

# UN WOMEN

"Assistance in strengthening national capacity, coordinating, and creating effective interdepartmental measures to implement family and gender policies, expand women's contribution to national production and its growth in order to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 5, 8 and 10 and introduce a multisectoral approach to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Kazakhstan" (the Umbrella Project)

July 2019 – May 2023

## FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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While this report incorporates the inputs of various contributors, any errors or omissions remain the sole responsibility of the evaluation team. The views expressed in this report solely belong to the evaluators and do not necessarily represent those of UN Women or any individuals and organizations mentioned in the report.

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Disclaimer: The analysis and recommendations presented in this report are the findings of the evaluation team and may not necessarily reflect the views of UN Women.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CO	Country Office
CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DV	Domestic Violence
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EVAW	Ending Violence against Women
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GATE	UN Women Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use platform
GEEW	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
HR & GE	Human Rights and Gender Equality
ILO	International Labour Convention
KII	Key Informant Interview
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
NCWAFDP	National Commission for Women Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
SC	Steering Committee
SCR 1325	UN Security Council Resolution on Women’s Peace and Security
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and medium enterprise
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SVW	Socially vulnerable women
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
VAW/VAWC	Violence Against Women/Violence Against Women and Children
WEE	Women’s Economic Empowerment
WPS	Women’s Peace and Security

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This report presents the results of the evaluation of the Umbrella project (*“Assistance in strengthening national capacity, coordinating, and creating effective interdepartmental measures to implement family and gender policies, expand women's contribution to national production and its growth in order to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 5, 8 and 10 and introduce a multisectoral approach to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Kazakhstan”*) in Kazakhstan. The project was implemented from 2019 to 2023 by the UN agencies – UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP and funded by the Government of Kazakhstan, with a total budget of 2,143,311 USD.

## Context

Kazakhstan is one of the largest Central Asian countries, ranked 80 out of 156 countries According to the Global Gender Gap Index 2021. Kazakhstan's legal and policy framework governing gender equality includes two laws The act on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities of Men and Women and the Domestic Violence Act (2009), the 2016-2030 state gender policy of Kazakhstan, with a major focus on promoting support for families and marriages by linking this aim with the modernization of human resources. Despite advancements, women in Kazakhstan continue to face discriminatory practices in both public and private spheres. Among the most pertinent GEWE-related issues are i) violence against women and girls which is still a widely spread form of gender-based violence in Kazakhstan; ii) economic vulnerability of women; iii) lack of women at decision-making and in the system of governance; iv) deeply rooted gender stereotypes which impacts equality and limit women's opportunities in public and private areas.

## Description of the project

The project's goal is to advance gender equality and empower women and girls in Kazakhstan, including the most marginalized to leave no one behind. The project is composed of three outcomes:

**Outcome 1 (O1):** Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE): strengthening implementation of the Concept on Family and Gender Policy of Kazakhstan

**Outcome 2 (O2):** Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE): instigating progressive practices in the field of women's economic integration, including socially vulnerable women

**Outcome 3 (O3):** Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW): consolidating the efforts of three UN agencies in Kazakhstan: UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF to create a model of comprehensive multisectoral approach in preventing and addressing domestic violence.

Under Outcome 1, the project team provided technical expertise in building capacity and institutional framework of the National Commission for Women and Family Affairs and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan. Under Outcome 2, various activities were undertaken to strengthen Kazakhstani society through the promotion of gender equality and family policies. This involved efforts to increase the role of both parents in child upbringing and enhance the legal and gender literacy of citizens. Additionally, socially vulnerable women were economically empowered by addressing barriers to entrepreneurial and formal employment opportunities. Outcome 3 targeted the well-being of survivors of violence against women (VAW). The project contributed to a strengthened legal and policy framework for combating VAW in Kazakhstan, focusing on its improved implementation. Equitable access to integrated quality social services for victims of violence was improved through enhanced multisectoral cooperation and coordination. The project also aimed to promote favorable social norms, attitudes, and behaviors to prevent violence against women and girls.

The project was designed to **target socially vulnerable women**, including those in rural areas, victims of domestic violence, unemployed women, women in the informal sector of the economy, parents, children, men and boys.

### **The purpose and objectives of evaluation and methodology**

The evaluation report of a project serves the explicitly defined purposes of accountability, learning, and/or decision-making. The evaluation is a final project 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. The evaluation was conducted based on the standard criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and two additional criteria of LNOB and GE/HRBA. The evaluation followed a theory-based design and its methodology that included both qualitative and quantitative methods integrated participatory and human rights and gender equality responsive approaches in order to give voice to all partners and beneficiaries of the project including those in most vulnerable situations.

The **primary intended users** of this evaluation include UN Women Kazakhstan Country Office, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Gender Team Group; Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (donor), National Commission and other national government institutions; Programme/project partners; target groups, their households and community members, programme/project partners; civil society representatives.

### **Methodology**

The evaluation encompasses all planning, monitoring and implementation activities of the selected projects from the beginning of the project to May 2022. The evaluation follows Results-Based Management and Evaluation (RBM&E) approach, which is a systematic process that analyzes and evaluates program activities, outputs, and outcomes to measure and track program performance. It predominately employs the qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches to account for the complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate.

### **Key findings**

#### **RELEVANCE**

- 1.** The project is broadly aligned with international commitments, including CEDAW Concluding Observations and the SDGs, as well as national priorities such as 'Kazakhstan 2050', '100 concrete steps', and the Concept on Family and Gender Policy until 2030, focusing on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- 2.** Although, some of the project interventions have gender transformative potential, the project shows limited evidence of transformative impact due to its fragmented, small-scale activities lacking the depth required to address root gender inequalities and challenge patriarchal norms.
- 3.** Project strategies target beneficiaries effectively, but there is limited outreach to socially vulnerable women due to the implementation stage of the project.

#### **EFFECTIVENESS**

- 4.** The project monitoring system does not allow to comprehensively assess the overall effectiveness and actual achievements beyond counting outputs. Nevertheless, through the project extensions, modification, and shifting priorities, the project appears to deliver all its planned outputs. No unexpected results were mapped.

5. Although project interventions under Outcome 1 contributed to the National Commission's position, visibility, and outreach, including through the information support of the project to the Commission. However, there is less evidence of positive consequences of study carried out and recommendations on restructuring the Secretariat and local offices beyond improved clarity in the division of responsibilities between the staff members and the members of the Commission. Commission's underfunding, strengthened capacity, lack of human resources, and limited reach across the regions still need to be addressed.
6. The creation of resource centres to support women's entrepreneurship in all regions is a key achievement under Outcome 2, with applications from women-potential entrepreneurs largely exceeding available budgets. Cases of women improving their business practices were collected, but given that centres started to operate only in 2021, there is a lack of evidence of the actual contribution to improved income security, decent work, and economic autonomy of socially vulnerable women (SWW). The follow-up and active uptake of a number of studies developed under the Outcome 2 remains to be seen.
7. Under Outcome 3, efforts were implemented by three agencies closely with the National Commission, which covered attempts to improve the legislative framework, strengthened service response as well as activities aiming to change norms and practices through education and behavioral change campaigns. Despite the amendments to the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence not being adopted (criminalization of DV), the research, advocacy, and coordination work to lobby this process contributed to speaking out about the problems and for civil society and initiative groups to continue putting pressure on the Government while complementing that with gender-transformative initiatives to address resistance behind the proposed changes. Nevertheless, the approach to GBV and WAVC remains fragmented and project-based, with some crucial initiatives lacking scaling up and needing political support. The actual impact of project interventions on survivors of violence (implementation of Outcome 3) is difficult to assess and lacks evidence.
8. The project produced a number of information and behaviour change materials, campaigns, and capacity-building events aiming to address different aspects of gender inequality, and adopted some new strategies for the Kazakh context, including engaging men in promoting GEWE. Nevertheless, the initiatives range in scale, scope, and reach, with no assessment to assess the transformative potential of different methods and inform future behavioural change campaigns in Kazakhstan available.
9. The implementation of the Umbrella project has been affected by several external and internal factors, including COVID-19, coupled with the complexity of national structures, systems, and decision-making processes, including specifics of the budget cycle and prolonged decision-making procedures. These were not effectively integrated into the project design, with limited prior proper assessment of the complexity and anticipated risks and mitigation strategies.

#### **EFFICIENCY**

10. The project efficiency was affected by the prevailing constraints and limitation of funding modality, characterized by the complex budgetary processes, decision-making structure and human resource constraints, leading to late disbursement of funds, prolonged decision-making processes and staff turnover. Nevertheless, efforts were made to mitigate the situation and deliver agreed deliverables, including through project extension.
11. Procuring external service through national procurement systems was a predominant mode of project implementation, with preference given to national consultants. Nevertheless, the complexity behind institutional funding often resulted in a shortened implementation period. Opinions on the expertise and quality of some of the selected consultants differ.

## COHERENCE AND COOPERATION

12. The program contributed to reducing the overlapping of UN agency programs and improved visibility of each strategic area. However, UN partners continued to implement initiatives in relatively autonomous ways while reporting them under the broad ‘umbrella’ of each of the Outcomes. The potential offered by the Umbrella project to strengthen synergies among UN agencies and cooperation at the activity and intervention levels has not been fully implemented.
13. The project contributed to improved and strengthened relationships (formal and informal) of all the UN partners with the National Commission. Most notably, the project has enhanced the role of UN Women in its technical expertise in various areas of GEWE among relevant Government institutions.

## SUSTAINABILITY

14. The project’s sustainability strategy or exit plan was not developed. A level of financial sustainability of the project interventions has been achieved through active efforts to develop new projects funded by the national agencies, integration of project element in UN agencies’ Country Strategy Plans, upscaling of the existing networks (Men Engage) or securing funding for initiatives, such as Women Entrepreneurial Centers, by the Ministry of Economy.
15. Although with mixed results and initiative-dependent, the long-term positive impact of interventions can be observed through efforts to strengthen partnership and enhance the capacities of State counterparts as duty bearers, certain successes in improving the legislative framework, and a number of outputs developed, such as studied and capacity building initiatives, which have potential to be replicated and re-used in future programs. However, their actual uptake still needs to be confirmed and seen.

## Conclusions

**Relevance:** The project’s objectives are broadly aligned with international commitments and national priorities in the domain of gender equality and women’s empowerment. It is linked to important commitments set in the CEDAW Concluding Observations and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as national programs such as “Kazakhstan 2050,” “100 concrete steps,” and the Concept on Family and Gender Policy until 2030. The project demonstrates the potential for gender transformation through some interventions. However, the fragmented nature of activities, lack of interlinkages, relatively small scale and depth of various interventions, might limited project’s overall impact on deeply-rooted gender norms and patriarchal values present in Kazakhstan society.

**Effectiveness:** The implementation of the Umbrella project has been affected by several external and internal factors, including COVID-19, coupled with the complexity of national structures, systems, and decision-making processes, including specifics of the budget cycle and pronged decision-making procedures. The findings indicate the need for further improvements to ensure the project’s effectiveness in promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in Kazakhstan. The project’s monitoring system integrated basic elements (quarterly monitoring schedule, progress working group meetings and donor reports, among others) and ensured tracking of project outputs. However, it lacks consistency in tracking outcomes, limiting the comprehensive assessment of its overall effectiveness beyond output counting. While the project’s Theory of Change and log frame were developed, they were not utilized in reporting, but the project managed to deliver all planned outputs through extensions and modifications.

**Efficiency:** The project’s efficiency was affected by constraints in the funding modality, including complex budgetary processes, decision-making structures, and human resource limitations, resulting in delayed fund disbursement, prolonged decision-making, and staff turnover, which were intensified by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts were made to mitigate the situation and deliver



project deliverables through extensions. Additionally, the project primarily procured services from external providers through In-tend procurement systems, with preference given to national consultants. However, institutional funding complexities often led to shortened implementation periods, and varying opinions emerged regarding the expertise and quality of selected consultants, indicating a need for improved selection processes in the future.

**Coherence and cooperation:** The project effectively prevented the overlapping of UN agency programs and increased their visibility in strategic areas. However, UN partners operated relatively independently, reporting initiatives under broad 'umbrellas' of outcomes, limiting the realization of synergies and cooperation. The project notably improved relationships with the National Commission on Women, particularly enhancing UN Women's technical expertise among government institutions. Despite cooperation with civil society organizations, it mainly involved them as external implementers and service providers, with limited consultation.

**Sustainability:** The project did not develop sustainability plan, neither for both the project or its individual initiatives. However, a level of financial sustainability has been achieved through efforts by engaged agencies to secure funding from national sources, including through new Tied grant implemented by UN Women with support of Ministry of Information, which covers elements of Umbrella project. Integration of project elements into UN agencies' Country Strategy Plans presents another element of sustainability. Additionally, the Ministry of Economy has taken over certain initiatives, like Women Entrepreneurial Centers, allowing for the continuation of efforts and outputs. Long-term positive impacts of the Umbrella program are evident through efforts to enhance the capacities of state counterparts, improve the legislative framework, and develop replicable outputs, though actual uptake needs confirmation through follow-up monitoring.

