters” don’t resist new ideas and technologies, which ensure their successful application by these group. So the JP RWEE recruitment strategy is viable and contributes to the programme effectiveness.

620. But because the JP RWEE recruitment in a village takes place only once, eligible people who are less open to innovations are left behind. In addition, the JP RWEE recruitment strategy leaves behind people who either don’t have the sufficient amount of land, money or unable to work, that is the most vulnerable.

Effectiveness

Achievement of intended results

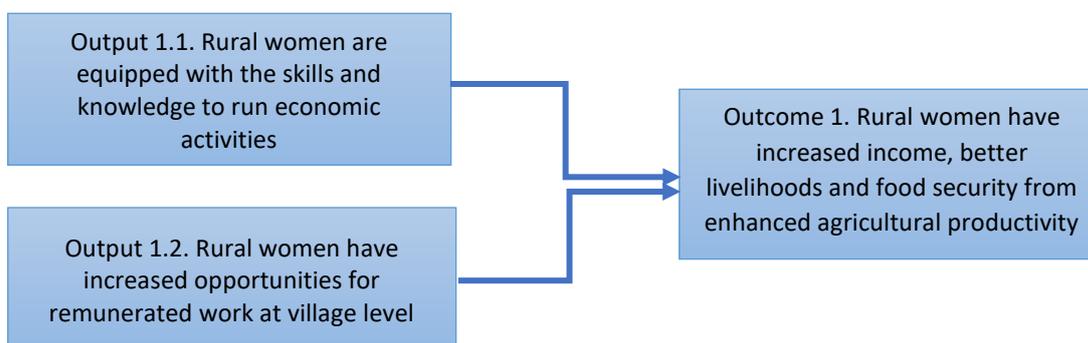
5

The JP RWEE has reached targets for most of its key performance indicators. The programme created intended positive changes leading to increased income, better livelihoods, food security and leadership role of participating rural women. Factors that facilitated these results include the promotion of solidarity economic models like self-help groups and group economic initiatives, as well as providing access to training and interest-free commodity and cash loans. Community members who were not directly involved in the programme benefitted from the transfer of skills and knowledge from program participants and development activities implemented by local authorities upon request from the program participants. One of important results of the JP RWEE is that its direct beneficiaries and community members broadened their perspectives and adopted more advanced practices.

621. The JP RWEE has reached targets for most of its key performance indicators (Table 6). Qualitative data collected in the course of this evaluation confirms that the JP RWEE led to intended changes in the lives of rural women and made their environment more enabling.

Changes in agricultural productivity, income, livelihoods and food security.

Figure 5. Intended changes leading to Outcome 1.



622. The stories that women and men shared with the evaluation team as well as change maps confirm that the JP RWEE activities led to achievement of Outcome 1 and related Outputs. The story that was written by a woman who participated in a focus group in Acha-Kaiyendy village in Naryn region (Box 1) exemplifies most of the themes emerging from the collective reflections on the JP RWEE results in the participating villages.

Box 2. One-woman story.

Text	Themes
<p>In the past we did not know how to earn money for the family. We were taking loans and repaying them was difficult. UN project proved to be very helpful for us. We went through many trainings on how to grow vegetables, how to sell them, how to make money and spend them. The project has taught us that we can buy necessary things for the household. It has taught us that we should grow vegetables so that we can provide for ourselves and don't suffer. It has taught us that we should try hard.</p>	<p><i>Learning to grow vegetables to generate additional income</i></p>
<p>We started to consult with family members. We started to share household duties. We started to grow tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, beets, onions. We got a good harvest. We sold part of it, processed another part by making preserves and drying to use later for household consumption. I used the revenue to buy an automatic washer. I also bought Tefal kitchen ware and a kettle. I bought agricultural instruments: spades, hoes, a cap for myself.</p>	<p><i>Using additional income to improve quality of life</i></p>
<p>As a group we took an interest-free loan to start a production facility. Our group started making dumplings, selling them to people in the village and a grocery store in At-Bashy. We used the revenue to buy a freezer. We bought materials to repair our production facility. I assumed the responsibility for making money for the family.</p>	<p><i>Starting non-agricultural production facilities</i></p>
<p>Due to the project I brought together all young women from poor families and trained them on making preserves. I have trained 30 people.</p>	<p><i>Transfer of JP RWEE knowledge to neighbors</i></p>
<p>Each of us received ten liters of oil and a hundred kilos of flour.</p>	<p><i>Receiving food from the JP RWEE</i></p>
<p>After I joined this project, my status in the community increased. We are supplying vegetables to people in our village. Sometimes they come to buy vegetables even late at night. Sometimes we give them vegetables and allow to pay later.</p>	<p><i>Becoming a source of vegetables for neighbors</i></p>
<p>I always have money from selling vegetables. I gave money to children to repair a roof of a cattle den using steel sheets.</p>	<p><i>Improved situation of extended family</i></p>

<p>We meet with members of other groups in the village to discuss problems, issues and the use of revenue. I liked GALS training, it is very useful. I used a “road to dream” method and gradually work towards my dreams.</p>	<p><i>Usefulness of GALS</i></p>
<p>I don't worry anymore about money, I work on my land, sell produce and I always have money.</p>	<p><i>Greater economic stability</i></p>
<p>In the past I was also growing vegetable and making about 30 thousand soms per season. Now my revenue is 40-50 thousand soms. Before the project I was not growing tomatoes and cucumbers. Now I have learned how to grow both tomatoes and cucumbers and they grow well.</p>	<p><i>Increased income due to knowledge and skill obtained through the JP RWEE</i></p>
<p>I started to buy quality seeds. And UN is also giving seeds. Now people in the village also buy seeds from us. We started using our own fertilizer, we don't add chemicals.</p>	<p><i>Change in agricultural practices</i></p>
<p>We started with small things and now set big goals to ourselves. We really need UN programmes. They should continue the project so that many other rural women can improve their lives. Due to this programme in the village we now have dumplings facility, sewing facility, handicraft group, kurut facility. We wish that this project would never stop. Thanks!</p>	<p><i>Other women shall also benefit</i></p>

623. Learning to grow vegetables is seen by all community members as a crucial change that led to other positive intended changes: increase in income due to the sales of vegetables and improved diet due to consumption of fresh and preserved vegetables. Community members were aware that vegetable enrich their diet with vitamins and that the vegetables they grow are organic and thus have higher nutritional value.

624. The JP RWEE also provided participants opportunities to obtain non-agricultural skills, e.g. growing and taking care of house plants, sewing, computer design, repair of mobile phones. Women used these skills to start group economic initiative with the support of the programme.

625. The evaluation has found the transfer of the agricultural skills from the JP RWEE participants to their neighbors which also start the chain of positive changes: “I also started growing beets and carrots and stopped buying them in the market. And the vegetables that I grow are fresh”.

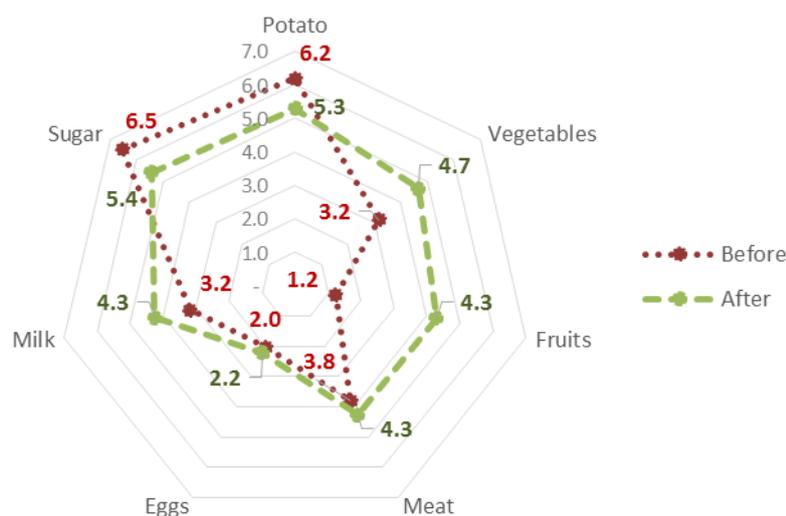
626. An important factor that facilitated income increase was provision of interest-free commodity and cash loans to the JP RWEE participants (providing seeds on the condition that women repay part of their cost to the village association funds can be seen as a provision of subsidized loan). In some cases provision of seeds has helped to stabilize the SHGs: “Before we got the seeds there was a turnover in group membership. About ten women left groups and were replaced by other women. But since we got the seeds, nobody left”, shared the social worker in one of the villages.

627. Access to low-interest loans enables women to start income generating non-agricultural activities even without direct support from the JP RWEE. For example, in the second cohort village of Ana-Kyzyl, Osh region, women borrowed money from the SHGs funds to start baking bread and making dowry items for sales.

627. In the first cohort of villages provision of interest-free loans was used to promote the model of the group economic activity where a group of women jointly operates an income-generating facility on a parity basis sharing risks and profits. The evaluation team has found numerous examples where this approach led to increased productivity and greater income generation. For example, in the village of Ak-Jar, Naryn region, the evaluation team met with a group of women producing felt carpets. All women were already making carpets for sales before the programme. Thanks to the JP RWEE they joined forces, received interest-free loan which helped them to increase production and sales. There is already a division of labor within the group with one of four women taking care of advertising carpets on social media, selling carpets in handcraft fairs and negotiating with potential customers. In the village of Acha-Kayendy, Naryn region, women who started a dumpling facility, were already making dumplings for sales at home before the programme. Loan from the JP RWEE induced these women to join forces and start the dumpling producing facility. This again led to increase in production and income. Part of the revenue is reinvested in the facility, for example these women also opened a canteen where they serve their dumplings. There are also examples where group economic initiatives were based on the skills and ideas that women gained through the JP RWEE. For example, a group of women in the village of Blagovestchenko, Jalal-Abad region, is running a successful house plants business. Last fall this group tried drying and selling apples that were purchased in the market and managed to get good profit. Both ideas were suggested to these women by the JP RWEE.

628. Increased income (including savings due to provision of wheat flour and oil) combined with availability of home-grown vegetables led to significant improvements in household food consumption practices (Fig. 6): consumption of vegetable and fruits have considerably increased.

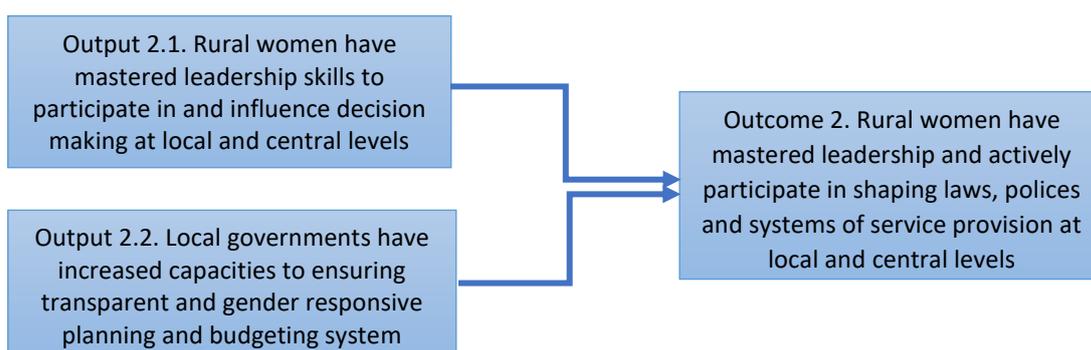
Figure 6. Average frequency of food consumption by type (days per week) before and after the JP RWEE.



629. As a result of the HP RWEE proportion of programme households with 'poor' or 'borderline' food consumption score, that is living on a diet that is insufficiently diversified to provide the essential vitamins and minerals, dropped from 24% to 9%.

Changes in women leadership and their participation in decision-making

Figure 7. Intended changes leading to Outcome 2.



630. The JP RWEE had a separate set of activities aimed at developing leadership skills of rural women as rights-holders in 20 aiyl aimaks. The evaluation has found that these activities helped to turn women into real change agents. For example, in the village of Beshik-Jon, Jalal-Abad region, where the leadership component of the JP RWEE was implemented, participants of the focus group shared a story of a local woman who managed to get aiyl okmotu to build a road in her area. She lived in the part of village where new houses were built, but there was no road connecting this area with the rest of the village. The new road improved the quality of life of all residents in this area. For example, children now have a safe and clean route to school.

631. The JP RWEE provided training to members of SHGs running for local keneshes (councils). 32 out of 92 women trained were elected. Evaluation data (Table 17) suggests that the JP RWEE main contribution was bringing to these councils women who were not active in the community in the past. For example, in the village of Acha-Kayendy, Naryn region, where leadership component of the programme was not implemented, four out of eleven members of the local kenesh are women, and all of them have jobs with state agencies: there is one physician, two teachers and one post office specialist. In the nearby village of Ak-Jar where the JP RWEE supported female candidates, women also got four out of eleven seats in the local kenesh. The difference is that one of these women is a former housewife who became socially active due to the programme.

Table 17. Changes in the women membership in local keneshes (councils).

Aiyl aimak	Number of female kenesh member (% of kenesh members) as of July 2016*	Number of female kenesh member (% of kenesh members) after December 2016 elections**	Change in women membership in keneshes (%)
Ak-Jar AA	3 (27%)	4 (36%)	+33%
Acha-Kayendy AA	2 (18%)	4 (36%)	+50%

*Source: Central Election Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic⁶.