**Human Rights/Gender Equality:** The project's strategies generally address beneficiaries' identified needs and adopt a Leaving Nobody Behind (LNOB) approach. However, only a limited number of initiatives were able to reach and benefit the most socially vulnerable women due to implementation constraints.

## **Recommendations**

### *For UN Women:*

- Strengthen government agencies' capacities in human rights-based programming and results-based management, integrating meaningful indicators and qualitative aspects. Link these efforts to a clear theory of change and explore tools like human interest stories for effective tracking.
- Leverage UN Women's coordinating mandate in gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) to foster cross-sectorial engagement, joint programming, and advocacy. Ensure civil society participation not just as subcontractors but as project partners. Optimize expertise and resources across UN agencies through coordination, while diversifying funds for independence from government priorities.

### *For UN agencies:*

- Enhance project design for inclusivity by actively engaging all stakeholders involved in specific interventions, ensuring smoother implementation, and fostering increased ownership at all levels.
- Establish clear guidelines and processes for contributing to and approving project outputs in future multi-partner projects. This includes setting reasonable deadlines and expectations to prevent unnecessary delays and last-minute interventions, which can strain the quality of outputs and relationships.

- Conduct thorough risk and mitigation analyses for each project during the design stage, accounting for risks and constraints associated with national institutional setups and processes.
- Continue efforts to enhance national gender mechanisms, specifically the National Commission of Women. This involves i) institutionalizing reporting obligations for institutions to detail their gender mainstreaming efforts and the status of implementing Commission recommendations; ii) strengthening the Commission's presence at local levels, provide continuous capacity building, design strategies to involve final beneficiaries directly, and support the development of a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) system.
- Work collaboratively with the National Statistics Committees to optimize knowledge product findings for evidence-based decision-making. To avoid fragmentation and leverage limited resources efficiently, adopt a unified UN approach, with one agency coordinating efforts and capacity-building opportunities related to effective data collection and management within the Bureau.
- Continue supporting women entrepreneurship centers, addressing identified opportunities to enhance their functionality, efficiency, and effectiveness. Consider integrating components addressing gender-based violence (GBV) into entrepreneurial work centers to raise awareness and address tensions in a patriarchal society, maximizing opportunities for awareness around GBV and violence against women in conflict (VAVC).
- Continue implementation of extensive transformative behavioural change campaigns using innovative and interactive approaches, which have the potential to address the root causes of gender inequality, is needed.

*For government institutions:*

- Integrate extensive MEL requirements as part of the procurement systems, and support and build capacities for all the sub-contracted service providers to design and use effective MEL tools.
- Design future projects using the support of TOC to help identify needed linkages and gaps, and assess the ability of the listed activities to contribute to the change envisaged. This might also support improving the strategic focus of the projects, reducing the fragmentations, and improving the project's coherence
- Strengthen the system of effective evaluation of consultants used under different projects to create a joint pool of gender experts in Kazakhstan, which will be supported by an effective assessment of their expertise and the quality of the deliverables.
- Continuous implementation of extensive transformative behavioural change campaigns using innovative and interactive approaches, which have the potential to address the root causes of gender inequality, is needed.

## 1. COUNTRY CONTEXT

Kazakhstan is one of the largest Central Asian countries, with a population of 19.1 million people<sup>1</sup>, 60% of whom reside in urban areas<sup>2</sup>. Kazakhstan is known for its extensive natural resources, which determined the economic profile of the country before COVID-19<sup>3</sup>. Since 2021 the country's GDP has continued to recover, returning to its pre-pandemic level, with an increasing share of services and manufacturing.<sup>4</sup>

Women constitute 51% of the population. According to the Global Gender Gap Index 2021, Kazakhstan ranks 80 out of 156 countries, a decrease compared to the 60<sup>th</sup> rank in 2018 and 52<sup>nd</sup> in 2017. The regress is in all areas of the index's composition, with the most sufficient in economic participation and opportunity and political empowerment<sup>5</sup>. The largest disparities are noted in the number of women at the decision-making level, i.e., female heads of state, ministers, and senior officials and managers. Gender Development Index ranks<sup>6</sup> Kazakhstan at 50 out of 189 countries according to the Human Development Index statistical update 2019, maintaining a similar ranking (51) in 2020.

Women enjoy formal equality enshrined in the Constitution and guaranteed by relevant legal acts. Kazakhstan's legal and policy framework governing gender equality has evolved significantly since independence. In 2009 two laws - The act on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities of Men and Women and the Domestic Violence Act - were approved. The gender policy of Kazakhstan is guided by the state's strategy on gender equality. The first document was adopted in 2006 for ten years. The present Concept of Family and Gender Policy endorsed till 2030 casts a major focus on promoting support for families and marriages by linking this aim with the modernization of human resources. The National Commission for Women Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy in Kazakhstan has a high formal status, being positioned under the Presidential Office. It is an institution responsible for shaping and implementation of the state gender policy since 1995. Each local administration includes a specialist who serves as a representative of the Commission and is responsible for the implementation of gender mainstreaming activities at the local level.

The share of working women amounts to 72%, whereas men's involvement in the economy is 82%. Unemployment among women is higher (5.4% vs 4.4% of the similar indicator among men), with the prevailing proportion of women who are unemployed for long-term and among youth under 28 y.o. While an increasing number of women are working in Small and Medium Enterprises, women are mainly self-employed and may lack decent working conditions and social security benefits such as pensions.<sup>7</sup> The occupational segregation between women and men in the labour market and the gender pay gap persist. Women are concentrated in low-paid sectors of employment, such as education and healthcare, usually run by state funding. The gender wage gap is 78%, according to the national gender statistics<sup>8</sup>. Women spent more time on unpaid work compared to men.<sup>9</sup> According to

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<sup>1</sup> Agency of Statistics, Ministry of National Economy, Key Socio-Demographic and Economic Indicators, Statistics on Demographical situation is available at <https://stat.gov.kz/official/industry/61/statistic/6>

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, Kazakhstan Overview, available here <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kazakhstan/overview>

<sup>3</sup> Franke, A., Gawrich, A., & Alakbarov, G., 2009. "Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan as post-Soviet rentier states: resource incomes and autocracy as a double 'curse' in post-Soviet regimes". *Europe-Asia Studies*, 61(1), 109-140

<sup>4</sup> World Bank, Economic Recovery During Challenging Times, Kazakhstan Economic Update Winter 2021/2022, available here <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kazakhstan/publication/economic-update-winter-2021-2022>

<sup>5</sup> World Economic Forum, 2021. The Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Report, Kazakhstan: country profile, available at [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2021.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> UNDP, 2019 and 2020. Human Development Report 2019, 2020, available at <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2019> and <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2020>

<sup>7</sup> OECD, 2017. Gender Policy Delivery Review, Kazakhstan. Available here <https://www.oecd.org/gov/Gender-Highlights-Kazakhstan.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> The Statistics Agency, Gender indicators, Employment, available here [https://gender.stat.gov.kz/page/frontend/detail?id=20&slug=16-58-16-63&cat\\_id=7&lang=ru](https://gender.stat.gov.kz/page/frontend/detail?id=20&slug=16-58-16-63&cat_id=7&lang=ru)

<sup>9</sup> The Statistics Agency, 2018. Available here [https://gender.stat.gov.kz/page/frontend/detail?id=112&slug=-90&cat\\_id=2&lang=ru](https://gender.stat.gov.kz/page/frontend/detail?id=112&slug=-90&cat_id=2&lang=ru)

the national statistics, women devote an additional 5 hours per day compared to men to unpaid household work, caregiving for children and elderly individuals, and volunteering.

Violence against women and girls is still a pertinent and widely spread form of gender-based violence in Kazakhstan. According to a national study, 17% of women experienced different forms of violence at least once in their lifetime in the forms of domestic violence and sexual harassment at work/study places.<sup>10</sup> In rural and remote areas, bride kidnapping and early marriages are still common, especially in the southern regions of the country.<sup>11</sup> The number of cases flagged as domestic violence has fallen by half since 2013-2014; however, the gender activists explain this tendency by the effect of decriminalisation of the VAW legislation in 2017 and a lack of coordinated efforts of law enforcement authorities and judicial institutions in addressing the cases of domestic violence (DV).

Gender stereotypes are present in Kazakh society, rooted in patriarchy which traditionally assigns to women the role of caregiver and housewife.<sup>12</sup> Girls and boys are treated differently in their families, schools, by peers, and, thus, in society generally. Shame (yet) is a key component of social norms in relation to women and men. Given that it is widely spread practice to live a few generations in one household, women are expected to take responsibility for households and elderly members of the family. This position limits women's economic opportunities and income-generating activities. It exposes women to economic, psychological and physical violence. Gender roles also negatively impact the perception of men and masculinity according to which men should exercise machoism in everyday life, being strong and a breadwinner.<sup>13</sup> Men's participation in relation to child support and educational responsibilities is significantly lower than women's involvement. Such attitude impacts men's health and life expectancy at birth of men (67.09 years vs 75.53 years for women)<sup>14</sup>.

## 2. Background on the project

The subject of the evaluation is the Umbrella project, which was launched in 2019. The project has a total budget of \$2,143,311 and has been initially implemented over 36 months, with two project no-cost extensions (until October 2022 and May 2023). The extensions were requested due to unforeseen circumstances, such as COVID-19, delayed funds disbursement and as a result, unspent funds, which caused few hold offs in completing the project within the original timeframe. The project is implemented jointly under the UN Women in Kazakhstan coordination, with the participation of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, as implementing partners.

### Overall goal

The overall goal of the project is to contribute to the achievement of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), including Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) and the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW) in Kazakhstan.

The project aimed at achieving this goal through a variety of actions, including but not limited to supporting the effective implementation of Family and Gender Policy, strengthening the capacity and institutional framework of the National Commission on Women, Family and Demographic Policy,

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<sup>10</sup> The Statistics Agency, 2017. Sample survey on violence against women in Kazakhstan, available here <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/country/mco-kazakhstan/kazakhstan%20vaw%20reportfinal%20engcompressed.pdf?la=en&vs=2115>

<sup>11</sup> UNFPA, 2019. We, Kazakhstan. Population Situation Analysis of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Available here [https://gender.stat.gov.kz/page/frontend/detail?id=71&slug=-58&cat\\_id=9&lang=ru](https://gender.stat.gov.kz/page/frontend/detail?id=71&slug=-58&cat_id=9&lang=ru)

<sup>12</sup> Asian Development Bank, 2019. Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment, p.17, available here <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/479136/kazakhstan-country-gender-assessment.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> OECD, Social Institutions and Gender Index, 2019. Global Report, Kazakhstan profile, available here <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/KZ.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Bureau of the National Statistics, 2020. Demographic characteristics of the population of Kazakhstan, Life expectancy at birth, available here <https://bala.stat.gov.kz/ozhidaemaya-prodolzhitelnost-zhizni-pri-rozhdenii/>

raising awareness about gender issues, reducing gender stereotypes, and developing social norms for a stronger and inclusive society.

The **ultimate goal** of the project is to advance gender equality and empower women and girls in Kazakhstan, including the most marginalized to leave no one behind. The project seeks to achieve this goal by 1) effective implementation of Gender and Family Policy in Kazakhstan; 2) economic integration of socially vulnerable women and creation of social protection policies and laws which provide decent work opportunities for vulnerable women, while eliminating gender-based discrimination related to women's unpaid care work, and 3) a full-fledged support in integration of multisectoral response to and comprehensive governmental approach to prevention of violence against women in Kazakhstan.

**The project is composed of three outcomes:**

**Outcome 1 (O1):** Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE): strengthening implementation of the Concept on Family and Gender Policy of Kazakhstan

**Outcome 2 (O2):** Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE): instigating progressive practices in the field of women's economic integration, including socially vulnerable women

**Outcome 3 (O3):** Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW): consolidating the efforts of three UN agencies in Kazakhstan: UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF to create a model of comprehensive multisectoral approach in preventing and addressing domestic violence.

To achieve the overall goal and objective the project aims to achieve the following results:

- Kazakhstani society is strengthened through promoted gender equality and family policies, increased role of both parents in the upbringing of children, improved legal and gender literacy of citizens (O1);
- The capacity and institutional framework of the National Commission for Women and Family Affairs and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan is strengthened for effective implementation of the Gender and Family Policy in Kazakhstan (O1);
- Socially vulnerable women are economically empowered through the elimination of existing barriers to entrepreneurial and business opportunities and formal employment opportunities (O2);
- Socially vulnerable women benefit from decent work opportunities created as a result of social protection policies (O2);
- Women improve their status due to the comprehensive work of the Government in the field of elimination of gender-based discrimination related to women's unpaid care work (O2);
- Survivors of violence benefit from strengthened legal and policy framework on combatting violence against women (VAW) in Kazakhstan and its improved implementation (O3);
- Equitable access to integrated quality social services (health, psycho-social support, social protection, police, legal et al.) for the victims of violence is improved through strengthened multisectoral cooperation and coordination for prevention, response and addressing violence against women (O3);
- Favorable social norms, attitudes and behaviors are promoted to prevent violence against women and girls (O3).