**Source: Interviews during field visits.

⁶ https://shailoo.gov.kg/ru/vybory_shailoolor/Mestnyh_kenesheyJergiliktyy_kenesh/Deputaty_mestnyh_keneshey/

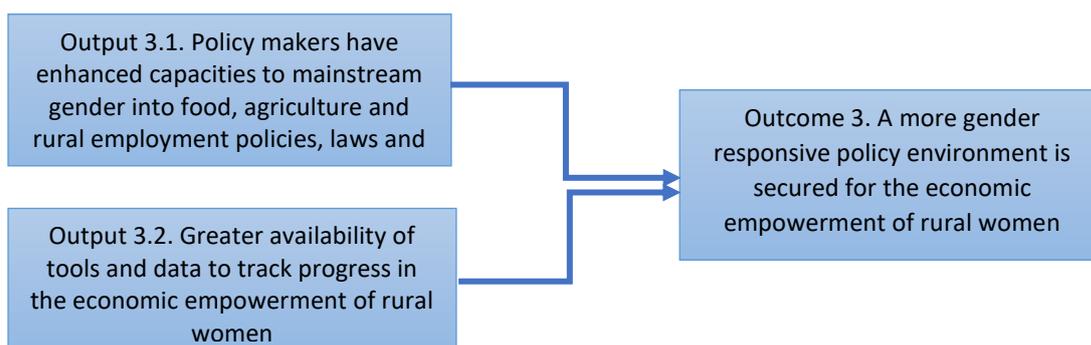
632. It should be noted that both Ak-Jar and Acha-Kayendy go against the national trend of declining female membership in local councils: from 19% in 2008 to 10% in 2016⁷.

633. The evaluation team met with a number of senior officials of aiyl okmotu involved in this component of the JP RWEE. (All of them were males.) In their opinion, the most significant change created by the JP RWEE was making their aiyl aimaks attractive to other development agencies like the Community Development and Investment Agency (ARIS) because the programme facilitated the preparation of local development strategies. One of senior officials also noted that the JP RWEE increased social activity of poor women: “The project trained women from poor families. Then they for the first time participated in budget hearings and joined the community development commission”.

634. The evaluation data also suggests that participation in self-help groups is an effective instrument for building women leadership skills just by itself. “Each of us learned to share and discuss our ideas with others. We learned to respect each other and to be critical to each other as well. We learned to reach out to other people in the village. For example, recently we went to aiyl okmotu and requested that they gave us the old mosque building to open a sewing workshop and a bakery”, reported women in the village of Ana-Kyzyl, where leadership component was not implemented.

Changes in policy environment

Figure 8. Intended changes leading to Outcome 3.



635. Key contribution of the JP RWEE towards a more gender responsive policy environment for rural women is the inclusion of gender-disaggregated indicators in the statistical forms used to collect data on the performance of the agricultural sector by the National Statistics Committee. The JP RWEE also supported the working group made of representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Statistics Committee to finalize the analysis of 14 SDGs indicators relevant for the agricultural sector and to develop indicator passports for each of them. Having a gender-disaggregated data on the situation in the agricultural sector lays the foundation for more-gender sensitive agricultural policies in the future.

636. “This project gave us an opportunity to take a fresh look at the agricultural production indicators. It was a revelation for me that cattle and area of cultivated land are just the tip of an iceberg, and it is also to look at the availability of credit”, commented a representative of the National Statistics Committee.

⁷ В Кыргызстане нет ни одной женщины-мэра или акима. December 25, 2017. <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/kyrgyzstan-politics-women-gender/28937131.html>

Pushing the borders of possible

637. A crucial role of the JP RWEE in providing new perspective on their practices was mentioned by many programme beneficiaries. The programme demonstrated that it was possible to grow tomatoes and cucumbers in Naryn region where they were not grown before. The program demonstrated the viability of solidarity economic models like self-help groups, village associations and regional producer organizations. The programme gave local authorities a new perspective on rural women as productive members of the community: “In our region the role of women was secondary. They could not express their opinions. Now the community realized the importance of women contribution. People are glad that women have become leaders and kenesh members. The main benefit of the project is that aiyl okmotu realized the women contribution is important to improving family income”, commented one of the aiyl okmotu heads to the evaluation team.

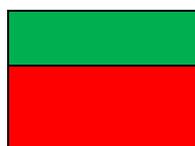
Impact on women empowerment

6

Adding GALS into the implementation model considerably increases the JP RWEE positive impact on women empowerment and even to some extent offsets the disempowering effect of the reduction in leisure time available for women because of greater engagement in income generating activities due to more equal distribution of domestic tasks.

638. Analysis of change maps and interview records has revealed that the JP RWEE had both positive and negative impact on empowerment of participating women and that there are significant differences in empowerment results between the first and second cohorts of villages (Table 18).

Table 18. The JP RWEE impact on women empowerment: changes reported by female participants.



Change was reported by JP RWEE female participants/ Change is seen as positive from WEAI perspective.

Change was reported by JP RWEE female participants/ Change is seen as negative from WEAI perspective.

Empowerment aspects	First cohort	Second cohort
Increased participation in productive decisions	Green	Green
Increased decision-making power over income use	Green	White
More social contacts	Green	Green
Increased confidence of speaking in public	Green	Green
Getting basic leadership skills	Green	Green
Becoming community leaders	Green	White
Less leisure time due to participation in income generating activities	Red	Red
Increased status in the family	Green	White

More equal distribution of domestic tasks ⁸		
More time for themselves		

639. Participants in both cohorts of villages ‘received’ one year of similar ‘treatment’ that included social mobilization, agrotechnology training and supervision, value-chain training, nutrition training and food assistance: first cohort – in 2016, second cohort – in 2017. In addition, in 2017 participants from the first cohort participated in GALS activities. Another difference between the first and second cohorts is that selected participants were supported to start non-agricultural economic activities and participated in the leadership component of the programme⁹.

640. Given the both cohorts received the similar “core treatment”, differences in results between the two cohorts with high level of confidence can be attributed to the JP RWEE activities that involved only participants from the first cohort.

Impact of leadership component

641. Evaluation data indicates that participation in self-help groups is sufficient for embedding a woman into a tight network of social contacts and thus helping her to build communication skill, confidence in speaking in public and develop basic leadership skills. But turning them in community change agents requires additional efforts. Only in the villages that were involved in the leadership component of the JP RWEE women reported that they started feeling themselves community leaders: “We started to participate in budget public hearings, contributed to the development of the aiyl okmotu strategy. We started to raise issues important for our village”.

Less leisure time due to participation in income generating activities

641. In all villages women reported that now they have less free time because they got engaged in income generating activities: “We have less free time now. In the past we were sitting and watching soap operas, but now we are all busy working”, “I don’t have leisure time at all, because I take orders to bake bread for feasts. I also make dowry items for girls”, “My sister now distributes her time well. She gets up in the morning, takes care of children, and goes to work. Having returned home she attends to vegetables, waters and weeds them. All her time is taken by work”.

642. Women themselves as well as other community members see this change as positive because leisure time is traded for increased income. But from the perspective of WEAI increased work time is seen as disempowering.

Impact of Gender Action Learning System (GALS)

644. GALS was applied only in the first cohort of villages. The JP RWEE reportedly used seven GALS tools (Table 19).

⁸ In one of the second cohort villages visited by the evaluation team husbands reported that they “created conditions” for their wives to engage in income generating activities: “we started to take children to school, bring water and fire wood”. Women in this village also mentioned in one of the change maps that their husbands and children were helping them but did not indicate in what way.

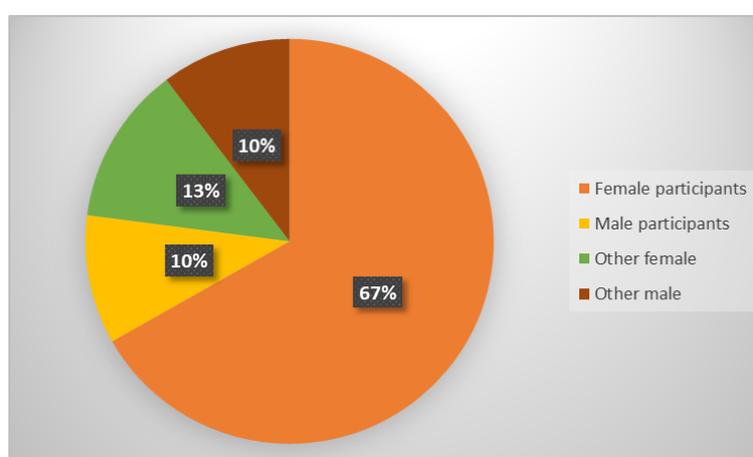
⁹ Differences between cohorts result from the shortage of funding that did not allow the JP RWEE to apply the same model in all target villages.

Table 19. Purpose of GALS tools applied by the JP RWEE.

GALS tool	Purpose
Vision	Tools is used to explicate people' dreams and motivate them to change in pursuit of these dreams and aspirations.
Vision Journey	Tools is used to help people plan actions necessary to realize their specific dreams.
Happy Family Tree	Tool is used to visualize the effects of gender roles and to catalyze transformation gender roles to improve women position within the household (unpaid care work is respected by other family members, women get more help and support from family members, more balanced gender roles and equity, etc).
Income Increase Tree	Tool is used for detailed gender-balanced planning of family budget accounting for income and expenses at the household level as well as to help women groups doing small business to identify opportunities to increase their income.
Dimond (Gender Balance Tree)	Tool is used to decrease and prevent domestic violence against women.
Market mapping	Tool is used to help women to improve their business and get more income by using simple marketing tools.
Multilane Vision Journey	Tool is used to help women and women groups to do comprehensive strategic planning of their agricultural activities.

645. GALS was rolled out using a pyramid approach: GALS champions directly trained by the JP RWEE were to use GALS 5 other people who in tur were to use GALS with 3 individuals each. As a result, over three thousand people – including SHG members as well as their family and neighbors - were directly exposed to GALS tools. Majority of them were the JP RWEE female participants (Fig. 9).

Figure 9. Gender composition of the pool of people exposed to GALS.



646. Women interviewed by the evaluation team shared stories of how the use of GALS instruments helped them to implement their dreams and made husbands to appreciate the input of women into family budgets, value of domestic care and to respect women autonomy. For example, one woman told

that after she showed her husband the Happy Family Tree she created in the GALS workshop, he stopped calling her when she was out of the house to run errands. Other woman shared that her husband helped her to realize her dream to buy and install a washing machine.

647. Change maps created by women from the first cohort of villages included statements indicating that women now enjoyed higher status in the family, more equal distribution of domestic tasks with their husbands and had more time for themselves. Women from the second cohort of villages did not mention such changes.

648. This data suggest the following change model. When women start engaging in income generating activities, they still have to take care of domestic core, leading to less and even no time for leisure. Due to participation in GALS women realize their needs and dreams and their husbands realize the value of domestic work and start sharing them with women as well as supported women to purchase time and effort-saving appliances like washing machines. As a result, women got more time for themselves.

649. These findings give the evaluation team confidence to conclude that most of the differences in extent of women empowerment between the first and second cohorts of villages can be attributed to the impact of GALS. The added value that GALS brings to the JP RWEE in terms of contributing to empowerment domains identified by the WEAI includes increasing women decision power over use of family income, increased women status in the family, more equal distribution of domestic tasks and women having more time for themselves.

Small programme reach

7

While the JP RWEE has made significant contributions towards better livelihoods, increased income, food security and leadership role of participating women, its impact on the situation of poor rural women and rural women in Kyrgyzstan is small. If the JP RWEE intent was reframed as developing a viable model for economic empowerment of rural women and the transfer of this model to relevant national institutions, this would better justify programme working with a limited number of villages and households and facilitate focus on the exit strategy, which is lacking in the current formulation of the JP RWEE.

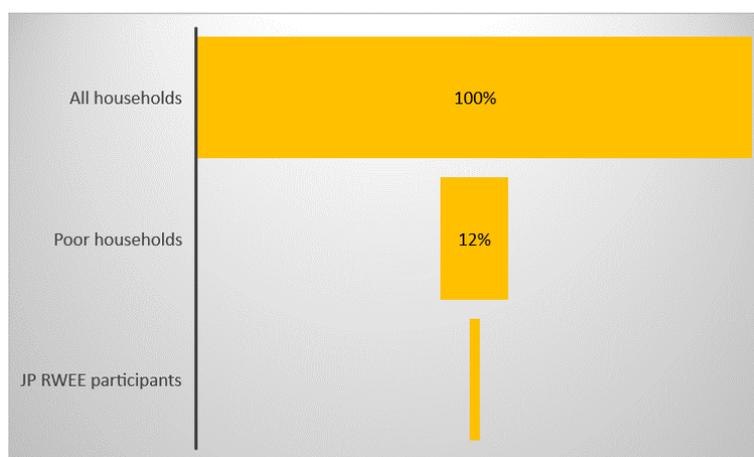
650. Given that JP RWEE budget is limited, the global JP RWEE is explicit about intent to focus on a limited number of sites per country. In Kyrgyzstan where the JP RWEE budget amounted to USD 2.6 million, the programme works in 73 villages, that is in about 4% of villages in the country¹⁰.

651. In targeted villages Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE works with a limited number of poor women (and some men) reaching about 15-25% of poor households (about 2% of all households) (Fig. 10). On the national scale the JP RWEE reach to poor rural households is about 4% (about 0.7% of all rural households)¹¹.

Figure 10. The JP RWEE reach on a community level.

¹⁰ Calculated using the numbers of villages per region provided at the website of the Kyrgyz Republic Embassy in the Russian Federation: http://kyrgyzembassy.ru/?page_id=428#.WsOWoohubIU

¹¹ Calculated using the data on the number of rural households and shares of poor rural households published by the National Statistical Committee.



652. So while the JP RWEE has made significant contributions towards better livelihoods, increased income, food security and leadership role of participating women, its impact on the situation of poor rural women and rural women in Kyrgyzstan is small.

653. The evaluation team believes that focusing on a limited number of villages and households would be better justified if the intent of the JP RWEE was reframed as developing a viable model for economic empowerment of rural women and the transfer of this model to relevant national institutions. Such framing would facilitate the programme focus on the exit strategy, which is lacking in the current formulation of the JP RWEE.

654. The JP RWEE has already made several steps towards the developing such model by creating training programs both for trainers to be and regular participants.

Sustainability

Sustainability of results

8

Implementation model applied in the first cohort of villages leads to higher sustainability of the collective institutions created with the JP RWEE support. As a result, the positive changes experienced by rural women who are members of these institutions are more likely to be sustained and even expanded. Regional producer organizations appear to play the key role in sustainability of the JP RWEE results on the community level, but these organizations are not yet ready to “graduate” from the programme and require continued support.

655. Several activists in visited villages shared with the evaluation team that a number of projects implemented in their communities earlier also created self-help groups, but these groups quickly dissolved after the projects were completed.

656. To assess the risk of this happening if the JP RWEE stops working in the villages of the first and second cohort in March 2018, the evaluation team analyzed factors that contribute to or undermine sustainability of collective institutions established with the support of the programme: self-help groups, village associations of self-help groups and regional producer organizations (associations and cooperatives) (Table. 20).

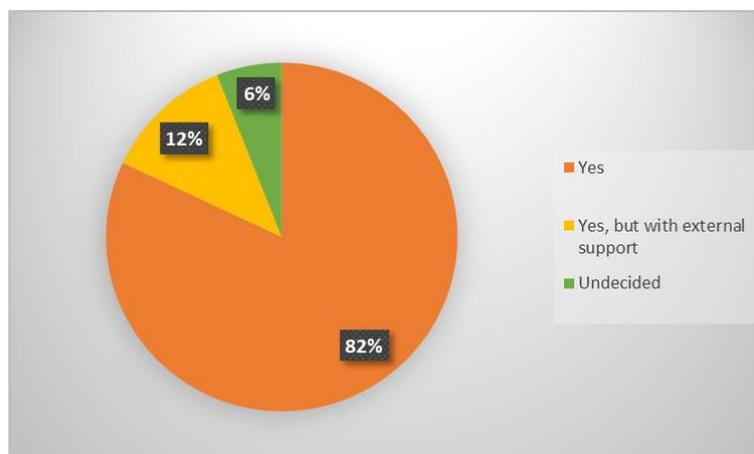
Table 20. Factors affecting sustainability of the JP RWEE results on a community level.

First cohort of villages	Second cohort of villages
<p>👍 In all four villages visited by the evaluation team the JP RWEE activists are active and interested to continue supporting local members of the SGHs.</p> <p>👍 Majority of activists who responded to the phone survey believe that collective institutions created with the programme support will continue working after the programme completion (Fig. 10).</p> <p>👍 Activists see regional producer organizations as guarantors of the sustainability of collective institutions created with the programme support: “Even is the projects closes, we will continue working. We want to increase our income with the Public Union “Tadje”¹²”.</p> <p>👍 Activists serve of the boards of regional producer organizations and serve as liaisons between these organizations and regular SHG members.</p> <p>👍 CDA has committed to support regional producer organizations established by the JP RWEE until they become self-sustainable. (CDA estimates that it will take about two years.) This commitment is in line with the CDA mission of supporting community development through social mobilization.</p> <p>👍 CDA has some funds to continue support of producer organizations in 2018 from the grant from the Fair and Sustainable Development Solutions organization.</p> <p>👍 Regional producer organizations have specific plans to carry their own revenue generating projects.</p> <p>👍 So far group economic initiatives were able to repay interest-free loans they got from the revolving funds located with the regional producer organizations.</p>	<p>👎 In one of the villages visited by the evaluation team the social worker was promoted to another position in aiyl okmotu but intended to continue supporting the SGHs. In another village the social worker was also up to promotion but got married and left the village right after the visit of the evaluation team.</p> <p>👎 The social worker who was about to leave the village was concerned that SGHs would dissolve if the programme stopped now.</p> <p>👎 Social workers have a high work load without having to support SGHs. Social mobilization is not part of their functional responsibilities.</p>

¹² Public Union “Tadje” is one of the four regional producer organizations established with the JP RWEE support.

- 🟢 Members consistently pay their fees to the regional producer organizations.
- 🟢 There is a pipe-line of income generating projects waiting for a loan.
- 🔴 Repayment of interest-free loans does not increase the amount of the revolving fund. This limits the capacity of producer organizations to meet the growing financial needs of their members and undermines producer organizations ability to sustain losses due to potential non-return of loans by some groups.
- 🔴 Membership fees are not sufficient to hire professional management and accountant professionals.
- 🔴 Activists have to travel long distance to attend board meetings held in regional capitals which results in considerable time and financial costs.

Figure 11. Distribution of answers to the question “Will self-help groups and associations continue in your village after the programme completion?”.



657. The above analysis suggests that the implementation model applied to the first cohort of villages leads to higher sustainability of the collective institutions created with the JP RWEE support and thus the positive changes experienced by rural women who are members of these institutions are more likely to be sustained and even expanded. Regional producer organizations appear to play the key role in sustainability of the JP RWEE results on the community level, but these organizations are not yet ready to “graduate” for the programme and require continued support.

National ownership

9

Extent of ownership of the JP RWEE model and results by national governmental and non-governmental entities working in the public sector depends on the degree of their involvement with the programme design and implementation. Involvement of the

National Ministries is limited to participation in quarterly meetings of the National Steering Committee and hosting several working meetings of rural women activists with policy makers. Local authorities directly support the programme by providing premises and renting public land to group economic activities. The strongest degree of ownership is demonstrated by NGO Community Development Alliance that was directly involved in the programme implementation and benefitted by the programme by developing GALS application expertise.

658. National ownership is traditionally defined as “the effective exercise of a government’s authority over development policies and activities, including those that rely – entirely or partially – on external resources. For governments, this means articulating the national development agenda and establishing authoritative policies and strategies”¹³.

659. But the evaluation team believes that in the SDGs era the concept of national ownership should be expanded to include the ownership of the intervention models and results by all stakeholders. Agenda 2030 explicitly says (paragraph 43): “We acknowledge the role of the diverse private sector, ranging from micro-enterprises to cooperatives to multinationals, and that of civil society organizations and philanthropic organizations in the implementation of the new Agenda”.

660. The evaluation has found that the extent of ownership of the JP RWEE model and results by national governmental and non-governmental entities working the public sector depends on the degree of their involvement with the programme design and implementation.

661. National Ministries have a limited involvement in the JP RWEE. Their representatives seat in the National Steering Committee, but these same people are also serving at the similar committees for other programmes. In addition, Ministries hosted several working meetings of rural women activists with policy makers organized by the JP RWEE. Limited involvement with the programme leads to low sense of ownership among the governmental national partners.

662. Local authorities have the stronger sense of ownership of the JP RWEE results, as they were involved in the activities under the leadership component of the programme. Local authorities support operation of self-help groups by providing premises and changing minimum fees for renting out public land for group economic activities.

663. The highest level of programme ownership is demonstrated by the NGO Community Development Alliance (CDA). According to CDA, its’ recommendations were incorporated in the JP RWEE design. CDA was contracted by the JP RWEE to carry social mobilization, support training activities implemented by other parties and monitor programme results in the first cohort of villages. CDA raised additional funds for the JP RWEE, including about USD 140,000 in case from the Australian Embassy and the Fair and Sustainable Development Solutions organization. CDA committed to continue supporting regional producer organization established with the programme support, CDA member serve of boards of these organizations on the voluntary basis. CDA was involved in introduction of GALS methodology and developed GALS expertise which it now tries to apply in its’ other projects.

¹³ OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms. <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=7238>

Comparative advantage

10

Combining FAO, WFP and IFAD expertise on building capacity of individual farmers with the UN Women expertise with normative and community work enables the JP RWEE to promote both individual capacities of rural women and a more favorable social context for them. In Kyrgyzstan this multilevel approach is used only by the JP RWEE and differentiates it from the government and USAID projects that were also contributing to economic empowerment of rural women in 2014-2018.

664. In parallel to the JP RWEE there were three other major projects that contributed towards economic empowerment of rural women in Kyrgyzstan. The government project “Support to Community Seed Funds” (August 2014 – March 2018) was funded with the World Bank grant (USD 2.8 million) to the Kyrgyzstan Government from the Japan Social Development Fund. Grant was managed by the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Finance. Agribusiness Competitiveness Center established by the earlier World Bank project was the responsible party in charge of operational management. The project aim was to support poor and extremely poor rural people whose incomes were negatively affected by rising food and fuel prices by helping them to increase agricultural productivity. Implementation modalities included support to establishment of self-help groups, community seed funds, provision of agrotechnology training, seeds and equipment.

665. The project supported establishment of 698 SHGs with over 4700 members in 160 villages as well as 221 seed funds with over 5600 members in 417 villages. Share of female beneficiaries of the project is about 47%, and there is no separate data on shares of female members in SHGs and seed funds.

666. Support provided to members of the SHGs included training on growing vegetables and provision of seeds and plastic tunnels. Seed funds are somewhat similar in concept with village associations of SHGs created by the JP RWEE: members shall pull resources together to purchase seeds. (it is worth noting that the JP RWEE manager negotiated possible cooperation with this project given the similarity of mandates, but the project management declined).

667. USAID Agro Horizon Project¹⁴ (October 2014 - October 2018) with the budget of USD 22 million was implemented by US-based international NGO ACDI/VOCA four regions: Osh, Jalalabad, Batken and Naryn. Agro Horizon Project had a strong focus on supporting the development of agrobusiness, providing it access to capital and connecting agroproducers with the market. Still the project supported about six thousand rural households with in-kind grants: seeds, fertilizers, plant protection chemicals, machinery services. Over 10 thousand farmers got access to finance. 1600 women-headed households were supported with kitchen gardens for improved household nutrition.

668. The government project “Development of Women Entrepreneurs” (2013-2017) was funded by the Asian Development Bank. The project aimed to improve access of rural women to credit. The project provided training on entrepreneurship and leadership skills to over 1000 women. Women entrepreneurs got access to credit through several channels, including a revolving fund. The project also provided training to local authorities.

669. Comparison between the JP RWEE and three other projects (Table 21) indicates that while all three projects to some extent contributed towards economic empowerment of rural women, only the JP RWEE was focusing on this area. In addition, only the JP RWEE had a combined focus on building capacity of individual farmers and creating more favorable social context for them through working with local and national authorities. This combined focus was facilitated by bridging operation capacities and

¹⁴ <http://www.acdivoca.org/projects/usaaid-agro-horizon-project/>; <https://www.usaid.gov/kyrgyz-republic/fact-sheets/usaaid-agro-horizon-project>

experiences of working with individual farmers brought by FAO, WFP and IFAD and capacities and experiences of normative and community work brought by the UN Women.

Table 21. Comparison between projects.

Area of support	JP RWEE	Support to Community Seed Funds Project	Agro Horizon Project	Development of Women Entrepreneurs
Focus of economic empowerment of rural women	☆☆☆	☆	☆	☆☆☆
Support to establishment of self-help groups	☆☆☆	☆☆		
Teaching to grow vegetables	☆☆☆	☆☆☆	☆	
Food for training	☆☆☆			
Provided access to financial resources	☆☆☆		☆☆☆	☆☆☆
GALS	☆☆☆			
Linking women and local authorities	☆☆☆			☆
Promoting rural women interests as the national level	☆☆☆			

Scale: ☆ - to some extent, ☆☆☆ - special focus on a specific area.

JP RWEE effectiveness: synergistic effects

11

Due to complementary mandates of the partner UN agencies, the JP RWEE beneficiaries got a comprehensive set of services that mutually reinforced each other leading to better results for rural women.

670. Mandates of the partners UN agencies are complementary which facilitated the design of the Kyrgyzstan model of the JP RWEE. Joint delivery allowed partner UN agencies to put together a comprehensive package of activities for target beneficiaries that mutually reinforce each other. “Joint delivery leads to the synergy of mandates of partner UN agencies”, noted one of representatives of responsible parties. For example, the start of the agricultural training component based on FAO expertise stopped the turnover in the membership of self-groups groups. Vegetables grown with the support of the agricultural training component as well as food supplies provided by WFP enriched the diet of the JP RWEE beneficiaries. Application of GALS tools developed by IFAD made a significant difference in terms of empowering rural women and transformation of patriarchal gender norms. Activities on community and national level led by the UN Women contributed towards more favorable social context for rural women.