The theory of change (TOC) is constructed based on the hypotheses which prioritize the work at policy and institutional levels:

**IF,**

1. National laws and policies on gender equality and family affairs are strengthened and implemented;

2. Systemic barriers associated with participation in unpaid work and unequal access to social protection services for rural and vulnerable women are removed to ensure women's meaningful participation in the economy;
3. State institutions adapt and implement effective approaches to prevention and response to violence against women and girls

**THEN,**

Women will be empowered to enjoy equality in social, political, and economic spheres of life and meaningfully contribute to national sustainable development.

Although not part of the requirement of the donor, the project has developed an extensive theory of change. However, the latter is characterized by inconsistencies stemming from the nature of the project design and does not necessarily support the type of activities, including their scope, needed to achieve very complex and broadly set project outcomes. In addition, given the complexity of the program and diverse thematic areas, the current TOC lacks strong causal mechanisms and systematic analysis of basic interrelations between the elements of the interventions and expected outcomes. The evaluation team aimed to construct the TOC. However, given that the final report covering the last year of project implementation was not yet available and a limited number of stakeholders were reached through consultations, the evaluation team feels it does not have sufficient information to comprehensively construct the TOC. This represents one of the key limitations of the evaluation.

In the inception report the evaluation team mentioned few observations regarding the TOC which indicated a number of challenges in explaining the results chain:

- Certain assumptions especially those related to GEWE drivers in the country suggest that political will in implementing gender agenda is an essential condition in successful implementation of the programme. However, the highlighted observation from the UN Women CPE (Country Portfolio Evaluation) regarding the lack of understanding and knowledge of gender equality concepts by state institutions, based on traditional role perceptions of women and prioritization of family responsibilities, raises a significant challenge to the transformative potential of this assumption. The failure of criminalisation of DV legislation supports the argument that without a comprehensive understanding of gender equality and its transformative potential, efforts to promote gender equality might remain superficial or ineffective. Competing priorities and limited resources in the government's agenda also affected the level of commitment to gender equality initiatives. Some of the assumptions require further validation or adjustment (for example, related to Outcome 3.2)
- Inconsistency and unclarity of the inclusion of selected interventions in the programme. For instance, the women, peace, and security agenda within Outcome 1 is not well-integrated into the logical model and lacks a clear linkage with the specific objective of the Outcome. The activities outlined in this context lack a comprehensive approach that would contribute effectively to the reported outputs. Additionally, the expected enhanced participation of the population in the implementation of the gender policy was not adequately reflected in the proposed activities.
- The interventions, as was also learnings from the UN Country Portfolio evaluations, are not necessarily sufficiently gender transformative to reach the set outcomes and results. For instance, economic empowerment activities did not fully address women's limited access to financial services and assets. Equally, they did not consider the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work on women which overlook a critical barrier to women's full participation in the workforce and economic autonomy.
- Many interventions are listed under each of the objectives/themes, but the linkages between them are not fully established, thereby missing the potential for achieving long-term sustainable change. For example, the activity "Provide expert and technical support to the General Prosecutor's Office in the implementation of the "Kazakhstan without violence in the family"

initiative” was linked to the output “National legislation on prevention and response to Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) is advanced”; however, the activity which was focused on the systemic service provision to the DV survivors, appears to focus on the implementation of a specific initiative rather than directly influencing the advancement of comprehensive national legislation on EVAWG.

The project **targets socially vulnerable women**, including those in rural areas, victims of domestic violence, unemployed women, women in the informal sector of the economy, parents, children, men and boys.

**Table 1. Beneficiaries of the Umbrella project, by type, number, location and activity**

Type of beneficiaries	Number	Location	Activity
Men (fathers and husbands)	120	Almaty, Nur-Sultan, Shymkent, Aktobe, Karaganda and Aktau	Men Engage (Output 1.1.2)
Persons from the target audience	Over 284,053	Kazakhstan	Men Engage (Output 1.1.2)
CSO	4		Men Engage (Output 1.1.2)
Ministry of Labour and Social Protection	n/a		Enhanced awareness of women’s participation in unpaid work and needs of women entrepreneurs (SMEs) in the context of the COVID-19 emergency (Output 2.1.1) and causes and implications of women’s economic inactivity and their involvement in the informal economy, the current situation and prospects for the development of social entrepreneurship (Output 2.2.1)
The National Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy	5 secretaries	Aktau, Pavlodar, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Shymkent, Kokshetau (cluster workshops)	Enhanced institutional capacity and improved monitoring of implementation of Gender Policy (Output 1.1.1 and 1.1.3); Improved capacity in review of the national laws on the domestic violence prevention (Output 3.1.1)
the Statistics Committee			Improved monitoring of implementation of Gender Policy (Output 1.1.3); Capacity of efficient budget spending to develop women’s entrepreneurship in the country, incorporating the needs of socially vulnerable groups of women (Output 2.2.2) Training on the methodology of the 2022 VAWG study (Output 3.2.1)
Population «Samruk Kazyna Trust» representatives Parents of pupils	13,852,859 538 451 467	Kazakhstan	Improved understanding of gender stereotypes and social roles of women and men in society (Output 2.1.2); Raised their awareness about non-violent disciplining with the focus on strengthening parenting skills (Output 3.3.1)

Journalists, influencers, civil servants and representatives of CSOs	635 (610 women and 25 men) 39	Nur Sultan, Taldykorgan and Kokchetau  Almaty, Nur-Sultan, Shymkent, Kostanay, East Kazakhstan region, Almaty region, Turkestan, Aktau, Kyzylorda, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Temirtau, and Turkestan region	Strengthening parenting skills (Output 3.3.1)  Improved the skills of national partners in planning communication campaigns to prevent violence against children and improve parental skills (Output 3.3.1)
Rural women-entrepreneurs	50	Zhambyl and Karaganda	Strengthened their capacities and improved understanding of employment and business running (Output 2.2.3)
Businesswomen		Kazakhstan	Capacity building through development of e-catalogue "100 Ideas for Women's Entrepreneurship" (Output 2.2.3)
State bodies representatives			Work with perpetrators by adapting the module (Output 3.2.3)
MPs, representatives of ministries, secretaries and public co-chairs of regional commissions, state bodies and the quasi-public sector (Otbasy Bank, Damu Foundation), the Asian Development Bank, activists of women's organizations and research organizations	80		Raised awareness on measures and instruments taken against women's economic empowerment and planned projects for unification and harmonization (Output 1.1.3)
Key national stakeholders focusing on VAW			Improved system of monitoring and information on VAW (Output 3.2.4)
Social media influencers	23		Campaign of the online marathon about the positive parenting (Output 3.3.1)
Women [to be clarified]	87	17 regions of Kazakhstan	Increased their capacity in women's leadership and women's participation at the decision-making level (Output 1.1.3);
Representatives of political parties ("Nur-Otan", "Akzhol", the Communist Party of Kazakhstan), regional councils of business women of "Atameken" National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as NGOs			Increased awareness and strengthened potential for further active participation in political life and at the decision-making level (Output 1.1.3)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Information and Social Development, Ministry of Defense and its Peacekeeping Training	80		Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Kazakhstan (Output 1.1.4)



Center, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Prosecutor General's Office, Ministry of Emergency Situations			
Specialists of local self-government bodies, employees of the healthcare sector, psychosocial, police and judicial spheres, crisis centers and CSOs	258 (204 women and 54 men)	Nur-Sultan and Shymkent, Almaty, Mangystau and East Kazakhstan regions	Strengthened the capacity, with a special focus on the needs of people with disabilities on prevention and interdepartmental response to violence (Output 3.2.1)
Centers for Active Longevity and Support of the Family Institute	8	Almaty and Nur-Sultan, Karaganda and Almaty	
Media	32		Strengthened their capacity in promoting gender through their work (Output 2.1.2)

### Project partners

The project is implemented by four UN agencies (UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA) with UN Women CO Kazakhstan as the main implementing partner. The partnership is based on the agreements between UN Women and the agencies. The roles are based on the mandates, expertise of the agencies and areas of their interventions in the country according to UNPFD 2016-2020 framework.

Table 2: Roles and responsibilities of UN partners in the Umbrella project

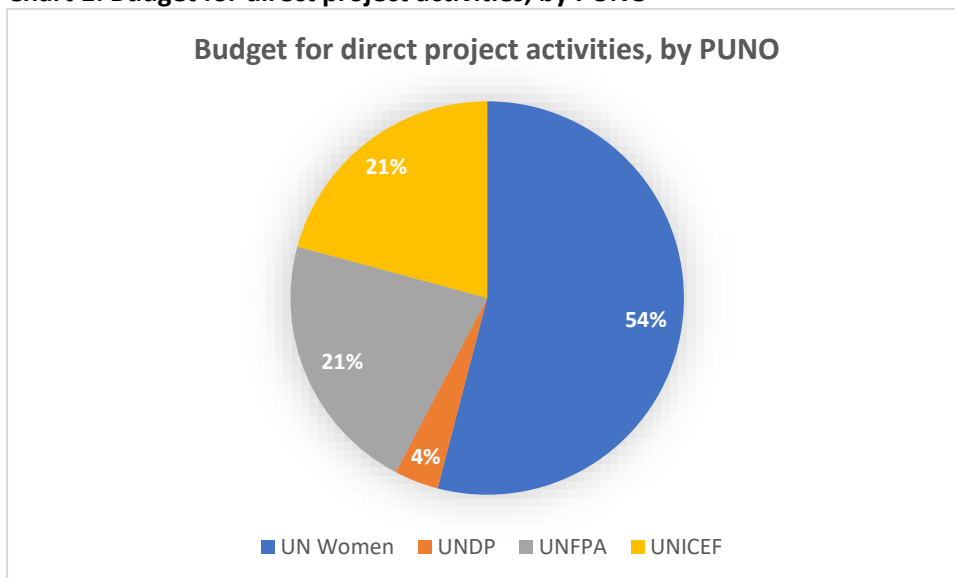
UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>key partner to deliver Outcome 1 (GEWE) focusing on strengthening the organizational capacity of the National Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy</li> </ul>
UNFPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>responsible for Outcome 3 (VAW), including enhancing multisectoral coordination, increasing the capacity of state bodies and CSOs to ensure comprehensive work on prevention and response to domestic violence; and men's engagement as active participants in addressing VAW</li> <li>implemented activities within Outcome 1 (GEWE) on raising awareness and boosting the participation of the society in the implementation of Family Policy</li> </ul>
UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is working on Outcome 3 (VAW) through increased public awareness of non-discrimination and strengthened positive practices for prevention and addressing violence against women and children in families.</li> <li>focuses on achieving favourable social norms, attitudes and behaviours to prevent domestic violence through the role of parents and teachers among school-aged children</li> </ul>
UN Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>direct implementation of the activities under Outcome 2 (WEE), which are aimed at providing transformational approaches to economic empowerment for socially vulnerable women, solving social problems related to unequal distribution of duties and participation in unpaid work and their impact on national programs for ensuring economic growth in the country</li> <li>Outcome 1 on enhancing the participation of society in the implementation of Gender Policy as well as capacity building of state stakeholders on monitoring, reporting and addressing VAW.</li> <li>serves as project coordinator, responsible for strategic guidance and , reporting to the Donor and monitoring during the implementation of the project through coordination, consolidation and compiling narrative and financial reports from UN agencies.</li> </ul>

**The Steering Committee (SC)** was established by UN Women, comprising representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the National Commission, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, and UNDP, and representatives of Civil Society Organizations. The main functions of the SC are oversight of the project's progress, targets/indicators, and risks, approval of annual work plans and provision of recommendations about changes to the project. As of August 2022, there were 4 meetings of the SC.

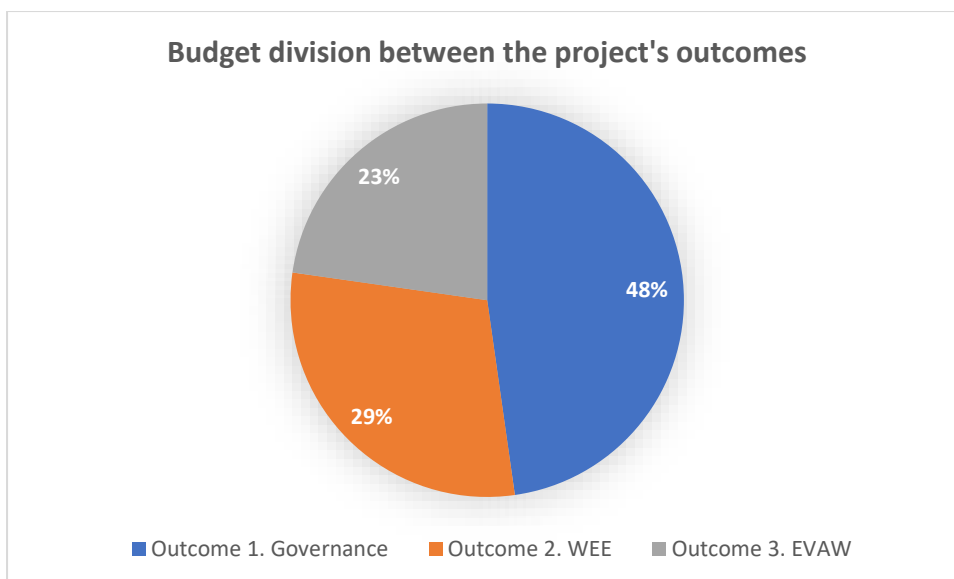
### Budget

More than half of the project budget dedicated for activities were under UN Women responsibility, while equal share of 21% were allocated for UNFPA and UNICEF. UNDP played a limited role with only 4% of allocated budget. During the first two years of the project's implementation 60% of the project's direct project costs was spent despite the outbreak of COVID-19 and delayed disbursement of funds. It was not possible to evaluate the budget implementation for the whole period of the project due to the absence of the financial reports for 2021 and 2022.