Efficiency

12

Joint delivery increased management costs in terms of time and efforts spent on communication and coordination by the staff of the partner UN agencies involved in management of the JP RWEE because the JP RWEE design had to ensure that each partner agency contributed towards implementation of its specific mandate. At the

same time, complementarity of mandates of the partner UN agencies facilitated the development of joint design of the Kyrgyzstan model of the JP RWEE. And joint delivery led to increased efficiency due to centralization of recruitment as well as village-level coordination and monitoring processes. The principle that the JP RWEE shall build on ongoing initiatives embedded in the global programme also contributed to reduced operational costs.

671. Both village activists and regular participants are positive about how the JP RWEE was implemented. Majority of focus group participants and survey respondents gave this aspect of the programme the score of 10 (Fig. 12 and 13). Some people thought that the programme design could be improved by providing support to participants with selling vegetables they've grown. No major delays or redundancies in delivery of programme activities were reported.

Figure 12. Assessment of quality of the JP RWEE implementation by community members.

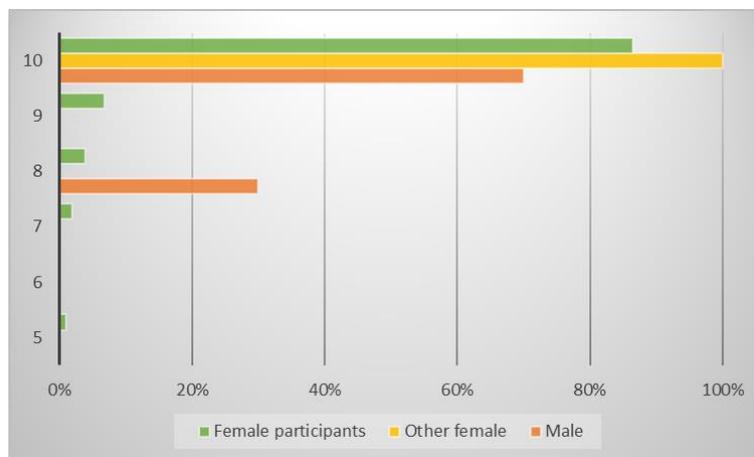
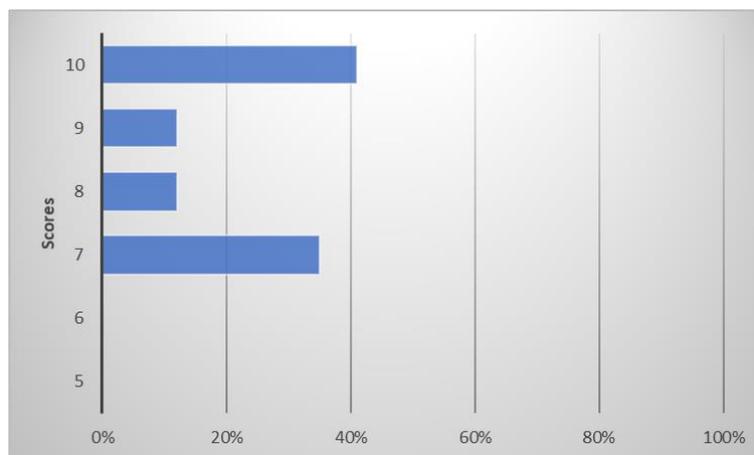


Figure 13. Assessment of quality of the JP RWEE implementation by village activists.



672. Responsible parties shared with the evaluation team that initially working with four UN agencies and meeting their information requests within the framework of a single programme felt overwhelming, but coordination and coherence between the agencies eventually improved. Majority of representatives of UN agencies interviewed by the evaluation team also felt that communication and coherence between agencies improved in the course of the JP RWEE implementation.

673. Given that each partner UN agency is accountable for implementation of its specific mandate, the joint delivery required allocation of significant amount of resources, especially time of the staff of the partner UN agencies involved in management of the JP RWEE, for communication and coordination. Coordination meetings were conducted at least monthly, and even weekly when necessary.

674. At the same time joint modality of the JP RWEE implementation increased efficiency of delivery. Recruitment of programme participants was done once, and then these participated in a broad range of activities led by partner agencies. The same regional coordinators and local activists/social workers were supporting implementation of activities led by different partner agencies and collected monitoring data.

675. The principle that the JP RWEE shall build of ongoing initiatives embedded in the global programme also contributed to reduced operational costs. Second cohort of villages was selected from the pool of villages where the WFP was already implementing its Development Project “Support for the National Productive Safety Nets and Long-Term Community Resilience”. The JP RWEE used already established relations with local authorities which reduced the cost of entry in the communities. In addition, the JP RWEE benefitted from the government support to the WFP Development Project:

- Food that was distributed to the JPRWE participants was stored in warehouses in Bishkek and Osh provided by the Ministry of Social Protection and Labor;
- Ministry also covered the costs of food transportation to distribution points;
- Social mobilization and coordination of the JP RWEE activities in the second cohort of villages was done by local social workers;
- WFP field monitoring officers provided support and supervision to these social workers.
- Nutrition training sessions were conducted through district and province health promotion units and village health committees – using the contacts that WFP already had.

Monitoring

13

JP RWEE monitoring system involved programme participants in data collection which allowed tracking progress on individual level. This data was further used to calculate values of 14 key performance indicators tracking progress on six programme Outputs. The monitoring system could benefit from having output, outcome and impact level indicators, though existing Logical Framework template used to describe expected results is not conducive for this.

676. There were several separate monitoring system tracking implementation of activities towards specific JP RWEE Outcomes. For example, CDA that was collecting monitoring data on the progress of participants in the first cohort of villages established a system that allowed to tracking progress of each individual participant. The primary data collection for this system was done by participants themselves who kept individual records of agricultural activities and vegetables sales as well as financial records for SGHs and SGH associations. During field visits women proudly demonstrated these records to the evaluation team.

677. Data from these “ground-level” monitoring systems was used to calculate the value of 14 key performance indicators tracking progress on six programme Outputs (Table 6). There are no Outcome indicators, but some of the Output indicators, like Indicator 1.1.2: “% of families of SHGs having increased access to diversified diet both during harvest and lean seasons (% of families with improved food consumption indicators)” measure achievement of the Outcome 1: “Rural women have increased income, better livelihoods and food security from enhanced agricultural productivity”, rather than of the related Output 1.1: “Rural women are equipped with the skills and knowledge to run economic

activities”. The design of key performance indicators is largely determined the by Logical Framework template used for preparation of ProDocs.

678. There are no key performance indicators measuring changes in the gender relations in the families of programme participants. CDA collected data on the roll-out of GALS as well as some change stories of people who used GALS instruments. This information was reflected in the JP RWEE reports. If the JP RWEE decides that in the future phases programme shall work towards for more equal gender relations in the households, it would be useful to include corresponding indicators, e.g. to measure changes in distribution of domestic tasks, the area with the highest disparity between women and men according to the data of the National Statistical Committee (Fig. 1).

Potential effects of Gender Equality & Women Empowerment

14

Focus of women who meet poverty criteria established by the Ministry of Social Protection and Labor and are eligible for the WFP “Food for Training” scheme unintentionally sends the message that only poor women shall be economically and socially active.

679. Use of the WFP “Food for Training” scheme within the framework of the JP RWEE serves as additional motivation for potential programme participants and contributes towards improvements in food security of participating households, but limits the pool of potential programme participants to people that meet poverty criteria established by the Ministry of Social Protection and Labor.

680. Unintentionally this sends the message that only poor women shall be economically and socially active, and leaves women from households that are not officially considered poor behind in terms of access to empowerment activities.

7 Lessons Learned

This section presents the lessons learned about specific components of the JP RWEE model, including their relevance for rural women and ease of replication.

Component	Lessons learned
<p>Social mobilization: establishing self-help groups (SHG) and village level associations of SHGs</p>	<p>Participation in a SHG does not require a lot of time and physical efforts, so this component is accessible for women with disabilities and women who are taking care of small children and disabled family members.</p> <p>Benefits of participation: increased social contacts, support network, development of communication and leadership skills.</p> <p>Local activists and social workers were able to support the creation of SGHs within the JP RWEE framework. Now they have skill and experience and can support creation of new SGHs in their villages.</p>
<p>Agrotechnology training and supervision</p>	<p>Participation requires a lot of time and physical efforts which is a barrier for women with disabilities and women who are taking care of small children and disabled family members.</p> <p>Benefits of participation: access to expert knowledge and professional advice, increased vegetable production for sales and household consumption, increased income, increased diversity of diet.</p> <p>The most appealing programme component for people who did not participate in the JP RWEE – to the extent that people are potentially ready to pay for training.</p> <p>There is already some transfer of knowledge from the JP RWEE participants to other community members.</p> <p>There are cases when people share produced vegetables with their neighbors for free.</p>
<p>Nutrition training</p>	<p>Participation does not require a lot of time and physical efforts, so this component is accessible for women with disabilities and women who are taking care of small children and disabled family members.</p>

	<p>Benefits of participation: increased knowledge and awareness about importance of the balanced diet.</p> <p>Training is delivered through district and province health promotion units and village health committees. There is a set of ready training materials, which reduces the costs of further replication.</p>
<p>Provision of food assistance (fortified wheat flour and vegetable oil)</p>	<p>Participants have to meet poverty criteria established by the Ministry of Social Protection and Labor and participate in other activities, including Agrotechnology training and supervision component, that requires a lot of time and physical efforts.</p> <p>As a result, people who need food assistance most – including women with disabilities and women who are taking care of small children and disabled family members – don't get it.</p> <p>Not necessary as a stimulus for participation in programme activities after people saw the results of the Agrotechnology training and supervision component achieved by "early adopter".</p>
<p>Support to group economic initiatives</p>	<p>Participation requires a lot of time and efforts, in some cases physical. This is a barrier for women who are taking care of small children and disabled family members, but probably less of a barrier for women with some disabilities.</p> <p>Benefits of participation: access to interest-free loans, increased income.</p> <p>Local authorities can support group economic initiatives buy providing free or low-cost premises and land.</p> <p>Replication is limited by availability of funds in the Revolving Funds.</p>
<p>Establishment of and support to regional producer organizations</p>	<p>Regional producer organizations (PO) that manage Revolving Funds play the key role in sustainability of the JP RWEE results on the community level.</p>

	<p>PO offices are located in regional capitals. Village activists have to travel long distance to attend board meetings which results in considerable time and financial costs.</p>
<p>Application of Gender Action Learning System (GALS)</p>	<p>Participation in GALS training does not require a lot of time and physical efforts, so this component is accessible for women with disabilities and women who are taking care of small children and disabled family members.</p> <p>Benefits: increased self-awareness, better management skills, more equal gender relations in the family.</p> <p>GALS model includes a peer-to-peer replication mechanism, but requires training the initial cohort of “champions”.</p>

8 Conclusions

The conclusions were developed based on the analysis of the evaluation findings conducted by the evaluation team in cooperation with members of EMG and ERG through Data Validation Workshops.

Relevance

1

Complementarity of mandates of partner UN agencies involved in the joint delivery of the programme and the JP RWEE focus on engaging women in income generating activities makes the JP RWEE highly relevant to national strategic priorities and needs of rural women.

Based on Findings 1, 2, 3, 11, 12.

801. All partner UN agencies involved in the joint delivery of the JP RWEE were still accountable for implementation of their individual mandates. As a result, the JP RWEE had an explicit focus on alignment with national strategic documents in the areas of gender equality, agriculture, food security and sustainable development and contributed towards implementation of 10 targets under 7 SDGs.

802. Due to complimentary of mandates of the partner UN agencies the JP RWEE provided a comprehensive package of activities for rural women that met their needs. Rural women highly valued the agricultural training and supervision component that enabled them to generate additional income. This means that the government strategy of stimulating poor families to look for ways to increase their income is well aligned with the actual needs of poor rural women. And that the JP RWEE to empower women to engage in income generating activities (that is teaching to fish rather than providing fish) is a well-aligned with both the national priorities and needs of rural women.

Effectiveness

2

Programme effectiveness in achieving better livelihoods, increased income, food security and leadership role of participating women is facilitated by promotion of solidarity economic models like self-help groups and group economic initiatives, providing access to training and interest-free commodity and cash loans, as well as recruiting participants who are eager and able to allocate a lot of time and effort to work. The negative side of this programme model is that most vulnerable women are not able to join the programme, and participating women lose their leisure time which is disempowering. The latter unintended negative effect is mitigated by the use of GALS instruments.

Based on Findings 4, 5, 6, 7.

803. The JP RWEE has made significant contributions towards better livelihoods, increased income, food security and leadership role of participating women. Factors that facilitated these results include the promotion of solidarity economic models like self-help groups and group economic initiatives, as well as providing access to training and interest-free commodity and cash loans.

804. Participation in the programme is voluntary and open to people who are recognized as poor based on the criteria set by the Ministry the Ministry of Social Protection and Labor. A participant had to commit to grow vegetables on 5-10 sotkas (500-1000 square meters), which requires substantial time and physical effort. In each village the programme recruits 30-40 participants, which constitutes about 15-25% of eligible poor. As a result of this recruitment strategy the JP RWEE works with “early adopters”, that is people who are eager for innovations and ready to try new things, which contributes

to high effectiveness. As the same time this approach to recruitment leaves behind eligible people who are less open to innovations as well as people who are unable to meet time and effort requirements because of the disability or having to take care of small or disabled children, that is the most vulnerable.

805. Significant time commitment necessary to ensure achievement of higher income and food security as well as participation in community decision-making processes leaves women no time for leisure, which is seen disempowering under Women Economic Empowerment Index (WEAI). Application of GALS instruments offsets this unintended negative impact of the programme by promoting higher status of a women in the household and more equal distribution of domestic tasks.

Sustainability

3

The JP RWEE established a number of mechanisms to ensure sustainability of its results, including creation of village associations of SGHs and regional producer organizations. But these mechanisms are not yet fully sustainable themselves. Explicit exit strategy could enhance sustainability of the JP RWEE results.

Based on Findings 3, 8, 9.

806. The JP RWEE has made some steps towards ensuring sustainability of programme results. The village associations of SGHs are expected to ensure accumulation of funds for purchase of high quality seeds. Producer organizations which membership is made of the JP RWEE participants were established in four regions targeted by the JP RWEE. Producer organizations manage revolving funds provided by the programme which shall ensure continuation and creation of new group economic initiatives.

807. Yet because the JP RWEE did not have an explicit exit strategy the producer organizations are not fully ready to operate without external support. In addition, the programme opted to add new villages rather to capitalize on interest in joining the programm created in the first cohort of villages after people saw its results. There is no clear vision on if and how the programme model shall be widely replicated in the country.

Efficiency

4

Relying on shared processes increases efficiency of joint delivery. The JP RWEE could benefit if this approach was consciously used in the next programme phases.

Based on Findings 11, 12.

808. The JP RWEE uses the joint delivery modality, but each partner UN agency is still accountable to meet its own mandate. This leads to increased management costs in terms of time and efforts spent on communication and coordination by the staff of the partner UN agencies involved in management of the JP RWEE. At the same time combining the complementary expertise of partner agencies created synergistic effects for participants and enhanced programme effectiveness.

809. Relying on joint recruitment, local coordination and monitoring processes contributed towards increased efficiency of the JP RWEE. Application of the principle that the JP RWEE shall build of ongoing initiatives embedded in the global programme also contributed to reduced operational costs.

9 Recommendations

Discussions at the Data Validation Workshops and of the draft evaluation report led to formulation of the following recommendations.

1

For the next stage of the JP RWEE implementation the partner UN agencies shall use the operational model that enhances all aspects of rural women economic empowerment as defined by the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index.

The table below lists necessary components of this model linking them to WEAI domains.

WEAI domains	Model component
Sole or joint decision-making over food and cash-crop farming, livestock, and fisheries as well as autonomy in agricultural production	Agricultural training and supervision
Ownership, access to, and decision-making power over productive resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables, and credit	Provision of interest-free commodity loans, e.g. seeds Interest-free loans for group economic activities
Sole or joint control over income and expenditures	GALS
Leadership in the community: membership in economic or social groups and comfort in speaking in public	Social mobilizations: - Self-help groups - SHGs associations
Allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks and satisfaction with the available time for leisure activities	GALS

2

In the second phase of the JP RWEE GALS shall be applied in the second cohort of villages to mitigate the negative JP RWEE impact on women leisure time.

Limited funding did not allow the JP RWEE to roll out GALS in the second cohort of villages. Given that the programme continues, it has an opportunity to correct the unintended disempowering effects on women in the second cohort of villages.

3

Under the second phase the JP RWEE shall continue supporting four producer organizations until they are fully self-sustainable.

One of the expected results of the Global JP RWEE is that “Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, **sustain** and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions” (Output 3.2). This output was not explicitly included in the results framework for the Kyrgyzstan JP RWEE, but it in fact started to work towards this output when four producer organizations were established. At the time of evaluation rural women from cohort 1 still did not have enough capacity to sustain these organizations, and continuation of the JP RWEE provides an opportunity to fully achieve this output.

Sustainability of these organizations will ensure sustainability of self-help groups, village associations and group economic initiatives in the first cohort of villages. It is necessary to find mechanisms that would allow for increasing the amount of the revolving funds and generating enough revenue to have professional management and cover administrative costs as well as ensure that producer organizations are owned by members rather than professional managers.

4

Partner UN agencies shall consider developing and testing the strategy for replication of women economic empowerment model in the villages and ayl aimaks where the programme has already worked.

The JP RWEE already has a proven strategy for entering a village by recruiting 30-40 “early adopters”. But there is no strategy for replication of the JP RWEE model in these villages. Evaluation findings suggest that people who saw the benefits the JP RWEE model creates for the participants may be willing to share costs with the programme. Potentially village associations of self-help groups may be interested in taking the leadership role in replication of the model because by adding new members they can increase the inflow of membership fees and accumulate funds that eventually could be used as revolving funds to support group economic activities of their members. This replication strategy will be an important step towards the JP RWEE exit strategy.

Annexes

Annex 1: Data collection tools.

Semi-structured interview guide

This section provides overview of the process for a semi-structured interview. Themes to be covered in interviews with specific categories of respondents are provided below.

Interview section	Purpose/Process
Introduction/ Informed consent	<p>Explain to a respondent(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of evaluation: this is evaluation of the JP RWEE project, not inspection or assessment of what a respondent or his/her institution have done; evaluation focus is on learning. • Conditions for cooperation with the evaluation team: anonymity, free to not respond to any answer, welcome to ask questions to evaluators. • Clarify if there any time limitations that should be observed. (The aim is to complete interview within 90 minutes.)
Scope clarification	<p>Identify, in what ways a person was engaged with the JP RWEE. Pay attention to components/activities.</p>
Recollection/ Actualization of experience	<p>Ask respondent to share the story of her/his engagement with the project. Allow a person to talk. When necessary – support with questions to ensure that he/she covers all areas identified in the scope clarification phase.</p>
Guided reflection	<p>Solicit assessments related to evaluation questions.</p>
Open reflection	<p>Have we covered all important aspects of your engagement with the project?</p>
Wrap up	<p>Acknowledge value of respondent's contribution to evaluation Remind when and how information about evaluation results will be made available. Ask if respondent has any questions to the evaluation team.</p>

Key themes/ questions for interviews with Implementing Partners: UN Women, FAO, IFAD and WFP

Criteria/ Sub criteria	Themes/ Questions
Relevance/ Focus on relevance throughout design process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How come that Kyrgyzstan was selected to be one of JP countries? • How was the JP adapted to national context? What processes were used?
Efficiency of joint work/ Comparative advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a unique contribution of your agency to the JP? • What are unique contributions of other partner UN agencies to the JP?
Efficiency of joint work/ Quality of management arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What arrangements are made between partner UN agencies to manage the JP? • How JP monitoring is organized? How monitoring data is used?

Efficiency of joint work/ Efficiency in the use of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How decisions about distribution of financial resources are made?
Efficiency of joint work/ Impact on UN family in Kyrgyzstan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you see some positive effects of joint delivery? Do you see some challenges?
Sustainability/ National ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What voice and influence do key national partners including women's movement etc. have within the programme's decision-making structure and hierarchy?
Sustainability/ Quality of exit strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is JP exit strategy? How is it working?

Key themes/ questions for interviews with National Partners and Responsible Parties

Criteria/ Sub criteria	Themes/ Questions
Relevance/ Focus on relevance throughout design process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did your organization participate in the JP adaption to national context? What processes were used?
Relevance/ Alignment with policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what way does the JP RWEE correspond to the priorities of your organization?
Efficiency of joint work/ Quality of management arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways was your organization involved in the JP RWEE? Were you involved in decisions about operation of the JP RWEE? How? Were your opinions taken into account?
Effectiveness/ Achievement of intended results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key changes created by the JP RWEE in the situation of its' beneficiaries?
Sustainability/ Sustainability of results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the likelihood that positive changes that you see will be sustained after the JP completion?
Sustainability/ National ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the JP RWEE have any impact on your organization?
Efficiency of joint work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you see any advantages or disadvantages of four UN agencies working together to implement the JP RWEE? If you were to plan the JP RWEE anew, would you make any changes to its design?

Key themes/ questions for interviews with representatives of local authorities

Criteria/ Sub criteria	Themes/ Questions
Relevance/ Alignment with beneficiaries needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How come that your ayil okmotu (AO) has joined the JP? What was local community reaction to the JP coming to AO?
Effectiveness/ Achievement of intended results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What JP activities have you personally been involved with? What has changed in AO as a result of the JP? What changes do you see in the lives of women who were involved in the JP and their family members? Did attitude of local community to the JP change over time? If respondent thinks that the JP worked well – Why did the JP work well in your community?

Sustainability/ Sustainability of results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will happen with the changes once the JP is completed?
Sustainability/ National ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does AO intend to support operation of self-help groups created by the JP after its completion?
Efficiency of joint work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you were to plan the JP RWEE anew, would you make any changes to its design?

Key themes/ questions for interviews with beneficiaries (activists, members of self-help groups)

Criteria/ Sub criteria	Themes/ Questions
Relevance/ Alignment with beneficiaries needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How come that you have joined the JP? • What was your family reaction to your joining the JP? • What was the local community reaction to the JP coming to your community?
Effectiveness/ Achievement of intended results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What JP activities have you personally been involved with? • What has changed in your life as a result of the JP? • Did attitude of local community to the JP change over time? • If respondent thinks that the JP worked well – Why did the JP work well in your community?
Sustainability/ Sustainability of results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will happen with the changes once the JP is completed?
Efficiency of joint work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you were to plan the JP RWEE anew, would you make any changes to its design?

Focus groups scenario

Element	Timing	Purpose/ Description
Introduction	10"	<p>Explain the purpose of evaluation. Explain the terms of participation (protection of sources). Obtain informed consent.</p>
Short presentation of the JP ARWEE history in this village	10"	<p>Recall/ actualize activities implemented in the villages within the framework of the JP ARWEE. Presentation shall be made by a local activist. The evaluation team will discuss the content of this presentation during an interview with an activist earlier this day.</p>
Development of change maps	30"	<p>Explain the concept of the change map. Divide participants into groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women – members of self-help groups; • Husbands of members of self-help groups; • Mothers-in-law of members of self-help groups; • Neighbors. <p>Each group will have to develop a map of changes due to JP ARWEE. Sectors on the maps for women – members of self-help groups and their husbands will include aspects of the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decisions about agricultural production,

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to and decision-making power over productive resources, • control over use of income, • leadership in the community, • time use, • other. <p>Maps for mothers-in-law and neighbors will include two sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes that you see in JP RWEE members. • Other changes. <p>The evaluation teams and an activist will help people to develop their maps on flipchart sheets.</p>
Presentation of changes maps	20"	<p>Groups present their maps.</p> <p>Evaluation team and other participants ask clarifying questions.</p>
Closing discussion/survey	30"	<p>Questions for the closing discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you assess the programme results (on a scale of 0 to 10)? • How do you assess the work done by the implementing team (on a scale of 0 to 10)? • If you were a manager of a similar project in the future, what would you do differently? <p>People will be given survey forms with the questions.</p> <p>For the first two questions the evaluation team will present the question, ask people to give a score, and then ask volunteers to share the scores and comment on them.</p> <p>For the third questions evaluation team will ask people to share their views. Alternatively people can answer in writing in the survey forms.</p>
Wrap up	5"-10"	<p>Collect filled survey forms.</p> <p>Thanks to participants from the evaluation team.</p> <p>Open the floor for questions to evaluation team from participants.</p>

Phone survey guide

Survey stage	Content
Introduction/ Informed consent	<p>Introduce yourself</p> <p>Explain the purpose of survey:</p> <p>This survey is undertaken within the framework of the final evaluation of the JP RWEE. We are contacting you because you served as an activist in your community. We would highly appreciate if you could answer three questions related to your assessment of the JP.</p>
Main part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please assess on a scale of 0 to 10 how useful the program results were to the women who participated in the program? • Please assess on a scale of 0 to 10 the quality of the work of the program staff with whom you were in contact in the course of program implementation? • The program is over. In your opinion, how likely is that self-help groups and business groups created as a result of the program will continue working in your community?
Wrap up	<p>Thank you very much for your assistance.</p>

Annex 2: Evaluation Management Group

Name	Title	Organization
Gerald Gunther	Representative	UN Women
Jipara Turmamatova	JPRWEE Coordinator/Programme Manager	UN Women
Jyldyz Kuvatova	National Programme Officer / <i>Evaluation Task Manager</i>	UN Women
Dorjee Kinlay	Representative	FAO
Omurbek Mambetov	National Consultant	FAO
Andrea Bagnoli	Representative	WFP
Kyial Arabaeva	National Project Officer	WFP
Beatrice Gerli (online)	Gender and Targeting Specialist	IFAD
Azzurra Chiarini (online)	JP RWEE Global Coordinator	WFP

Annex 3: Evaluation Reference Group

Evaluation Reference Group			
#	Name	Title	Organization
1	Roza Bekmatova,	Head of Gender Policy Unit	Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic
2	Elena Taranova	Chief Specialist of the Department of Agrarian Policy and Investment	Ministry of Agriculture, Processing Industry and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic
3	Syinagul Batyrova	Head of Macroanalysis and Forecasting Unit	Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic
4	Venera Isalieva	Head of Unit	State Agency for Local Self Government and Inter-Ethnic Relations of the Kyrgyz Republic
5	Manas Murataliev	Ex-head of Kamyschanovka aiyl aimak	Beneficiary
6	Zamira Davletbakova	Chair of women's association "Taajy" in Chuy oblast	Beneficiary
7	Asel Kuttubaeva	Project Manager	Community Development Alliance (Responsible Party UN Women)
8	Janyl Abdylidabek kyzy	Team Leader	Centre for Gender Studies (Responsible Party UN Women)

Annex 4. Bios of the Evaluation Team

International Consultant

Natalia Kosheleva has been working in the field of evaluation since 1996. Since 2011 she was actively involved in promoting gender-responsive, equity-focused and human rights- based evaluation in the CIS region and internationally. For example, she developed the first Russian-language online module on gender-responsive evaluation and delivered a number of seminars and presentations on this topic in Russia, Moldova and Kyrgyzstan. In 2017 she facilitated the development of Sri Lanka National Gender Responsive and Equity Focused Evaluation Guidelines.