**Chart 1: Budget for direct project activities, by PUNO**



**Chart 2: Budget division between the project's outcomes**



## 2. EVALUATION DESIGN

### 2.1. Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

The evaluation report of a project serves the explicitly defined purposes of accountability, learning, and/or decision-making. With certain limitations, it uses the Results-Based Evaluation (RBM&E) approach, which is a systematic process that analyzes and evaluates program activities, outputs, and outcomes to measure and track program performance. Furthermore, the evaluation assessed the programmatic progress and performance of the above-described intervention from the perspective of the OCED/DAC evaluation criteria: *Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency, sustainability and gender equality and human rights*.

The evaluation is a final project 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.

**Specific objectives** of the evaluation, as defined in terms of reference (TOR), are:

1. Assess the Relevance and coherence of implementation strategy and approaches of the Umbrella Project at a national level and alignment with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment and national gender policies;
2. Assess the effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the project's results;
3. Analyze how human rights-based approach and gender equality principles are integrated into the project's implementation;
4. Assess the sustainability of the results and the interventions in advancing gender equality in the target group;
5. Assess how the intervention and its results relate and contribute to the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals;
6. Validate the project results in terms of achievements and/or weaknesses toward the outcome and outputs;
7. Assess the sustainability of the results achieved by the project;

8. Document lessons learned, best practices, success stories and challenges to inform future collaboration of UN Women Kazakhstan, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan and National Commission in addressing family and gender policy, women's economic empowerment and ending violence against women and girls;
9. Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices;
10. Provide actionable recommendations for future programmatic developments and maximize ownership by partners in the country covered by the project.

The **primary intended uses** of this evaluation are:

1. Accountability for the development effectiveness of the joint collaboration of the UN agencies in terms of contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment;
2. Learning and improved decision-making to support the development of the next Programme/project;
3. Capacity development and mobilisation of national stakeholders to advance gender equality and empowerment of women.

The **primary intended users** of this evaluation are:

- UN Women Kazakhstan Country Office, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Gender Team Group;
- Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, National Commission for Women and Family Affairs and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan and other national government institutions;
- Programme/project partners
- Target groups, their households and community members, programme/project partners
- Civil society representatives
- Donors and development partners

## 2.2. Scope of evaluation

The evaluation encompasses all planning, monitoring and implementation activities of the selected projects from the beginning of the project to July 2022. It aimed to evaluate all three outcomes and activities carried out by all four partners.

The evaluation scope is defined by the following:

- **Duration:** The evaluation covers the period of 2019-2022, and does not take into account activities carried out in the non-costs extension period of the project until May 2023. The fact that the annual report for 2022 activities has not been prepared and submitted yet due to the non-cost extension requested by UN Women (initially approved till 31 October 2022 and then extended to 31 May 2023), limited insights of the evaluation team into activities implemented in 2022 and first half of 2023, when the project implementation was accelerated. This limits the insights into the achievements reached in the last year of the project.
- **Geography:** The evaluation covered activities implemented in all four regions of Kazakhstan, Almaty, Astana, Shymkent and Karaganda, depending on the scope of activities carried out in each of the region. No field visits to regions were carried out, with presents one of the limitations of the evaluation.
- **Types of interventions:** The Umbrella project includes country-based interventions managed by UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA, including capacity building of stakeholders, awareness raising and advocacy, provision of technical expertise through studies and research, and coordination.
- **Thematic coverage:** The evaluation comprised interventions in all three areas, including i) gender equality and women's empowerment; ii) women's economic empowerment; and iii) ending

violence against women and has, given the evaluation limitations highlighted in the Limitations section, explored the activities and results achieved in all these three areas.

### 2.3. Assessment Criteria and Framework

The assessment of these criteria was carried out in line with the requirements of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations<sup>15</sup> recommending focusing on two dimensions: i) results-focused and ii) process-oriented. Therefore, throughout the evaluation, HR & GE was integrated into:

#### i. Results-focused (evaluation questions and related assessment framework):

- how the project interventions advance the rights of the target groups and particularly marginalized women (rural women, women with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, women entrepreneurs etc. – *the right holders*);
- how the project reinforced the capacity of state actors to fulfil their HR & GE obligations by implementing state gender policy; how the HR & GE accountability mechanism is promoted in the country in compliance with national and international HR & GE standards (participation of the society in monitoring and implementation of gender policy) – *the duty bearers*;
- how the project interventions challenged and/or changed the existing inequalities and discriminatory practices and power relations;

#### ii. Process-oriented:

- how the evaluation process is approached, i.e., to ensure adequate representation of both duty holders and right bearers in the evaluation process, ensure gender- and region-disaggregated data, etc.

The project evaluation also aimed to identify the extent to which the project integrated a Leave No One Behind (LNOB) approach, including in the area of disability, rural women, especially those with limited opportunities and LGBTQ rights, which was reflected in the evaluation questions under the HR and GE criteria.

The evaluation was guided using the evaluation framework. The TOR stipulated the evaluation criteria, which were adjusted following the desk review. The evaluation was guided by the following main questions based on OECD-DAC evaluation criteria:

Table 3: Evaluation Framework

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the project design match with the complexity of national structures, systems, and decision-making processes?</li> <li>• Are the programmatic strategies and interventions appropriate to address the identified needs of beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable groups (including women and men with disabilities)?</li> <li>• Is the project aligned and reflects Kazakhstan’s international obligations and commitments including national plan to achieve SDGs, CEDAW, Beijing Declaration?</li> <li>• Is the project aligned to and reflects Kazakhstan’s national development strategies in the area of gender equality, family and gender policy,</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group (2014). Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations. New York: UNEG

	women's empowerment, and ending violence against women and girls as well as reflects national and local priorities and commitments on GEWE/WEE and the EVAW?
<b>Gender Equality and Human Rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has gender equality and human rights-based analysis been carried out and findings integrated in the project design?</li> <li>• To what degree were adequate resources provided for integrating a human rights-based approach and gender equality in the interventions, including reaching the most marginalized?</li> <li>• To what extent have the capacities of relevant duty-bearers and rightsholders been strengthened?</li> <li>• To what extent is the project and its interventions gender transformative? To what extent has the project been catalytic in addressing some of the root causes of gender inequality as specified in Family and Gender Policy, WEE and EVAW?</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes?</li> <li>• Are the interventions implemented within the intended timeframe and budget? Are there mechanisms in place to ensure this?</li> <li>• To what extent is the project's implementation cost-effective and provides value for money?</li> </ul>
<b>Coherence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are the interventions achieving synergies with the work of the UN Country Team the project and other interventions jointly implemented by UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF?</li> <li>• To what extent is the project coherent and is achieving synergies with similar initiatives of other stakeholders?</li> <li>• What is UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF's comparative advantage in the Umbrella projects area of work compared to other UN entities, and key partners and stakeholders in Kazakhstan?</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the project achieved its expected outcomes and expected results?</li> <li>• What are the results achieved, including any unforeseen results, either positive or negative?</li> <li>• What are the good practices in project implementation?</li> <li>• What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results, including external and internal factors affecting project implementation (including COVID-19 and country specific context)?</li> <li>• How effectively project adapted and reacted to the changing situations, including the COVID-19 pandemic?</li> <li>• To what extent does the project have effective monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards results?</li> </ul>

<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent were relevant stakeholders and actors included in the project planning and implementation?</li> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Do national/local institutions demonstrate ownership, leadership commitment and technical capacity to continue to replicate some project activities?</li> <li>• To what extent has the project's exit strategy been well planned?</li> </ul>
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The sub-questions are presented in the evaluation matrix. . The **assessment grid with indicators** has been developed to ensure quality assurance of the evaluation. The evaluation matrix is included in [Annex 1](#) of this report.

#### 2.4. Data collection methods

The evaluation follows Results-Based Management and Evaluation (RBM&E) approach, which is a systematic process that analyzes and evaluates program activities, outputs, and outcomes to measure and track program performance. It predominately employs the qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches to account for the complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate. The evaluation uses quantitative approach in a very limited manner, namely only when assessing the achievements of specific quantitative outcome indicators.

The decisions related to the proposed methodology reflect:

- Findings from the first phase of the desk review, including project reports and past evaluation reports;
- The balance between the available timeframe, resources and access to key stakeholders.
- The constraints and limitations of the evaluation (online data Kazakhstan, gaps in information, no final beneficiaries included, no quantitative survey carried out following the consultations with ERG, see Limitation section for full overview).

In order to enlarge the evidence base to the maximum extent possible and enhance the validity of the findings, different data collection techniques were used. These include

##### **Desk review**

A desk review of the most relevant documents has been carried out. This includes a review of the following:

- Project agreement approved by the donor;
- The past project, country-level reviews and evaluations;
- Project monitoring and evaluation reports (activity reports, project narrative interim reports, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework, etc.);
- Outputs developed as part of the project, communication and knowledge products;
- General and other published and grey literature, including legal and policy frameworks, related to gender equality, economic empowerment and women’s rights in Kazakhstan.

The full list of reviewed documents is included in [Annex 2](#) of the evaluation report.

## Primary data collection

To ensure the triangulation of the information, primary data collection was carried out using **Key Informants Interviews (KIIs)**, a key method of primary data collection. KIIs are qualitative in-depth interviews with key stakeholders familiar with the project.

### 2.5 Sampling

The KIIs were carried out with the following group of stakeholders:

Table 4: Stakeholders consulted

Stakeholder group	Quantity	Men	Women
UN Agencies	8	1	7
Government Institutions	7	3	4
CSOs	4		4
Academia / Consulting groups	5		5
Representatives of media	1		1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>

During evaluation the evaluation team reached out to the organisation which was responsible for implementation of the project's component on WEE (Outcome 2) and directly dealt with the vulnerable groups, i.e. rural women etc. It's the long-standing stakeholder in the area of women's economic advancement and had relationships and trust within the vulnerable communities and therefore, had a deeper understanding of these groups, their needs which enriched the evaluation process and provided valuable insights.

The full list of consulted stakeholders is included in **Annex 3** of this evaluation report.

Initially, inception report included a survey as one of the potential data collection methods. However, in consultations with the ERG, the evaluators decided not to carry out a survey as no baseline data is available, and no baseline survey was carried out at the beginning project to allow for measuring the progress achieved. Consultation on the topic has been carried out with the ERG, including with the aim to map other opportunities for intervention-based or outcome-specific surveys. However, no such opportunities were identified, and ERG agreed to exclude the survey from the proposed methodology. However, apart from initial meeting, the ERG was not actively involved in the evaluation and has provided limited guidance and feedback to the evaluators.

All the primary data collection was carried out online, with no data collection visits to Kazakhstan carried out, which presents one of the limitations of the evaluation.

### 2.5. Limitations of the evaluation

As part of the inception phase, the evaluation team carried out a rapid evaluability assessment of the Umbrella Programme, which identified **medium to high evaluability constraints**, specifically related to the limited baseline data, quality of indicators, and synergies between the project components led by different UN agencies. Although mitigation strategies were put in place, the following evaluation limitations exist:

Table 5: Evaluation limitations

Gaps in the project MEAL system		Although the project has developed a MEL framework with key indicators, there was no consistent reporting on MEL indicators. The
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		<p>indicators included in the AWP are predominantly quantitative, e.g. the number of events conducted or a number of recommendations developed. This limited the ability of the evaluation to capture the qualitative change expected at the outcome level.</p> <p>To address the lack of ongoing monitoring data and reporting on outcomes, the evaluators aimed to reconstruct the monitoring data based on data provided in the annual narrative reports (excluding the final report for 2022), as well as reconstruct key mapped outcomes by using the adjusted outcome harvesting approach. Nevertheless, the quality of some interviews, including the time allocated and often somewhat formal approach to the discussion with representatives of the public institutions, did not fully allow for extensive outcome mapping, and, most importantly, sourcing sufficient information to create the necessary linkages to the project's achievements.</p>
Lack of information on project implementation in 2022		<p>The final project report, including activities implemented in 2022, was not available to the evaluation team. Although efforts were made to receive updates through KII, given the broad scope of activities and time constraints of consulted stakeholders, these could not be mapped comprehensively. This means that the evaluation has limited insights into 2022 and 2023 project achievements.</p>
The broad scope of interventions		<p>The funding under the Umbrella program covers a broad scope of thematic areas – ranging from WEE to GEWE, to ERAW in Kazakhstan – with interlinkages sometimes appearing to be missing. The broad scope of the range of activities limits the ability of the evaluation to provide an in-depth assessment of all the components of the project and required necessary prioritization.</p>
Remote data collection with no visits to Kazakhstan and limited engagement with final beneficiaries		<p>In initial planning of evaluation, which happened during the COVID-19, UN Women did not foresee evaluation visit to Kazakhstan to be carried out as part of the evaluation, including allocating sufficient resources, thus no visit to Kazakhstan was carried out by a national or international consultant, and all the data was collected remotely. This particularly impacted the KIIs with public institutions, as it often did not allow the creation of the necessary environment for open discussion around the project challenges and achievements.</p> <p>Equally, no KIIs and FGDs could be organized with the final beneficiaries of some of the interventions,</p>

		<p>which presents one of the key evaluation limitations. The later were reached out indirectly, through organisations working with them.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the evaluation team assesses that sufficient triangulation was done to carry out the evaluation and provide evaluation findings and recommendations.</p>
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## 2.6. Ethical approach

The evaluation was conducted in full compliance with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation and UNEG Ethical Code of Conduct. The evaluation was built on its impartial and systematic assessment of the project and involvement of stakeholders should not interfere with the impartiality of the evaluation. The evaluators had the final judgment on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation report, and the evaluators were protected from pressures to change information in the report.