Natalia has conducted over 20 evaluations in Russia, CIS and Eastern Europe, both individually and as a member of evaluation teams. In 2016 and 2017 she was a Team Leader for three evaluation that had a specific gender and human rights focus and used participatory methodologies:

- Evaluation of the Young Women Development Groups Program (for Peacebuilding, UK, - Russia (Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan), 2017);
- Final Evaluation of the Building Constituency for Piece Project (for UN Women – Kyrgyzstan, 2016);
- Final Evaluation of the Activity “Enhancing Women’s Human Rights in the North Caucasus region through Strengthened Civil Society Structures and Strategic Community-led Actions” (for International Rescue Committee, North Caucasus Office, Russia, 2016)

She also has experience with evaluation of UN interventions, for example UNDP Regional Programme for Europe and the CIS (2009-2010) and UNDP Kosovo Country Programme (2010).

National Consultant

Elmira Kerimalieva has over 20 years of experience in public sector (public administration including strategic planning and public budgeting; sectoral reviews in education, transport and social protection and labor, including development of legal framework for public finance management(PFM).

She also has over 12 years of experience of project management, monitoring and evaluation with international financial organizations and charities (World Bank, UNDP, DFID, EU, SECO, GIZ), government agencies, and NGOs.

Annex 5: Terms of Reference

Functional Title: International Consultant for final evaluation of the project Joint UN Women/ FAO/ IFAD/ WFP Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women

Location:	45 fee days in Kyrgyzstan and home-based
Application Deadline:	2 January 2018
Primary Category:	Women's Economic Empowerment
Type of Contract:	Special Service Agreement (SSA)
Languages Required:	Proficient English, knowledge of Russian and Kyrgyz are an asset
Starting Date: (date when the selected candidate is expected to start)	6 February 2018
Expected Duration of Assignment:	Between 6 February 2018 and 15 April 2018 (estimated 45 fee days)

I. Background (programme/project context)

The creation of UN Women in July 2010 came about as part of the UN reform agenda, consolidating the Organization's resources and mandates on gender equality for greater impact. The mandate of UN Women calls on UN Women to have universal coverage, strategic presence and ensure closer linkages between the norm-setting inter-governmental work and operations at the field level. UN Women is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to i) support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms, ii) to help Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it and to forge effective partnerships with civil society, and iii) to hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress and mobilizing and convening key stakeholders to ensure greater coherence and gender mainstreaming across the UN. Since 2001 UN Women (previously as its predecessor entity UNIFEM) has implemented catalytic initiatives on promoting women's economic, political and social rights. In 2012 a Country Office with Delegation of Authority (DOA) was established in the Kyrgyz Republic. The establishment of UN Women represents a unique opportunity for the United Nations system to strengthen its coordination to deliver its work on GEEW and to enhance accountability on GEEW. UN Women's organizational structure aims to create synergies between normative and operational support functions and to enhance the gender architecture of the UN.

Rural women play a central role in the development of Kyrgyzstan, providing a significant proportion of agricultural labour force, playing a key role in food production and nutrition, and performing most of the unpaid care work, thereby supporting reproduction of the Kyrgyzstani society. The share of women employed in the agricultural sector, which constitutes 34.5% among women compared to 29.6% (National Statistics Committee) among men, as well as increasing share of women in the category of contributing family members may reflect the tendency that rural women resort to agricultural activities in the absence of other viable employment opportunities, or men moving to either other more productive sectors, or migrating, and leaving de facto female headed households behind. Having recognized the disadvantaged status of the rural women UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in its Concluding Observations to the Fourth Periodic Report have called upon the state to: i. take measures to combat poverty among rural women including effective measures to ensure rural women's access to justice, education, housing, safe drinking water, sanitation, formal employment, skills development and training opportunities, income-generating opportunities and micro-credits, and ownership and use of land, taking into account their specific needs; and ii. to ensure

the participation of rural women in decision-making processes at the community level on an equal basis with men.

Rural women and girls have significantly less access to productive resources, which limits the efficiency of the agricultural sector. According to agricultural census of 2002 only 12% of peasant farms in 2002 have been registered to women, and National Statistics Office survey data shows that 57.5% of women report that they do not own any land. Women's lack of land tenure security is historically related to inadequate or discriminatory legal and policy frameworks and social and cultural norms, such as male preference in inheritance. Despite the laws of Kyrgyzstan guarantee women and men the same rights to own, use and control land; customary and traditional practices discriminate against women and undermine the full implementation of national legislation.

They face more difficulty than men in gaining access to public services, social protection, decent employment opportunities, and local and national markets and institutions. Unpaid care work further hampers rural women's ability to take advantage of on- and off-farm employment and market opportunities in the agricultural sector. These challenges facing rural women have been further amplified by the combined impact of the recent economic and financial crises, high and volatile food and fuel prices, climate change, the lack of investment in rural development and agriculture, and demographic changes.

Rural women and girls in Kyrgyzstan should be seen as key agents for achieving the transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. But limited access to climate-resilient assets, skills and technologies, employment, health care, education, and decision-making are among the many challenges they face, which are further aggravated by food and economic crises and climate change. Empowering rural women is key not only to the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also to overall economic productivity, given women's large presence in the agricultural workforce of Kyrgyzstan. The barriers which prevent this need to urgently be removed in order to leverage development benefits of women's engagement in national economic development. These objectives are in line with the SDG targets on women's empowerment (SDG 5), food security (SDG 2), poverty reduction (SDG 1), carbon management and adaptation (SDG 13), and peace and security (SDG 16).

II. Description of the programme/project: *Joint UN Women/ FAO/ IFAD/ WFP Programme Rural Women's Economic Empowerment*

Project strategy and expected results

Four UN agencies in Kyrgyzstan, namely UN Women, FAO, IFAD and WFP, have a history of coordinated response to the multidimensional challenges faced by rural women. One of such initiatives Joint Programme to Accelerate Progress towards Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE) is an example of providing an integrated development package, which also taps onto the leadership potential and the agency of rural women to build sustainable livelihoods and shape laws, policies and service provision systems at the local level. The Joint programme is part of a global joint initiative implemented in seven countries globally, including Guatemala, Niger, Ethiopia, Liberia, Rwanda, Nepal, and Kyrgyzstan. Since 2014 the Joint Programme has directly benefitted over 3,000 rural women across 73 villages in five provinces, indirectly improving livelihoods of 8,400 rural residents in Kyrgyzstan.

The programme has been supported by the Governments of Sweden and Norway. The total amount invested in this project is USD 2.53 million. It has been officially launched in 2012 and the first funding has been received in November 2014 from the Government of Norway, and then in March 2015 from the Government of Sweden.

Together, this partnership between UN Women, FAO, and WFP is expected to generate synergies that capitalize on each agency's mandate, comparative advantage and institutional strength to generate more lasting and wider scale results. The partnership of three UN agencies, each having a specialized mandate is premised on a successful support model provided by UN Women, FAO and WFP during their joint Delivering as One programme. This proved to be effective and mutually reinforcing. Group solidarity and membership discipline in self-help groups mobilized by UN Women ensured accurate use of seeds, fertilizers, and food, as well as consistent and systematic application of new knowledge on agricultural technologies and food security. Following this model, the programme utilizes the comparative advantages of four agencies: FAO's policy assistance on agriculture and food security, value chain training and normative work; WFP's food assistance innovations; and UN Women's technical expertise on women's economic empowerment and its mandate to promote accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment.

ARWEE aims to promote rural women's economic empowerment in the Kyrgyz Republic through securing rural women's livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the post-MDGs agenda. Programme is designed around the following three outcome areas: (i) increased income opportunities and food security for rural women; (ii) enhanced leadership and participation of rural women in decision-making processes at the local and national levels; and (iii) a more gender responsive policy environment in the country. The agencies aim to provide a harmonized, political, and institutional framework for complex programme interventions aiming at overcoming deep-rooted inequalities in rural areas.

i. Economic Empowerment

The programme shifts from the rights awareness discourse to actions and ensures tangible opportunities for women to become economically effective. The programme focus is critically important for reducing rural poverty and improvement of rural families' livelihoods. It addresses the complex range of challenges in rural areas, including providing access to land, irrigation, agricultural extension services, and access to new knowledge and innovative technologies that enable good yields from agricultural activities. Programme support to rural women in applying innovative approaches, new technologies, diversification of agricultural and livestock production, participation in value chains, effectively using market information aims to increase economic profitability and thus help to overcome stereotypes regarding women's inability to manage effective agricultural production. **Above and beyond economic gains, rural women must also advance their social status to be able to influence policy decisions and transform the power relations** at family, community and government levels. These way rural women are considered as **agents of change rather than beneficiaries of the programme**.

Helping women to unite, for instance in **rural cooperatives** addresses the issues of small land plots and low productivity of agricultural activities. Processing plants prefer to work with farmers with bigger volumes of production; poor rural women are usually excluded from more profitable and highly productive economic relations. This impacts the food security status of women headed households, as the level of vulnerability increases when there is lack of economic opportunities and inability for effective use of the available land plots. There are some positive practices of joint lease of land within the borders of one territory to produce crops that can be cultivated only in big areas. There is demand for knowledge and tools to set up and operationalize cooperatives in rural areas. Self-help groups, which have a good organisational basis can be the basis for cooperatives.

As microfinance institutions currently impose extremely unfavorable crediting terms, **establishing a Revolving Fund** within the programme may fill the gap of limited access to financial resources for women from vulnerable groups and stimulate practical economic activities of rural women, by supporting packages of services and innovative approaches for enabling productive agricultural activities run by rural women. The Guide on the Revolving Fund has been developed in the framework of the project.

ii. Female Leadership & Participation

Working with local government is an essential prerequisite for sustainability of the results of the planned programme. The programme targets local governments, rural women leaders and communities to build their capacities, to ensure **genuine participation of rural women in local development processes** and adequate reflection of rural women's priorities in local plans and budgets. The programme also focuses on methodological support to strengthen the normative and institutional systems so that participatory initiatives and human rights based approaches by local governments are maintained beyond the duration of the programme. The programme attempts to avoid fragmentation of support and has been in line with the administrative reform of the local governance system, which proposes transferring the discretionary power to local governments on issues of education, health, social protection and gender equality.

The administrative reform aims to improve the local governance system in relation to land and pasture management, irrigation management, taxation, planning and budgeting, support to public-private partnership with businesses on agricultural extension services, cooperatives, and seeds funds. Therefore, it is important to use this momentum to form local organisations, such as Pasture Committees and Water User Associations, and promote **rural women's participation**. Currently women's participation in these organizations is extremely low, limiting rural women's opportunities to benefit from its services and their voices to be heard.

Rural women/young women who may possess specialized technical knowledge and skills and have an interest in upgrading and acquiring a new profession have been trained / re-trained for the professions which are in demand at village level and may provide possibilities for the women to get remuneration for their work. To enhance **leadership and participation** support has been provided to improving governance systems and strengthening capacities of three major actors.

Rural women have received leadership training to initiate and hold dialogues with local governments on local development planning and budgeting to prioritize and address local development needs from gender perspectives. This way women activists have improved their position to raise issues and challenges they face in rural areas preventing them to enhance their economic activities.

Local and central governments as duty bearers have received technical support on gender responsive local development planning and budgeting, including the principles of transparency and partnership relations with local constituencies.

Women activists have received support in strengthening their capacities for genuine membership and participation in local specialized organizations – Water User Association, Pasture Committees, Seeds Funds, etc.

iii. Enabling Policy Environment

To achieve a more **gender responsive policy environment** technical assistance has been provided to strengthen the capacity of policy makers, such as the Ministries of Agriculture and Ministry of Labour Social Development to create a policy environment that promotes rural women's economic empowerment. The programme has also strengthened the capacity of the National Statistics Committee (NSC to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women.