The evaluators obtained informed consent to participate in the evaluation activities prior to engaging in data collection/interviews. The evaluation team members read the statement of intent of the evaluation and requested the individual to express their willingness to participate or not prior to initiating the discussion or interview in English and Kazakh. No recording of the interviews and discussions were done during data collection.

All data collected through this evaluation was subject to the UN Women Information Security Policy that set out the basis for UN Women in protecting the confidentiality, integrity and availability of its data to protect these assets against unauthorized usage, access, modification, destruction, disclosure, loss or transfer of data, whether accidental or intentional. Confidentiality of information obtained was ensured through coding (i.e., the actual names of participants were not included in the report, only the positions and institutions).

## 3. FINDINGS

### 3.1 RELEVANCE

**Finding 1: The project is broadly aligned with international commitments, including CEDAW Concluding Observations and the SDGs, as well as national priorities such as 'Kazakhstan 2050', '100 concrete steps', and the Concept on Family and Gender Policy until 2030, focusing on gender equality and women's empowerment.**

The project has broadly set activities and covers a range of the thematic areas of women's economic empowerment (WEE), elimination of gender-based violence (GBV), and strengthening the capacity of the national women machinery, which are all among the priorities as set in the national priorities and strategic programs "Kazakhstan 2050", the National Plan "100 concrete steps", and most importantly, the action plan of the Concept on Family and Gender Policy until 2030.

There is a clear alignment of the project objectives with the international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment in the areas of WEE and GBV and violence against women (VAW). The project largely responds to the Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Kazakhstan (2019) in the part of (i.) implementing a comprehensive strategy and conducting campaigns to raise public awareness about discriminatory stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in society and the family and promote positive portrayals of women as active participants in social, economic and political life (para 24), ii) repealing the list of prohibited occupations for women (para 38), iii) promoting entrepreneurship by women, expand their economic opportunities (para 42) and iv) strengthening access for rural women to entrepreneurship (para 44).

The project is also broadly aligned with the plan of nationalization of SDGs in Kazakhstan, and supports the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals: 1 "Poverty eradication", 3 "Good health and well-being", 5 "Gender equality", 8 "Decent work and economic growth", 10 "Reducing inequality", 16 "Peace, justice and strong institutes", 17 "Partnerships". It also, in a minor way and through only one output, responds to UN Security Council Resolution on Women's Peace and Security (WPS) (SCR 1325). The project is also closely aligned with the UN partner's Country Strategic plans and UNTC Framework.

Nevertheless, as elaborated more in detail in the effectiveness section, the selection of a long list of interventions with rather a small scope under a broad thematic area of WEE, GE, and GBV, contributes to a level of fragmentation of the project activities, limiting the strategic focus of the project, which are needed in order to achieve fairly complex and ambitiously set program outcomes.

**Finding 2: Although, some of the project interventions have gender transformative potential, the project shows limited evidence of transformative impact due to its fragmented, small-scale activities lacking the depth required to address root gender inequalities and challenge patriarchal norms.**

The fragmented nature of activities, lack of interlinkages among different interventions and their small-scale and pilot nature affected the ability of the project to provide the multilayered and comprehensive approach required to address some of the key challenges it aims to address. This has limited the project's transformational potential. The project design is also not effectively supported by the in-depth analysis of the root causes of inequalities, which would justify the selection of thematic priorities and, within this, priority interventions. The concern raised in the UN Women Kazakhstan country evaluation the way in which gender equality is conceptualized in the national Gender and Family Policy, also affected the selection of the projects' interventions, excluding those with higher gender-transformational potential. Additionally, the gaps in the monitoring, evaluation and learning

(MEL) system, which also adopts a predominately output-based approach oriented towards activities rather than measuring outcomes and impacts, do not allow the project to be fully evaluated against its transformative gender potential.

Nevertheless, this is not to say that the implemented individual interventions do not have gender-transformative potential. For example, in order to address the gender norms and support behavioural change among the general (and targeted population), a number of information products, online and offline trainings, and other behavioural change campaigns have been developed, particularly under Outcome 3 and Outcome 2. This includes UNICEF efforts to target parents, including men, on positive parenting and violence against girls and boys, or engaging men in preventing EVAW (UNFPA support for Men Engage and Unions of Fathers). A number of informational and communicational activities to increase understanding of the Gender and Family concept were developed (National Commission Website and media support, independent discussion platform on Instagram), which included working with journalists and NGOs to improve their messaging and campaigning around gender-related topics. Nevertheless, social norm change is a lengthy process that requires long-term investment to materialize transformative results and significant upscaling of some of the mapped initiatives to achieve changes at the national scale.

Interestingly, a number of consulted stakeholders highlighted efforts to adjust the messaging of information campaigns and products to the 'realities' of Kazakhstan, particularly in rural regions. For example, Guidelines for Men to be Responsible Husbands supported under the Men Engage concept were developed using fact-based and statistical information, as opposed to 'value-based information', interpretation of religious texts, and positive messaging to prevent any potential backlash. However, apart from counting the number of people reached, no extensive evaluation of the different interventions was conducted to assess the effectiveness and transformative potential of different approaches that were utilized, which could also support future learning.

Furthermore, other activities, such as strengthening the national gender machinery, have indirect potential to contribute to addressing the root causes of inequalities in the long term through their activities and action plans. However, continuous efforts are needed to effectively build the capacity of the Secretariat and, particularly, new Commissioners, including finding effective ways of reinforcing the transformative aspects of Gender and Family policy focusing on empowerment and elimination of stereotypes (as opposed to using it to promote traditional family values based on patriarchal concepts). Numerous studies, methodological materials and researches developed under the program also provide clarity on the situation in several GEWE-related areas, highlight challenges and provide recommendations for improvements. However, their effective usage of these products in the future will determine their gender transformative potential.

**Finding 3: Project strategies target beneficiaries effectively, but there is limited outreach to socially vulnerable women due to the implementation stage of the project.**

There is limited evidence of a direct participatory program design phase as well as the design of individual initiatives, including any extensive consultations carried out with project beneficiaries. However, the project-integrated LNOB and targets the most vulnerable most explicitly under the two following outcomes:

- under 'Outcome 2.1: Socially vulnerable women have improved income security, decent work, and economic autonomy', where the project implements interventions aiming to strengthen WEE targeting most socially vulnerable women, including rural and elderly women, which includes the creation of resource centres for women entrepreneurs, as well as production of several studies aiming to understand better their barriers in full participation in economic activities, including entrepreneurship initiatives.

- under Outcome 3 'Violence Against Women and Children (WAVC)', the establishment of the National Referral Mechanism and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)', which considers specific vulnerabilities for the violence of persons with disabilities and aims to address the barriers in their access to services.

The participation of final beneficiaries in actual design of Umbrella project was indirect. This has been partly justified by the fact that some interventions present continuation from previous activities (i.e., SOP for multidisciplinary response to GBV), partly because the design of activities was based on the existing studies in which consultations with socially vulnerable women groups were carried out, while partially, because the consultations were carried out indirectly, through the CSOs working in the field and, assessed as knowledgeable of the situation. Nevertheless, the creation of mechanisms for engagement and consultations with final beneficiaries might be considered in future project planning.

Generally, no direct incompatibility of the intervention with the priority/needs of the target beneficiaries was noted. Nevertheless, the final beneficiaries were not consulted during the final evaluation. Thus, their perspective on the project and the extent different project interventions address their needs could not be fully established. This presents one of the key gaps of the evaluation.

### 3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

**Finding 4: The project monitoring system does not allow to comprehensively assess the overall effectiveness and actual achievements beyond counting outputs. Nevertheless, through the project extensions, modification, and shifting priorities, the project appears to deliver all its planned outputs. No unexpected results were mapped.**

As more in depth explained in the methodology section, the inconsistency in TOC appears to reflect the overall approach of project design, which is predominantly activity-focus, composed of a list of fairly autonomous interventions of each agency and institution, linked together under broad 'umbrella outcomes' and a joint, post-festum developed TOC and MEL framework. Competing priorities and interests for limited funds, with the desire to address many of the different areas of the project, is reasonably contributing to the extensive list of various interventions. Examples of this is, for example, Outcome 2, which is, apart from WEE resource centres, Outcome 2, composed mainly of numerous studies, which uptake is yet to be seen. Some of the studies were added during the project implementation, lacking clear linkage with other activities or follow-ups (i.e., a study on occupational injury; on evaluation of longevity and family centres). The design of the project also appears to be impacted by the limited capacities of government institutions or priority afforded to results-based and human rights-based programming, which is at the core of UN mandates, coupled with sometimes different understanding and knowledge of gender concepts concept among project national counterparts.

This is also reflected in a project MEL system which, at the actual reporting level, also adopted a predominately output-based approach oriented towards activities, rather than being outcome and impact-focused, which would allow the project to be designed, monitored, and evaluated against its transformative gender potential. The project reporting procedure is not done against its TOC and MEL framework, while indicators set in the MEL system are of different qualities, relevance and ability to capture the impact and outcome level results; the output level results are often linked to mere activities (output level). For example, enhanced awareness and participation of the population in implementing the national gender policy (output 111) is measured by the number of events without providing reliable data on substantive social involvement. Equally, activities under the Men Engage intervention are measured by the number of men trained rather than by also measuring the outcomes

of such training. A number of indicators in the MEL system also lack effective baseline data, which would allow for measuring and comparing the achievements compared to the initial situation (results and outcome- level). Equally, the MEL system does not employ other methods of capturing the project's accomplishments, such as storytelling, which could provide insight into the achievements of the different interventions, particularly from the beneficiaries' perspective. Such a MEL system has less potential to prompt critical reflection, measure achieved efficiency and effectiveness, and improve learning and sustainability. Weakness in the MEL system also affected the ability of this evaluation to make a fully informed assessment of achievements under the Umbrella program.

At the same time, the project built up a good context analysis and background information for future projects in similar targeted areas by conducting several important studies on women's status in different areas, focusing on vulnerable groups and intersectional discrimination, with some of them pioneering in addressing different aspects of gender-based vulnerabilities (rural women, elderly, sexual harassment). Nevertheless, these will require effective follow-up and actual utilization.

**Finding 6: Although project interventions under Outcome 1 contributed to the National Commission's position, visibility, and outreach, there is less evidence of positive consequences of restructuring the Secretariat and local offices beyond improved clarity in the division of responsibilities between the staff members and the members of the Commission. Commission underfunding, strengthened capacity, lack of human resources, and limited reach across the regions still need to be addressed.**

Functional analysis of the Commission carried out by the UNDP (Output 1.1.1.) **highlighted several gaps and weaknesses of the National Commission** and provided recommendations for restructuring and increasing its (human) resources. Following the presentation of recommendations of the analysis, changes in the Commission structure were introduced, including introducing four deputy Commissioners, one responsible for WEE and another for the WPS agenda and prevention of domestic violence. The Commission's membership also changed as part of the restructuring. However, although the clarity in roles and responsibilities was highlighted as a key achievement of restructuring, stakeholders agreed that it is too early to fully assess and understand the effects of restructuring on the Commission's capacities, particularly as changes were not effectively supported by increased resources of the Commission.

Nevertheless, the project appears to strengthen the Commission's position, visibility and outreach, including through extensive information and communication support (media and public relations plans, website, establishing communication channels, information products, etc.) and improved engagement with relevant stakeholders, including with local executive bodies, through various conferences and consultations (i.e., the discussion and recommendations to the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Prevention of Domestic violence"). The numerous studies carried out as part of the project also contributed to improved insight into some of the GEWE areas, hopefully, to be utilized to support future programming of the Commission's work and priorities.

On the other hand, several persisting challenges were highlighted, including:

- Changes in membership resulted in attracting members with diverse interests, backgrounds and different levels of experiences and expertise on GEWE. This is, in one way, seen as an opportunity to expand the Commission's scope and approach; however, consulted stakeholders also pointed out that new members have different knowledge and perspective on GEWE, while understanding of GBV and WAVC was highlighted as somehow weak point of the current cohort. Different agencies, including UN Women, UNICEF, and UNFPA are (outside the Umbrella project) individually providing training to the members of the National Commission annually. At the same

time, this engagement has intensified in the wake of changes in the Commission's membership in 2021, aiming to address some of the capacity gaps.