Key results of the JP RWEE to date include:

Under Outcome 1 – Rural women have increased income, better livelihoods and food security (relates to Global JP Outcomes 1 and 2)

- two women's cooperatives and two women's associations established, to start providing services to at least 1,500 women-members to access inputs, extension support, finance from its revolving capital, information, and joint marketing. These organizations will allow for joint procurement of inputs, joint processing of the produce and better negotiation power with value chain actors. Cumulative revolving capital of the four organizations is over USD 107,000, which is used for funding self-help group based business initiatives of rural women;
- 2,712 women are engaged in productive and sustainable agriculture with productivity increase of 30-70%, average additional income of USD 488 per agricultural season. Of them 1416 women are running small businesses achieving an average of 29.5% increase in income. This is expected to improve livelihoods of rural women, increasing their resilience to food and economic crises, and invest in the health and education of their family members;
- 63% reduction of share of households with 'poor' or 'borderline' Food Consumption Score, and Dietary Diversity Score increased from 6 to 7 food items, adding the categories of vegetables to the regular diet of rural families;
- 28 public awareness campaigns conducted by rural women at community and district levels reaching over 3,000 people on topics such as violence against women, reproductive rights and health, early marriages, etc. The campaigns through participatory tools, such as forum theatres, are aimed at challenges gender stereotypes and eliminating harmful practices in communities;

Under Outcome 2: Rural women have mastered leadership skills and actively participate in local development planning and service provision (relates to Global JP Outcome 3)

- 32 women elected as members of local councils from among 93 trained. These women have initiated a national forum on the results of elections, raising a concern over decreasing representation of women in local councils, where they have called for introduction of a gender quota in local council elections. These women have been capacitated to meaningfully participate in the decision-making and influence allocation of local resources for gender needs and priorities;
- 15 gender-responsive local development strategies developed for 2017-2030. These strategies have been developed through inclusive consultative processes ensuring needs and priorities of all population groups are integrated;
- 12 social initiatives implemented to reduce women's unpaid care burden through improved access to information, Internet, better child care facilities, access to electricity, improved road conditions, and IT training facilities in communities, which is expected to benefit 12,549 people, including 6,726 women. Co-funding of 43.5% provided by local governments, communities and private sector. These initiatives have been identified in the local development strategies, proposed to the selection committee, and identified through a competitive process;
- 38 champions trained on an innovative household strategy – Gender Action Learning System (GALS), and reached out to about 3000 people to influence gender power relations towards more equitable distribution of care work, and life free of violence.

Under Outcome 3: More gender-sensitive policy environment for economic empowerment of rural women (relates to Global JP Outcome 4)

- Legislation on social insurance tariffs changed to remove discriminatory provisions for rural women and smallholders. An increase of social insurance tariffs for rural smallholders by up to 20 times has led to households consolidating land plots and registering the title on one family members' name, which is traditionally a man. Hence, there was a threat of women losing land titles in favour of men to avoid the burden of increased tariffs. The new amendments have incorporated proposed recommendations and brought the tariff rates to the previous levels;

- Women participated in lobbying for two other legislative initiatives banning child marriage and on introduction of gender quotas in local councils;
- Gender analysis of agricultural strategies and policies undertaken and recommendations provided to the Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen human dimension of agricultural policies; technical assistance provided to localization of SDG indicators in the agricultural sector, specifically in identifying the local data available and propose possible indicators for SDGs relating to the agricultural sector;

Project beneficiaries and stakeholders

The programme targets rural women, in particular those who are most vulnerable, who are unemployed. In rural areas, there are **limited opportunities for remunerated employment** (local government specialists, teachers, and medical workers) and rural entrepreneurship (small shops, dressmaking, hairdresser, bakeries, catering, etc.), and demand in those categories is very low. The programme feeds into on-going process of vocational training reform (supported by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the *German Agency for Technical Cooperation* (GIZ). The programme promotes policy and institutional measures to improve the system of re-training unemployed women in professions in demand at local labour markets, including non-traditional professions for women.

Government counterparts in the project are the Gender Unit at Ministry of Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Melioration and various district administrations and municipalities involved in the project. Responsible parties are the NGO Community Development Alliance (CDA), NGO Alliance for Budget Transparency (ABT), Rural Advisory Service Chuy-Talas.

Budget and geographical scope and timeframe

The project is implemented in 5 provinces, 73 villages of the Kyrgyz Republic jointly selected by the four participating agencies. The programme has applied a phased approach starting with four provinces and 45 villages first in 2015, and adding an additional province and 28 villages in 2016.

Total project budget is USD 2,538,255 contributed by the Government of Norway and Sida. UN Women's contribution is USD 40,000 over the period of 2015-2017.

Project management

Operational Management of the programme

UN agencies is supported in achieving project results by a Programme Management Unit (PMU) headed by a Programme Manager and including relevant operational support staff. The unit is established by UN Women. This joint PMU is responsible for the implementation of the joint programme, to build synergies, address intersectionalities and review progress in the implementation of the programme's activities.

Joint monthly co-ordination meetings of all agencies are held at the county level to share progress, challenges, constraints, good practices and to discuss the way forward for each project site.

National Steering Committee

A National Steering Committee is set up. It will be co-chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Development and the head of a UN agency on a rotating basis.

The members of the national SC include:

- One representative from each of the participating entities: UN Women, FAO, IFAD, and WFP.
- One representative from each of the following ministries: agriculture, social development, economy, finance and a representative of the State Agency on local self-governance
- One representative of the President's Office

Representatives of the beneficiaries of the targeted areas and representatives of local authorities will be invited on an ad hoc basis to the meetings of the national SC.

The main tasks and responsibilities of the national SC include the following:

- To give strategic direction
- To oversee programme implementation
- To oversee the allocation of funds to the different components of the programme.

III. Purpose (and use of the evaluation)

A final evaluation of the *Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment* is conducted with a special focus on lessons learnt both from programmatic and coordination perspectives. The main purpose of this final evaluation is to assess in more detail the programmatic progress and performance of the above described intervention from the point of view of relevance, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency and sustainability. The evaluation will not be able to fully assess the Joint Programme's performance, as some activities are still ongoing; however, it will address the following questions with the results and evidence that is available to date.

The findings of the evaluation will contribute to effective programming, refining the approaches of participating UN agencies to women's economic empowerment, organizational learning and accountability. It will also be a key input to knowledge management on joint programmes and programmes for gender equality and women's empowerment. The findings of the evaluation will moreover be used to engage policy makers and other stakeholders at local, national and regional levels in evidence-based dialogues and to advocate for gender-responsive strategies to promote inclusive local and national economic development with a particular focus on rural women.

Targeted users of the evaluation are the personnel of the participating UN agencies in Kyrgyzstan and in the six other countries globally, where the JPRWEE is being implemented, the responsible parties, and the government counterparts at local and national levels, CSOs, and other UN agencies, donor community and development partners present in Kyrgyzstan, and the programme beneficiaries. The evaluation should also provide specific recommendations as to the priority areas that should be considered to inform future work of participating UN agencies in the frameworks of Women's Economic Empowerment agenda and a potential Phase Two of the Joint Programme. This would include interventions that require continued support, successful interventions for expansion, and recommendations on prioritizing interventions to maximize impact. It should also define recommendations to improve project management and maximize ownership by national partners.

IV. Objectives

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

- Analyse the relevance of the programme objectives, strategy and approach at the local and national levels for the economic empowerment of rural women
- Assess effectiveness and a potential measurable impact of the programme intervention on the target group across all five dimensions of empowerment as per the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI): i) decisions about agricultural production; ii) access to and decision-making power over productive resources, iii) control over use of income, iv) leadership in the

community, and v) time use. Impact on off-farm production and other productive activities should also be considered.

- Assess organizational efficiency and coordination mechanisms in progressing towards the achievement of the project results, including the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results as defined in the intervention
- Assess the sustainability of the results and the intervention in advancing gender equality in the target group
- Analyze how human rights based approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the programme implementation
- Assess how the intervention and its results relate and contribute to the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals
- Identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories and challenges within the project, to inform future work of participating UN agencies in the frameworks of Women's Economic Empowerment agenda and beyond
- Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices
- Provide actionable recommendations with respect to UN Women's work on Women's Economic Empowerment in Kyrgyzstan.

Key evaluation questions

Considering the mandates to incorporate human rights and gender equality in all UN work and the UN Women Evaluation Policy, which promotes the integration of women's rights and gender equality principles, these dimensions will have a special attention in this evaluation and will be considered under each evaluation criterion.

Relevance

- To what extent was the design of the intervention and its results relevant to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries? Was the choice of interventions relevant to the situation of the target group?
- To what extent is the intervention consistent with the national development strategies in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment, food and nutrition security, and economic development, and reflect national priorities and commitments on GE/WE, new aid modalities and the UNDAF?
- To what extent key national partners were involved in the project's conceptualization and design process?
- To what extent has gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the programme design and implementation?
- To what extent has the project been catalytic in addressing some of the root causes of inequalities related to rural women's economic empowerment?
- To what extent is the intervention aligned with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of inclusive economic growth?
- To what extent did the participating agencies possess the comparative advantage in the programme's area of work in comparison with other UN entities and key partners in the Kyrgyz Republic?
- To what extent did the project's design process include a collaborative process, shared vision for delivering results, strategies for joint delivery and sharing of risks among implementing UN entities?

Effectiveness

- To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on both outcome and output levels?
- What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results? Has project achieved any unforeseen results, either positive or negative? For whom? What are the good practices and the obstacles or shortcomings encountered? How were they overcome?
- How effective have the selected programme strategies and approaches been in achieving programme results?
- How well did the intervention succeed in involving and building the capacities of rights-holders, duty-bearers, as well as the project partners?
- To what extent are the programme approaches and strategies are innovative for achieving economic empowerment of rural women? What -if any- types of innovative good practices have been introduced in the programme for the achievement of GEEW results?
- What contribution are participating UN agencies making to implementing global norms and standards for gender equality and economic empowerment of rural women?
- To what extent the joint programme modality led to improved communication, coordination and information exchange within the United Nations family in Kyrgyzstan?

Impact

- What evidence exist that the joint programme has delivered longer term results from processes through to benefits? Have any unintended results been delivered?
- Is there a potential measurable impact of the programme intervention on the target group across all dimensions of empowerment?
- To what extent is the programme changing the dynamics of power in relationships between different groups?
- To what extent is the programme bringing about gender transformative changes that address the root causes of gender inequalities – including prevailing social norms, attitudes and behaviours, discrimination and social systems

Efficiency

- Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated and split between the four participating agencies strategically to achieve the project outcomes?
- How has the joint nature of the project affected efficiency of delivery, including reduced duplication and increased cost-sharing, reduced/transferred burdens and transaction costs? What factors have influenced this?
- Has JP RWEE led to improved efficiency in the management of resources and what has been the relationship between increased/decreased efficiency and (potential) results on GEWE? Does the established levels or mechanism of “jointness” lead to better GEWE results?
- Has there been effective leadership and management of the project including the structuring of management and administration roles to maximize results? Where does accountability lie?
- Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent are the programme’s individual entity and joint monitoring mechanisms in place effective for measuring and informing management of project performance and progress towards targets? To what extent was the monitoring data objectively used for management action and decision making?

Sustainability

- What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?
- To what extent the intervention succeeded in building individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices to local development and water governance?
- How effectively has the project generated national ownership of the results achieved, the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of national capacities to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits?
- What voice and influence do key national partners including women's movement etc. have within the programme's decision-making structure and hierarchy?
- What steps were taken to develop and/or reinforce the operating capacities of national partners during the implementation of the programme?
- What local accountability and oversight systems have been established?
- To what extent has the project been able to promote replication and/or up-scaling of successful practices?
- To what extent has the exit strategy been well planned and successfully implemented?

Considering the mandates to incorporate human rights and gender equality in all UN work and the UN Women Evaluation Policy, which promotes the integration of women's rights and gender equality principles into evaluation, these dimensions will require special attention for this evaluation and will be considered under each evaluation criterion.

It is expected that the evaluation team will develop an evaluation matrix, which will relate to the above questions (and refine them as needed), the areas they refer to, the criteria for evaluating them, the indicators and the means for verification as a tool for the evaluation. Final evaluation matrix will be approved in the evaluation inception report.

V. Scope of the evaluation

The final evaluation of the *Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment* will be conducted at the end of project implementation and will cover the entire duration of the project 01-11-2014-31.03.2018. The evaluation is scheduled between January and April 2018.

The evaluation includes a data collection mission to Bishkek and up to eight selected project sites in Kyrgyzstan, both in its southern and its northern part.

The evaluation shall cover all aspects of the project, and broadly allocate resources (time) in relation to the relative expenditure between the various project components.

The *Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment* has been included in the Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) conducted in 2017 as part of the project portfolio of UN Women Country Office in Kyrgyzstan. The CPE report with findings and recommendations relevant to the JP RWEE will be made available to the evaluation team to inform the evaluation design, methodologies, and final evaluation report.

VI. Evaluation design (process and methods)

Methodology

The evaluation will be a transparent and participatory process involving relevant UN Women stakeholders and partners in Kyrgyzstan. The evaluation will be based on gender and human rights

principles and adhere to the UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct and UN Women Evaluation Policy and guidelines. (Please see section XI References below)

The evaluation is a final programme evaluation and both a summative approach focusing on capturing the lessons learned during the implementation and assessing the achievement of the results at output and outcome levels, as well as a formative, forward-looking approach assessing the applicability of the results will be employed. The evaluation methodology will furthermore follow a ToC approach and employ mixed methods including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches to account for complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate. Methods may include but are not limited to:

- Desk review of relevant documents such as project and programme documents, progress reports, financial records, meeting minutes and monitoring reports, and secondary data or studies relating to the country context and situation
- Online consultations and discussions with the senior management, programme and project management staff of the four participating UN agencies
- Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, surveys with direct and indirect beneficiaries, implementing partners, donor and other stakeholders
- Field visits to and observation at selected project sites

Data from different research sources will be triangulated to increase its validity. The proposed approach and methodology has to be considered as flexible guidelines rather than final requirements, and the evaluators will have an opportunity to make their inputs and propose changes in the evaluation design. The methodology and approach should, however, incorporate human rights and gender equality perspectives. It is expected that the Evaluation Team will further refine the approach and methodology and submit a detailed description in the inception report.

Comments provided by the evaluation reference and management groups are aimed at methodological rigor, factual errors, errors of interpretation, or omission of information and must be considered by the evaluators to ensure a high-quality product. The final evaluation report should reflect the evaluator's consideration of the comments and acknowledge any substantive disagreements.

Evaluation Process

The evaluation process has five phases:

- 1) Preparation: gathering and analysing programme data, conceptualizing the evaluation approach, internal consultations on the approach, preparing the TOR, establishment of the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), stakeholders mapping and selection of evaluation team.
- 2) Inception: consultations between the evaluation team and the EMG, programme portfolio review, finalization of stakeholder mapping, inception meetings with the ERG, review of the result logics, analysis of information relevant to the initiative, finalization of evaluation methodology and preparation and validation of inception report.
- 3) Data collection and analysis: in depth desk research, in-depth review of the project documents and monitoring frameworks, in online interviews as necessary, staff and partner survey/s, and field visits.
- 4) Analysis and synthesis stage: analysis of data and interpretation of findings, and drafting and validation of an evaluation report and other communication products.

5) Dissemination and follow-up: once the evaluation is completed UN Women is responsible for the development of a Management Response, publishing of the evaluation report, uploading the published report on the GATE website, and the dissemination of evaluation findings.

Participating UN agencies are entirely responsible for phases 1 and 5 outlined above which will not foresee the involvement of the independent evaluation team.

VII. Stakeholder participation and evaluation management

The UN Women Kyrgyzstan National Programme Officer, who was providing overall programmatic support for the JPRWEE, but was not involved in direct management of the programme, will serve as the evaluation task manager responsible for the day-to-day management of the evaluation and ensures that the evaluation is conducted in accordance with the UN Women Evaluation Policy, United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations system and other key guidance documents. Moreover, an evaluation management group comprising of senior management of the participating UN agencies and their delegated programme staff will be established to oversee the evaluation process, make key decisions and quality assure the different deliverables.

The establishment of an evaluation reference group facilitates participation of the key stakeholders in the evaluation process and will help to ensure that the evaluation approach is robust and relevant to staff and stakeholders. Furthermore, it will make certain that factual errors or errors of omission or interpretation are identified in evaluation products. The reference group will provide input and relevant information at key stages of the evaluation: terms of reference, inception report, draft and final reports and dissemination of the results.

VIII. Timeframe and expected outputs¹⁵

Task	Tentative Timeframe	Est No of Fee Days
Inception Phase	February 2018	
Desk review of background documentation	February 7-9, 2018	3
Inception meeting with EMG and ERG	February 12-13, 2018	2
Inception report (including two rounds of revision)	By February 22, 2018	9
Data collection phase	February 2018	
Documents review, (online) interviews	February 2018	5
Visit to project sites	February 26 – March 9, 2018	12
Analysis and reporting phase	March 2018	
Drafting and presentation of preliminary findings (including one round of revision)	March 13, 2018	1
Draft report (including two rounds of Revision)	March 26 – April 2, 2018	8
Final report		
Evaluation communication products (brief		

¹⁵ Since this evaluation will be conducted by an international and a national evaluator the distribution of the days amongst them are indicative and based on preliminar distribution of responsibilities.

Expected deliverables

The evaluation team is expected to deliver:

- **An inception report:** The evaluation team will present a refined scope, a detailed outline of the evaluation design and methodology, evaluation questions, and criteria for the approach for in-depth desk review and field work to be conducted in the data collection phase. The report will include an evaluation matrix and detailed work plan. A first draft report will be shared with the evaluation management group and, based upon the comments received the evaluation team will revise the draft. The revised draft will be shared with the evaluation reference group for feedback. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the final inception report.
- **Presentation of preliminary findings:** A PowerPoint presentation detailing the emerging findings of the evaluation will be shared with the evaluation management group for feedback. The revised presentation will be delivered to the reference group for comment and validation. The evaluation team will incorporate the feedback received into the draft report.
- **A draft evaluation report:** A first draft report will be shared with the evaluation management group for initial feedback. The second draft report will incorporate evaluation management group feedback and will be shared with the evaluation reference group for identification of factual errors, errors of omission and/or misinterpretation of information. The third draft report will incorporate this feedback and then be shared with the reference group for final validation. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the revised drafts.
- **The final evaluation report:** The final report will include a concise Executive Summary and annexes detailing the methodological approach and any analytical products developed during the course of the evaluation. The structure of the report will be defined in the inception report.
- **Evaluation communication products:** Online presentation of the preliminary findings at the closing event of the project in March 2018 (date TBD), a PowerPoint/Prezi presentation of the final key evaluation findings and recommendations, and a 2-pager/infographics on the final key findings, lessons learned and recommendations in a format preferably adjustable for individual project sites both in English and Russian.

Payment will be issued in three instalments upon the satisfactory submission of the deliverables cleared by the evaluation task manager to certify that the services have been satisfactorily performed: 15% upon the signing of the contract, 20% upon approval of evaluation inception report, 25% upon the submission of the draft report and 40% upon the validation of the final evaluation report and communication products.

IX. Evaluation team composition and requirements

An evaluation team consisting of an international consultant as a Team Leader and a national consultant as a Team Member supporting in all substantive aspects of the evaluation. Both have some experience of each of the following: conducting evaluations, gender equality, women's economic empowerment, and food and nutrition security and agriculture. The international consultant as team leader is responsible for coordination during all phases of the evaluation process, ensuring the quality of outputs and application of methodology as well as timely delivery of all evaluation products in close collaboration with the evaluation task manager and the evaluation management group. The national

consultant will provide support to the international consultant in all the aspects of conducting the evaluation, including translation and interpretation where necessary.

In further detail, the duties and responsibilities of the international consultant are as follows:

- Leading the inception phase and developing an inception report outlining design, approach and methodology of the evaluation and an indicative workplan of the evaluation team within the framework of this ToR.
- Directing and supervising the national consultant in carrying out collection, research and analysis of relevant documentation and other data, and reporting.
- Overseeing and assuring quality of data collection and leading the analysis of the evaluation evidence.
- Preparing for meetings with the evaluation management group, evaluation reference group and other stakeholders to review findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- Leading the preparation of the evaluation communication products.

Required skills and expertise of the International Consultant

Competencies

- Sensitivity and adaptability to culture, gender, religion, nationality and age
- Strong analytical, writing and reporting abilities
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, ability to lead a team and negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders
- Commitment to quality products and deadlines

Qualifications

- At least a master's degree in economics, social sciences, international relations, gender studies or a related area

Required experience

- 7 years of relevant experience of periodically conducting evaluations of strategies, policies and/or development programmes and projects
- Proven experience of designing and leading or participating in gender-responsive and human rights based evaluations utilising participatory approaches and methodologies
- Knowledge and experience in gender equality and women's empowerment, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis and the related mandates
- Demonstrated facilitation and communications skills, experience in participatory approaches and ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders
- Ability to produce well-written analytical reports
- Previous work experience of countries in transition. Previous experience working in Central Asia and/or in particular in Kyrgyzstan will be considered a strong asset
- Experience with the United Nations system will be considered an asset
- Fluency in English. Knowledge of Russian or Kyrgyz will be considered an asset

X. Application procedure

Applications should include

- Offeror's letter to UN Women confirming interest and availability for the assignment, including financial proposal, indicating a total lump sum to include all costs relating to the delivery of outputs as per above description
- P11 form including past experience in similar assignments. This form can be downloaded at www.unwomen.org/about-us/employment
- Copies of previous evaluation reports submitted separately by email to hr.kyrgyzstan@unwomen.org

All online application must include (as an attachment) the completed UN Women, UNDP or UN Personal History form (P11) in English accessible via the following link: www.unwomen.org/about-us/employment. Kindly note that the system will only allow one attachment, which must be the P11.

Please upload the P11 form combined with other application documents, including the financial proposal and a possible CV, as one (1) single PDF document. Copies of the previous evaluation reports should be sent to: hr.kyrgyzstan@unwomen.org.

Please carefully respond to the requirements of the Terms of Reference in the P11 that you submit.

Please note that the financial proposal should all-inclusive and take into account various expenses incurred by the consultant during the contract period itemizing the following: fee rate per working day, daily subsistence allowance rate for every day in field for the purposes of the assignment, necessary local travel expenses by the most appropriate means of transportation and the most direct economy class practicable route and any other relevant expenses required for the purposes of the assignment. The financial proposal should be provided in USD; if the proposal is provided in any other currency it would be converted as per UN exchange rate on the date of post closure.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Candidates can only be shortlisted if they profess to meet all the mandatory requirements in the Terms of Reference. Applications without the completed P11 form are incomplete and will NOT be considered for further assessment.

The Consultant shall promote a client-oriented approach consistent with UN Women rules and regulations and commits to high standards of quality, productivity and timeliness in the delivery of tasks. The Consultant will meet and apply the highest standards of integrity and impartiality.

The Consultant must be fully dedicated to the mandate and the values of UN Women, particularly to promoting Gender Equality as a strategy to reduce conflict, improve livelihoods and ensure fairness and justice; to Women Empowerment underpinning Gender Equality promotion efforts; to inter-ethnic tolerance and concord; and to respect for diversity.

Evaluation of applicants

Candidates will be evaluated using a cumulative analysis method taking into consideration the combination of the applicants' technical qualifications and experience, and their Financial Proposal. Candidates meeting the mandatory requirements in the Terms of Reference as per the P11 submitted will be longlisted and passed on for further technical evaluation. The technical evaluation of the longlisted candidates comprises a desk review of the submitted documents, including the mandatory P-11, and an interview for candidates clearing the threshold in the desk review. Candidates obtaining a minimum of 70% (28 points of 40) in the desk review, which accounts for 40% of total assessment marks, will be shortlisted and invited for an interview. Candidates obtaining a minimum of 70% (49 points of 70) from the aggregated marks for desk review and the interview will be further considered for financial evaluation. The interview thus accounts for 30% of total marks, and the Financial Proposal for 30% also.

The contract will thus be awarded to the individual consultant whose application documents including the Financial Proposal, and performance in an interview have been evaluated and determined as:

- Technically responsive/compliant/acceptable to the requirements of the ToR and
- Having received the highest cumulative (technical evaluation and interview, and financial evaluation) score against the below defined criteria.

Applications without the documents indicated as required are incomplete and will NOT be considered for further assessment. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Technical Criteria for International Consultant - 70% of total evaluation - max. 70 points

Criteria	Mandatory requirement used for longlisting		
At least a master's degree in economics, social sciences, international relations, gender studies or a related area	X	Yes/No	
7 years of relevant experience of periodically conducting evaluations of strategies, policies and/or development programmes and projects	X	Yes/No	
Experience of working in countries in transition	X	Yes/No	
Fluency in English	X	Yes/No	
Technical evaluation		Points in desk review 40	Points in interview 30
Proven experience of designing and leading or participating in gender-responsive and human rights based evaluations utilising participatory approaches and methodologies		Up to 8	Up to 10
Knowledge and experience in gender equality and women's empowerment, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis and the related mandates		Up to 5	Up to 10
Demonstrated facilitation and communications skills, experience in participatory approaches and ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders		Up to 5	Up to 10
Ability to produce well-written analytical reports		Up to 10	
Proven work experience in Central Asia and specifically Kyrgyzstan an advantage		Up to 5	
Experience within the United Nations system will be considered an asset		Up to 4	
Knowledge of Russian or Kyrgyz will be considered an asset		Up to 3	

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

The maximum number of points assigned to the Financial Proposal is allocated to the lowest price proposal. All other price proposals receive points in inverse proportion.

A suggested formula is as follows: $p \cdot 30 (\mu/z)$

Where:

p - points for the financial proposal being evaluated

μ - price of the lowest priced proposal
z - price of the proposal being evaluated

XI References

Evaluation Policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNW/2012/8): www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=UNW/2012/12&Lang=E

How to Manage Gender Responsive Evaluation. Evaluation Handbook: www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation

UN Women Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS): www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/about%20us/evaluation/evaluation-geraasmethodology-en.pdf

Standards for Evaluation in the UN System: www.uneval.org/document/detail/22

Norms for Evaluation in the UN System: www.uneval.org/document/detail/21

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

UNEG Guidance Integrating Human Rights and Gender into Evaluation: www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616

UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator: www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452

UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: www.uneval.org/document/detail/607

UNEG Ethical Guidelines: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102

UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

UN Women Kyrgyzstan Country Portfolio Evaluation:
<http://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?EvaluationId=5014>

Joint Evaluation of Joint Gender Programmes:
<http://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?evaluationId=4603>