- There are also continued discussions regarding the integration of children together with women and families within the Commission's work, with – particularly UNICEF – advocating for its separation, allowing to consider children more in line with international standards as rights holders in their individual rights.
- The Commission, particularly the Secretariat, remains under resources and underfinanced given its extensive mandate, particularly as the majority of the members of the Commission work voluntarily and expert support from their side differ, while the understaffed Secretariat carries out the majority of the work.
- Despite efforts to strengthen the Commission's presence at the local level, such as through study visits and consultations, which also aimed to improve the learning loop, the presence of the Secretariat at the local level remains weak and region-dependent, with limited ability of the National Commission to engage with and receive feedback from the local level structures and communities. This also impacts its ability to effectively raise awareness and promote gender equality and women empowerment at that level.

*They do a lot, but don't go through the regions and should be at the regional level and under the local akims and Government. Being set in Astana and doing a lot is not enough, and many problems we see are in the regions and especially in rural areas, and we should scale and go down to people in small villages and places and small towns where there are not aware that this Commission exists and work.*

*[representative of the NGO]*

*The National Commission is represented by a specialist of the social department of the local administration but with no budget. What can one person do to do gender mainstreaming in such a large region? All this work is done on a voluntary basis. We have 500,000 children – young region! Many vulnerable categories of the population; all social problems are highly concentrated here!*

*[representative of the NGO]*

- The institution has a consultative status under the President and is responsible, among others, for integrating gender in the work of other Ministers. Nevertheless, the recommendations of the Commissions are not legally binding, and their implementation varies among different Ministries. At the moment, the requirement to integrate gender into the work of ministries is reported only annually through oral meeting, lacking mechanisms to track the level of gender integration as well as the level of implementation of recommendations of the National Commission.

Lack of human resources and as a result, a limited pool of diverse expertise, poses challenges in addressing GEWE issues and providing adequate support to the ministries in integrating gender perspectives into their policies and plans. This shortage of human resources with the necessary expertise hinders the comprehensive integration of gender considerations into policy development processes and limits the capacity to design and implement targeted interventions that address the specific needs and rights of women and girls.

Additionally, a key effort to strengthen the Commission's ability to support improvements in the Kazakhstani society's understanding of the implementation of the gender policy (Output 1.1.3) was organized around improving information and communication channels and capacity of the National Commission, including creating its official website ([www.ultcom.kz](http://www.ultcom.kz)), other channels of communication, drafting a preliminary media plan and special PR Strategy for 2021 to increase public awareness of the current state measures to implement family and gender policy and protect women

from all types of violence. This effort resulted in an impressive number of materials, TV and published publications reported in the scope of one year (132 information materials, 27 television and radio programs, 105 publications). An independent platform to discuss issues related to family and gender policy was also established on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/shnrq.kz/>). The work of the Commission was complemented by virtual training courses, such as on "Eradication of gender stereotypes in the information environment for media representatives". Nevertheless, again, except for counting of the people reached through different channels (which is fairly low with 102,389 people reached in 2021 – tbc (43% men, 57% women), no evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of the communication support and communication approach were mapped to inform future learnings, while some stakeholders recognized that communication potential of the Commission, particularly through its social media, could be maximized.

**Finding 7: The creation of resource centres to support women's entrepreneurship in all regions is a key achievement under Outcome 2, with applications from women–potential entrepreneurs largely exceeding available budgets. Cases of women improving their business practices were mapped and more than 8,000 women cited receiving the services. The follow-up and active uptake of a number of studies developed under the Outcome 2 remains to be seen.**

A number of assessments and studies were carried out supporting Outcome 2, including (i.) a large-scale assessment of the effectiveness of state support measures provided within the framework of existing state programs (ii) a package on research activity around women's informal work (study of unpaid domestic work of women in Kazakhstan; research of gender characteristics of women's entrepreneurship; investigation of the causes and consequences of women's economic inactivity and their involvement in the informal economy of Kazakhstan) (iii.) study on occupational injuries and (iv) study on sexual harassment in the workplace and (v.) evaluation of services provided by the Centers for Active Longevity and Support of the Family Institute, just to name few. Nevertheless, their uptake and contribution to the project outcomes remain yet to be seen, with many lacking evidence of their effective use during the project period.

Nevertheless, the Umbrella program has been widely regarded as providing evidence for the needed advocacy to repeal the list of prohibited occupations for women (Output 2.2.1). The latter was repealed in October 2021 by law excluding restrictions on the employment of women from the Labor Code.<sup>16</sup> Umbrella project supported advocacy with a study on the topic and wide consultations and presentations, including the economic impact of such discrimination. The abolishing of such a list was also one of the CEDAW's recommendations. Nevertheless, consulted stakeholders highlighted that continuous follow-up is needed to define and remove the actual barriers women face when aiming to enter these professions and assess the effectiveness of lifting the ban. Additionally, plans are reportedly underway to use the study on harassment in the workplace to advocate for Kazakhstan's ratification of the 190 ILO Convention concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work. Other studies' influence and contributions to Outcome 2 implementation are yet to be seen.

One of the key achievements under Outcome 2 was the creation of resource centres to support women's entrepreneurship in all regions. Not initially foreseen in project design, the initiative was funded through the "Solidarity Fund for Kazakhstan in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic", in cooperation with Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNDP. The project has received an ongoing extension through the financial support secured by the Government. The centres are run in collaboration with Atameken, the largest business association in the country, acting as a primary implementor of nonfinancial support. The centre offers seven types of services to women,<sup>17</sup> and were,

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<sup>16</sup> With the Law "On Amendments and Additions to Some Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on social protection of certain categories of citizens",

<sup>17</sup> Information provided by the service provider.



according to the data provided by UN Women, in 2022, reaching 8,705 women (majority are rural) and received 26,386 units of targeted support and services. 1,208 women expanded their businesses, and 723 (9.5%) opened new entrepreneurship as a result of their application to the Centers. In addition, 183 additional jobs have been created for women in difficult life situations. Women were mostly interested in opening businesses in sewing, beauty services, the production of bakery and confectionery products, as well as in agriculture.<sup>18</sup> No direct conversations with women receiving service were held to gain their insights on the effectiveness of the centers and their impact on their improved income security and decent work.

Some examples of types of support and some of the achievements are presented below:

*One woman works at a sewing event in Karaganda; after a chat with her, we asked her if she could build a pattern, and now she is building a pattern for other seamstresses. For her, this is a big step forward.*

*We met with a woman, who produces various products on her site, such as tomatoes and other vegetables, and it turns out that she constantly supplied her relatives, but when she became a mentee, she was convinced that it was necessary to make canned food and began to sell it. From September 1, she has sold daily for 150,000 tenges. Before, she was just handing it out.*

[Representative of implementing agency]

Nevertheless, building this initiative did not come without challenges, with the following being mapped:

- Lack of funding to support the growing number of applications from potential women entrepreneurs (i.e., 500 applications were received per month in key urban centres, as opposed to the planned 70), indicating the need for stronger selection criteria of supported initiatives and securing additional finances. Nevertheless, the high demand shows the relevance of and interest in such support.
- Administrative challenges with delays in the disbursement of funds; changing donors and sources of funding also required adjusting to the reporting and financial requirements. Initial gaps in information support between beneficiaries (women entrepreneurs) and the Government, which initially hindered the effective implementation of programs at the local level; lack of support to cover events was aimed to be addressed by outsourcing the efforts through external tender, which was delayed.

The need for increased funding to respond to the demands, particularly in urban centres, an effective information management system to record a case of each woman, an automated system of accepting applications and setting effective feedback and monitoring mechanisms, including a mechanism to monitor women who receive support, were highlighted as some of the steps that can improve the effectiveness and functioning of the centres. The need to work with husbands and men to create a more supportive environment for women's entrepreneurship has also been flagged out. This has to go along with behavioural change campaigns promoting women's entrepreneurship, addressing gender norms, and working with men to change their perception of women in business. Integration of GBV consideration can also benefit from addressing some of the tensions that promoting WEE can create at the household level and maximize the potential of centres to support awareness raising around GBV and WAVC (i.e., providing an integrated approach of WEE and GBV).

**Finding 8: Under Outcome 3, efforts were implemented by three agencies closely with the National Commission, which covered attempts to improve the legislative framework, strengthened service response as well as activities aiming to change norms and practices through education and**

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<sup>18</sup> Data provided written by UN Women, 15.11.2023

behavioral change campaigns. Despite the amendments to the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence not being adopted (criminalization of DV), the research, advocacy, and coordination work to lobby this process contributed to speaking out about the problems and for civil society and initiative groups to continue putting pressure on the Government while complementing that with gender-transformative initiatives to address resistance behind the proposed changes. Nevertheless, the approach to GBV and WAVC remains fragmented and project-based, with some crucial initiatives lacking scaling up and needing political support. The actual impact of project interventions on survivors of violence (implementation of Outcome 3) is difficult to assess and lacks evidence.

The project, under Outcome 3, invested efforts in ending violence against women, with activities being implemented by three agencies, with support of the National Commission. These interventions cover attempts to improve legislative framework, service response, and change of norms and practices through education and behavioural change campaigns.

Efforts were invested in improving the normative framework in Kazakhstan, particularly amendments to the national legislation on domestic violence towards its criminalisation. However, this has not been translated into the actual enhancement of normative frameworks (Output 3.1.1). Nevertheless, a study and consultations around the new law provided some opportunities to increase engagement and understanding of stakeholders on this topic, while the guidelines for the development of draft laws on the prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls in Kazakhstan aimed to improve and inform further efforts in this field. As reported by stakeholders, engaging in public discussions and advocacy campaigns had a significant impact by instilling a renewed sense of societal intolerance towards GBV. Updating the current "Concept of Family and Gender in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030" did not result in the most pressing issues aimed to be addressed.

Furthermore, the project included the component to strengthen the response systems to GBV and WAVC, mainly through the project "Kazakhstan without domestic violence" (Output 3.2.1), piloted in five regions Nur-Sultan and Shymkent, Almaty, Mangystau, East Kazakhstan regions. Building on the past work of UNPFA in piloting multidisciplinary mechanisms for the prevention of domestic violence, which is disability sensitive, a regulatory legal act (Regulation) on intra- and interdepartmental (interdepartmental) cooperation on countering domestic violence (disability-sensitive) was designed by a team of national consultants (Output 3.2.1). Adoption of this document would present guidelines for standardized response across Kazakhstan.

However, no conclusion of the reach of the initiatives and their sustainability could be made, with consulted stakeholders indicating that legal acts supporting SOP were not yet adopted and that the pilot projects, after comprehensive trainings organized, are struggling, including due to shifting priorities after elections, to receive and secure the necessary support at the national and local level. Some of the piloted initiatives are being implemented through the Spotlight Initiative supported by the EU.

Efforts to improve the statistics on VAC and methods for the VAW survey carried out in 2022 also complemented the efforts in this field (Output 3.2.4). The basis for future changes and reforms has been set through a number of studies (analysis of the child protection system, guidance for drafting GBV laws, violence perception study with the potential to provide data for evidence-based decision making).

Additionally, under (Output 3.3.1.) extensive efforts were invested by UNICEF in the prevention of violence against children and positive parenting, ranging from analysis of the system for prevention

and response to violence,<sup>19</sup> KAP studies, capacity building, and guidance for specialists.<sup>20</sup> A number of resources and activities for parents were developed,<sup>21</sup> and off and online training and capacity buildings held, including 60 long 4-day online and offline sessions. The methodology of holding parent meetings was approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and conducted by trained regional CSOs and Youth health centres. An extensive behavioural change campaign complemented these efforts.

Although, stakeholders notice some improvements in the field of GBV and VAWC, as also indicated by the UNICEF KAP study (7% decrease in general public support for the use of corporal punishment at home; the proportion of parents/adults reporting the use of non-violent disciplinary measures increased by 3%), there is lack of evidence to state that Outcome 3 has been fully achieved, and that survivors of violence benefited from a strengthened legal and policy framework on prevention and combatting VAW and girls in Kazakhstan and its improved implementation.

At this moment, Kazakhstan's principle legislation on GBV remains unaligned with international standards, and different interpretations of traditional family values often fuel the implementation of the Gender and Family. The GBV/Outcome 3 component integrates several interventions to ensure effective change, ranging from legislative, capacity building, and behavioural change initiatives as well to strengthening direct service response. However, these interventions are scattered around different priorities, themes, approaches, implementing partners and regions and the concerns were raised over predominately project-based and pilot-based approach to addressing the VAWV.

The project-based nature of addressing VAWV can be also seen in high dependence of initiatives remain dependent on each Government's political will and priorities and the subsequent availability of the funds. This also affects their transformational approach and prevents building an effective, comprehensive prevention and response system for GBV and VAWC. The response to violence against children equally remains fragmented, with children – in line with overall concepts in Kazakhstan – being bundled under the family policies rather than being recognised as rights holders on their own, including when it comes to response to VAW.

A number of challenges in response to VAWC exist, including the reluctance of survivors to report the cases and limited focus on the work with perpetrators (which gap was also confirmed by KAP study). The prevention aspects, including addressing some of the root causes, ranging from persistent gender norms to addressing triggers, such as alcoholism and economic vulnerabilities, have been highlighted as needing further attention, thus requiring integration of GBV and VAWC in all sectors. Furthermore, initiatives remain in the form of pilots, lacking the near future prospect to be scaled up, including due to changed priorities at the local and national levels.

**Finding 9: The project produced a number of information and behaviour change materials, campaigns, and capacity-building events aiming to address different aspects of gender inequality, and adopted some new strategies for the Kazakh context, including engaging men in promoting GEWE. Nevertheless, the initiatives range in scale, scope, and reach, with no assessment to assess the transformative potential of different methods and inform future behavioural change campaigns in Kazakhstan available.**

Different approaches under the project were developed and tested out to increase understanding of gender and family policy and address some of the pertaining issues linked to gender inequality and gender norms.

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<sup>19</sup> Functional analysis of the system of prevention and response to violence against children."

<sup>20</sup> A step-by-step pocket guide was developed "How to support children who have experienced violence in the absence of special assistance services in your region

<sup>21</sup> Two brochures for parents, "Learning to be Good Parents for primary school children (7-12 years old)" and "Learning to be good parents for Teenagers 12-18 years old

Most notably, the project builds on the UNFPA work and partnership with the NGO "Union of Fathers" to raise awareness and participation of Kazakhstani men and boys in the implementation of Family policy in Kazakhstan, as well as promoting the concept of "Men Engage (Output 1.1.2). As part of the initiative, a sociological study was conducted on the level of men's involvement in family life, separation of responsibilities, and fatherhood in all regions of Kazakhstan, which findings - according to reports – informed the awareness raising and media material on the topics. The initiative strengthens the NGO "Union of Fathers" by supporting their Republican Forum of Fathers, opening a new branch, and producing a flagship document 'Guideline for Men on How to be responsible fathers and Husbands.'<sup>2223</sup> developed within the framework of the project, published in 100 copies and a series of 8 printed materials on "Men Engage". Apart from measuring the number of people involved, the initiative's impacts could not be assessed or measured, including the effectiveness of the approach. The Union of Fathers, which is mainly composed of and depends on volunteer member support, after the end of continue to use the developed materials in the schools they are providing informal information sessions in (approx. 100 schools), while the guideline developed will be reportedly used as the basis for the development of similar material at the Central Asian level (under Spotlight Initiative). Other forms of continuation of project initiatives could not be mapped.

Additionally, under (Output 3.3.1.) extensive efforts were invested by UNICEF in the prevention of violence against children and positive parenting, with their work also supporting extensive informational and behavioural change campaigns, which later also included Online and face-to-face training on effective communication campaigns on the topics, a special campaign "Month of Positive Education" to prevent violence against children, with extensive resources available on the special web page<sup>24</sup>—using different communication channels, such as WhatsApp, with—reportedly reaching 3,130,628 people (35% men, 65% women) (only in 2021). This was also still the era of Covid-19 when the majority of the activities were transferred online.

*First, we worked in social media – in Russian and Kazakh languages; we tried to use national visuals; the second direction was the work with fathers – created a friendly image of fathers. We had a viral video, "Become a hero for your family", with fathers from different social levels and celebrities. The main message is that in such a situation, there is a way to express yourself and become a hero. Many fathers supported us, and we did it on a distance basis from different parts of the country. Another video was to encourage men to help their wives in household activities. There was very little amount of information during the pandemic. Information was scarce at that period.*

[KIIs with Representative of NGO]

All of these initiatives, given their approach of working with men, can be supported by an effective system to track their effectiveness in changing the attitudes and practices, to enhance further learning in the country.

**Finding 5: The implementation of the Umbrella project has been affected by several external and internal factors, including COVID-19, coupled with the complexity of national structures, systems, and decision-making processes, including specifics of the budget cycle and pronged decision-making**

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<sup>22</sup> [UNFPA Kazakhstan / Guide for men "Guideline for men on how to be responsible fathers and husband."](#)

<sup>23</sup> Available at the link [UNFPA Kazakhstan / Guide for men "Guideline for men on how to be responsible father and husband"](#),

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/kazakhstan/позитивное-родительство>

**procedures. These were not effectively integrated into the project design, with limited prior proper assessment of the complexity and anticipated risks and mitigation strategies.**

**Several external and internal factors**, some more in detail explained under the efficiency sections, impacted the effective delivery of the project and created delays in project implementation. Most notably, the project was implemented **amid the Covid-19 pandemic**, which – with its related lockdowns and required shifting of priorities and resources of the Government institutions to its effective response - presented an additional burden on highly resource-constrained national institutions, particularly of MLSP. Covid-19 abruptly operational work with government agencies, which caused a delay in the agreement and approval of documents. The burden placed on the institutions by Covid-19 thus exacerbated existing challenges in the operations of public institutions in Kazakhstan (see more under efficiency). Some of these external factors include:

- Funding modality and complex budget cycles led to late disbursement of funds, with, for example, the 3<sup>rd</sup> tranche from the donor being received by UN Women only in August 2021;
- Long processes of signing project work plans, with the project plan for 2021 being signed only in May 2021 and revised again in October 2021, effectively contributing to less than seven month implementation period. Given the nature of the procurement system, the implementation period for some of the service providers was, according to consulted stakeholders' testimonies, limited to four months or less for activities that were initially planned to be implemented in a period of ten or more months.
- Capacity constraints of state authorities, which were juggling several priorities and operating with constrained resources also due to Covid-19, contributed to long processes of approval of deliverables, sometimes requiring changes in the last stage of product design. Sometimes conflicting approaches and understanding of GEWE and the usage of languages and related negotiations added to the delays.
- Frequent staff changes within national institutions and UN Women, including the project coordinator position, also partly affected the management and overall implementation of the project. This also included changes following elections of some of the key positions, leading to shifting some priorities, particularly noted in the GBV and WAVC interventions.
- Initially, the project implementation was also affected by the long processes of signing the inter-agency agreements among some of the agencies, including due to different administrative procedures and requirements.

All these factors impacted the implementation of the projects and caused delays, sometimes resulting in changes in interventions and required extensions of deadlines.

### **3.4 EFFICIENCY**

**Finding 10: The project efficiency was affected by the prevailing constraints and limitation of funding modality, characterized by the complex budgetary processes, decision-making structure and human resource constraints, leading to late disbursement of funds, prolonged decision-making processes and staff turnover. Nevertheless, efforts were made to mitigate the situation and deliver agreed deliverables, including through project extension.**

The project has complex structures, which involve a number of stakeholders and associated processes that are not always aligned and support each other. In this regard, project efficiency has been affected by several factors, many of which are part of existing institutional structures and processes that are beyond the influence of implementing partners. Although extensive efforts were placed in ensuring the delivery of agreed work plans, the following factors affected the efficiency of project implementation, including the quality of the delivered outputs:

- **Complex budgetary processes, resulting in delays with disbursements of funds from the donor to the UN Women office and to project partners and other sub-contractors.** The project was funded by the Government of Kazakhstan/Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population (MLSP/Ministry of Labour) and, as such, underwent complex and burdensome national budgetary processes,<sup>25</sup> which resulted in continued late disbursement of funds for the implementation of the project. This shortened the project implementing period, created pressure on implementing partners and led to sometimes rushed results or postponement of the deliverables to the following year. Although these challenges are symptomatic when finances come from public funds, no risk and mitigation strategy to foresee such challenges at the design stage was carried out. To address the challenging situation, implementing partners adopted different strategies, including ‘temporarily borrowing’ money from the other projects or core funding’ (resulting in a disciplinary warning for some agencies), expediting the implementation of the activities in the scope of a limited period left, or delaying the actions into the following year. The key strategies to address these challenges and ensure that the project delivered all its agreed deliverables were transferring activities into the next period changing the activities and extending the project implementation period. The delays also affected the effectiveness of the procurement processes and partners' cooperation and relationship with external stakeholders, including contracted institutions and individuals providing numerous services under the Umbrella project. Smaller service providers reported being more negatively affected by the delays in payment.
- **Prolonged decision-making processes, characterized by the fluctuation of the priorities, including due to Covid-19, staff changes, and related shifting priorities.** The modality set by the project required all the project deliverables to be produced with the final approval of the relevant government institutions. Nevertheless, the approval and decision-making processes took prolonged time across all outcomes and sometimes resulted in last-minute changes for deliverables already at the design and publishing stage. Already stretched human resources of public institutions, including key actors in implementation of Umbrella project, were – during the project implementation – additionally burdened by the COVID-19 response. Shifting priorities of ministries, voluntary nature of work of some of the actors (members of the National Commission) and, sometimes opposite understanding and approach to gender equality, were also some of the reasons quoted as fueling delays.
- **Different financial management and reporting procedures of UN partners,** who were all using different administrative procedures, put additional pressure and created an additional reporting workload, including required working through different budget codes. This created a situation in which reports were collected quarterly carried out in a quarterly manner, then translated into the UN Women results-based management system and further prepared for donor reporting. Nevertheless, this situation is reported to be soon resolved as all the UN agencies are moving to a unified financial system.

The project implementation has also been affected by the staff turnover in public institutions, requiring the reintroduction of the project, leading to a loss of institutional memory and different levels of understanding of grant procedures, among others. Changes at the local level, with new administration following the election and reorientation of the priorities, also, for example, affected the implementation of individual initiatives, such as Kazakhstan without violence projects.

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<sup>25</sup> This includes the complex process of aligning the budget and receiving the approval of a number of ministries, adjusting it to national economic plans and strategy, strict financial checks and management procedures on all the public expenses by the Ministry of Finance (resulting in a very tight grant with limited flexibilities), the requirement of very detailed budget and supporting documents and extensive coordination between the ministries responsible for finances lead to very late budget approval and allocation of funds for project activities.

Staff changes also affected the UN Women level and project implementation. Throughout its lifespan, the project was managed by three project managers, including by program specialist as interim manager. For a period of time, UN Women was without UN Women Country Office Representatives, which, as raised by some consulted stakeholders, might limit the UN Women's strategic influence regarding some of the project implementation challenges, including prolonged decision-making processes. Nevertheless, as reported by the UN Women, since the appointment of the new country representative, the strategic engagement with the Government has been improved and significantly strengthened.

In terms of management, the Umbrella project presented the first large-scale project directly managed by UN Women in cooperation and coordination with several national-level stakeholders and UN agencies. As such, it presents an important learning project for a fairly small UN Women national team operating in a complex political structure with fluctuating political interests, frequent staff changes, and particularly complex budgetary processes. This impacted the project management processes.

Although recognizing that UN Women was implementing the project in a complex environment affected by several external factors, partners highlighted the different quality of the management through the project implementation period and indicated that there is room for improvement in the management of projects of such scale, including by (i.) setting clear reporting processes, expectations, and templates at the beginning of the project; (ii.) ensure effective and timely communication of reasons behind some of the institutional challenges in project implementation, particularly funds disbursement, and communication of the UN Women efforts to address this challenges (iii.) strengthened approach to equal partnership, rather than 'administrator' versus 'project implementor approach'. The project implementation towards the end of the project has been assessed by a number of stakeholders as improved.

**Finding 11: Procuring external service through national procurement systems was a predominant mode of project implementation, with preference given to national consultants. Nevertheless, the complexity behind institutional funding often resulted in a shortened implementation period. Opinions on the expertise and quality of some of the selected consultants differ.**

The procurement of services from external partners (NGOs, research institutions) and individual consultants was a predominant working approach of the project, with all the partners working with a number of institutions, sometimes providing one-time and sometimes long-term support for the project. Although providing a level of transparency, addressing potential corruption, and offering the opportunity to select an offer with the best 'value', such as an approach, is not without challenges, including particularly delays in selections due to late disbursement of funds and, sometimes due to lack of suitable service providers meeting requirements (i.e., tender for an information package to improve access to information and services for women entrepreneurs).

*We participated in the contest to provide these services in November 2020 when we filled in the application. In March 2021, we got the message that we were selected for this work. The work we wanted to do and presented in this application took about 10 months after applying in November 2020. In April next year, the contract was signed in June and July, and we were supposed to be done, thus carrying out an activity requiring 10 months only in 3 and 4 months.*

*[Respondent from the contracted service providers]*

Such an approach also creates a situation in which the engagement of the service providers ends following the conclusion of the contract, which might affect the sustainability and follow-up on the individual output.

Additionally, at the request of the funder, the emphasis of the project was to utilize national expertise in development of a number of project outputs. This contributed to strengthening the national capacities and utilizing locally available knowledge while providing the project implementation with the needed deep understanding of the context. Nevertheless, concerns were raised that, given the specifics of the project, not all needed expertise are to be found nationally, doubting the quality and expertise of some of the selected national consultants and service providers. Examples were also found of representatives of public institutions, such as the National Commission of Women, carrying out the consultancy work under the project.

### 3.5 COHERENCE AND COOPERATION

**Finding 12: The program contributed to reducing the overlapping of UN agency programs and improved visibility of each strategic area. However, UN partners continued to implement initiatives in relatively autonomous ways while reporting them under the broad ‘umbrella’ of each of the Outcomes. The potential offered by the Umbrella project to strengthen synergies among UN agencies and cooperation at the activity and intervention levels has not been fully implemented.**

The Umbrella project presented the first large-scale project directly managed by the UN Women country office that involves and coordinates a number of national-level stakeholders and UN agencies. By bringing together key UN agencies working on different aspects of GEWE, one of the key ideas behind the project was to facilitate improved coordination and synergies, and prevent overlapping, particularly in light of several agencies having a similar approach to some of the thematic areas, particularly GBV And VAWC. Nevertheless, although the project contributed to the prevention of overlapping, the cooperation between implementing UN agencies was most often characterized by formal interactions in the form of joint midterm meetings, participation in the project management groups, and reporting to the donor. However, it lacked creating synergies at the level of activities, with activities of each agency being implemented in rather autonomous ways. Although certain efforts were made in terms of sharing outputs, sharing consultants’ details, and to the extent joining activities around amendments to domestic violence legislation, the awareness of each other’s activities and evidence of actual participation in joint interventions remain limited. The potential for more synergies and actual joint working, including a collaborative approach to some of the knowledge products and interventions, thus remains unfulfilled. From September 2022, UN Women is implementing another 3-years project founded by the Ministry of Information and Social Development (MISD/the Ministry of Information), which is implemented in cooperation with UNICEF and UNPFA. No other joint UN project of national institutions and four UN agencies participating in the Umbrella project is foreseen in the near future.

There was also a very different level of financial participation of agencies in the Umbrella project, with UN Women receiving the more significant share of almost 2 million US worth project, with the initial division of funds being - UN Women 67%, UNFPA 17%, UNICEF 13% and UNDP 3%. Lesser engagement of some of the partners might also influence the ownership over the project. The fact that UN agencies compete for the same bundle of national funds is also not creating a conducive environment for UN joint programming.

Apart from challenges in project management, more in detail described in the efficiency section, the coordination of the UN partners was also affected by administrative challenges, particularly challenges related to different administrative systems and reporting procedures used by UN agencies. The latter will be addressed with the planned introduction of the joint UN administrative systems in 2023.



Individually, various program interventions contributed and were largely aligned with UN agencies' strategic priorities and country program strategies. The Umbrella project also has a strong connection with the UN Women Strategic Note 2016 – 2020 in the part of Outcome Area 1: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Outcome Area 2: Women have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy; and Outcome Area 3: All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence. The roles among the agencies are largely divided based on the mandates, expertise of the agencies, and areas of their interventions in the country according to UNPFD 2016-2020 framework. In this regard, the project also appears to cover the interventions in which each agency has its comparative advantage and interests. At the same time, as mentioned above, the project contributed to reducing the potential overlaps among the UN agencies.

However, with only a few joint initiatives among UN agencies in the field of GEWE planned in the future GEWE, the full mandate of the Kazakhstan Country Office regarding the coordination of GEWE across the United Nations system appears not to be yet fully implemented, and additional efforts are needed to ensure effective joint programming among the agencies. While coordination and engagement with UN resident coordinators was reportedly improved, the contribution of the project to enhancing the status of UN Women, as GEWE coordinator, within other mechanisms, such as gender equality within the UNCT and Gender Thematic Group (to ensure operational and technical coordination of gender equality and empowerment of women efforts within the UNCT), could not be established, as such assessment was going beyond the scope of the project.

**Finding 13: The project contributed to improved and strengthened relationships (formal and informal) of all the UN partners with the National Commission on Women. Most notably, the project has enhanced the role of UN Women in its technical expertise in various areas of GEWE among relevant Government institutions.**

Despite numerous institutional limitations, the national gender machinery recognized efforts and improvement of the relationship with UN partners and expressed gratitude for the support offered. That the project built stronger relationships with the Commission was also recognized by UN agencies, despite often challenging patterns of working. The project has also been widely acknowledged as contributing to the improved position of the UN Women as technical experts on the issues related to GEWE and strengthened its working relationship with the key Government ministries and institutions, including the Prime Minister's Office. The project was also regarded as improving communication channels and has particularly strengthened informal communication channels among key personnel, which supported faster consultations and decision-making processes (as opposed to fairly long and formal official engagement processes).

On the other hand, the project has foreseen the inclusion of CSOs predominately as service providers and project implementers recruited through procurement and tender opportunities. They have also participated in selected consultations. Although each agency and institution has other mechanisms of engagement with CSOs, their broader strategic engagement in the Umbrella project might be beneficial to mobilize their expertise and constituency, particularly around key legislative changes the project aimed to achieve.

### **3.6 SUSTAINABILITY**

**Finding 14: The project's sustainability strategy or exit plan was not developed. A level of financial sustainability of the project interventions has been achieved through active efforts to develop new projects funded by the national agencies, integration of project element in UN**

**agencies' Country Strategy Plans, upscaling of the existing networks (Men Engage) or securing funding for initiatives, such as Women Entrepreneurial Centers, by the Ministry of Economy.**

The project has not developed an overall project sustainability strategy or exit plan, and there was limited evidence that individual initiatives/projects supported through the program would have such strategies developed, which leaves the continuation of the project activities open to existing ad-hoc funding and other opportunities.

*I think there was not much dialogue on the sustainability of the programs, and they should be integrated from the start.*

[Representative of the UN agency]

No new project of scale and size, including in terms of partnership among UN agencies in the field of GEWE, could be mapped, with limited evidence that the UN-joint approach to gender, for which the project was recognized, will continue as such. Nevertheless, extensive fundraising efforts and negotiations with national institutions are on the way by all agencies, particularly UN Women, to continue some of the initiatives and work done under Umbrella, including (tbc):

- (i.) a new project implemented d by UN Women and UNFPA, with the support of the Ministry of Information, was secured, which will continue to support the implementation of Family and Gender Policy, including – according to consulted stakeholders - some interventions of the Umbrella project; the project also places additional efforts on gender and awareness raising and education, including addressing the gender norms. Nevertheless, as mentioned, the project does not replicate the same partnership across the UN agencies.
- (ii.) Discussions are ongoing with the MLSP to continue the work on sexual harassment in the workplace, including supporting advocacy efforts and technical support to ratify the International Labour Convention (ILO) Convention No. 190 on the topic.
- (iii.) Negotiations are ongoing with the Ministry the Defense to support the implementation of the WPS National Action Plan on UNSC Resolution 1325 (as part of the women, peace, and security agenda);
- (iv.) Discussions are also ongoing with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support the regional GBV Alliance under the Spotlight Initiative.

Although details of supported projects were unavailable and no new 'Umbrella Project 2' appears to be funded through the MLSP, continuous funding shows some level of ownership and commitment on the side of some ministries. Additionally, some form of financial continuation of specific initiatives was mapped, including:

- Although lacking funds needed to cover all applications received, the women's entrepreneurial centres secured funding from the Ministry of Economy for its continuation; there appear also to be increased engagement and interest in supporting the centre from the private sector, including by VISA and Coca Cola, while other organizations, such as IOM expressed interest to support the migrant women and FAO their constituency of rural women through the centres.<sup>26</sup> The exact extent of this could not be confirmed.
- The concept of Men Engage continues to be promoted under the regional Spotlight Initiative; however, the exact engagement and support of the Union of Fathers to continue to carry out awareness-raising sessions outside of their school program could not be mapped. The materials developed are used in their existing sessions with the school. Nevertheless, organization of the latter are based on the volunteer engagement of their members and have limited scope and reach.

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<sup>26</sup> KII with a representative of Atkemen.

- Less clarity was obtained on the continuation of the interventions under Kazakhstan without violence pilots piloted in five regions. Nevertheless, the existing evidence indicates that due to a change of key personnel, the project has been discontinued and is, in a limited manner, implemented in some areas through the Spotlight Initiative. The legislative to systemize SOP on disability-sensitive multidisciplinary response to GBV, including due to changing priorities at the government level, was not yet adopted and appears not to be a priority of the Government at the moment. This creates a blow to the sustainability of the Umbrella project.

Although efforts to secure the continuation of the funding are positive, these efforts also reveal the continuous dependency of the UN Women on government funding, leaving its programming successes more susceptible to priorities set by national institutions, which - as also noted through Umbrella - remains vulnerable to political influences and shifts in priorities. The high dependency on national funding of all UN agencies might limit also their negotiation powers in setting the agenda based on evidence-based evidence and human rights-based programming. Such concerns over the predominate funding modalities of the UN Women were also raised in the UN Women Country Portfolio evaluation and are currently also being addressed by the UN Women by placing efforts into diversification of funding through engagement with the private sector and seeking funding opportunities through regional initiatives. Nevertheless, the diversity of funding remains of issue, including due to the upper middle status of the country and limited resources are available at the country level to address Kazakhstan specifics, which also limits the financial sustainability of some of the Umbrella interventions.

Additionally, as some of the project initiatives were also part of the UN agencies Country Strategies,<sup>27</sup> there is an expectation that some of them will continue to be implemented (i.e., according to consultations, this includes UNICEF behavioral changes and positive parenting programs with more orientation towards online safety of children, UNFPA Men Engage Concept and support for WEE components of the UN Women). Nevertheless, as most of the UN agency's Strategic Plans ended in 2021, this could not be fully confirmed.

**Finding 15: Although with mixed results and initiative-dependent, the long-term positive impact of interventions can be observed through efforts to strengthen partnership and enhance the capacities of State counterparts as duty bearers, certain successes in improving the legislative framework, and a number of outputs developed, such as studied and capacity building initiatives, which have potential to be replicated and re-used in future programs. However, their actual uptake still needs to be confirmed and seen.**

Efforts to strengthen the national gender machinery, particularly the National Commission were noted, and through that, achieve transfer of capacity and ensure the sustainability of the initiatives. The project, in this regard, offered the national gender machinery various forms of technical and other support, including (i.) analysis leading to the Commission's restructuring, including improving the clarity of roles and responsibilities (ii.) improvement of communication and engagement with general and targeted stakeholders, through extensive media support and support for various form of consultations, (iii.) several studies on different aspects of Gender and Family policy developed can support informing the Commission's work plans and priority settings (iv.) improved and strengthened cooperation with UN agencies, particularly UN Women offers new opportunities for cooperation and joint work, among others. These achievements contribute to the sustainability of the Umbrella project. Nevertheless, the full impact of the restructuring of the Commission is yet to be seen. At the same time, currently, Commission remains under-resourced and with limited presence and reach at the

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<sup>27</sup> UN Women Global Strategic Plan for 2018-2021, "UNFPA Strategic Plan for 2018-2021", "UNICEF Strategic Plan for 2018-2021", "UNDP Strategic Plan for 2018-2021" and compliance with the "UN Women Strategic Note in Kazakhstan for 2016-2020 and 2022-2025.

local level, which are two key aspects needed for its effective work and delivery of the results. Changing its membership in 2021 brought members with diverse understandings and levels of expertise in GEEW, requiring renewed capacity-building efforts.

In terms of other institutions, the efforts to strengthen the national statistical system, mainly through the Bureau of National Statistics under two project Outcomes, were included in the project. This includes strengthening the methodology for piloting the survey on violence against women, reporting on VAC indicators and improving available data on employment/self-employment and informal work and inactivity of women. However, not all the surveys and studies carried out under Umbrella were incorporated and/or implemented in cooperation with the Statistical Bureau, which might limit their scope and usability, as Bureau has an important role in preparing data for evidence-based decision-making and programming at the state level. Furthermore, Bureau is severely human resources restrained, compared to the tasks at hand, which might affect its ability to fully utilize and, more importantly, disseminate available data to influence evidence-based policy-making and programming priorities at the national level. A more coordinated approach of UN agencies to supporting the Statistical Bureau, including through a common platform, might reduce overburdening of the Bureau.

Additionally, other stakeholders on all levels were reached through **several offline and online capacity-building initiatives** (positive parenting courses, training on effective campaigning in WAVC, guidance books for specialists working in VAC, virtual training for journalists on gender equality and VAC, etc.). Several capacity-building activities for different stakeholders were also carried out as part of the project *Kazakhstan without violence* on various topics of multi-stakeholder response to the GBV, with, for example, a curriculum developed on SOP on multidisciplinary response to GBV, which was reportedly also integrated into the training and guidelines for Police staff.

Overall, the sustainability of the capacity-building efforts was partly affected by frequent changes of staff in public administration, including due to elections, political appointments, or general rotation, which also exposed a predominately project-based and individually-pushed, rather system-based approach to GEWE and GBV in Kazakhstan. This has important implications for the overall sustainability of efforts.

A great deal of effort was invested in the project to improve the legal and regulatory framework, mainly through supporting amendments of the legislation on domestic violence to be in line with international standards and proposing a legal act institutionalizing SOP on GBV; none of them have been successfully adopted. However, the discussions around, and the documents developed to guide the drafting of the amendments and rejections of the domestic violence legal framework, are assessed as fulling discussion and raising awareness. However, there have also been some successes, such as the abolishment of the restrictions on the employment of women from the Labor Code.<sup>28</sup> However, the latter requires follow-up work, including assessing and addressing the barriers to women's actual participation in these occupations to ensure the effective implementation of these changes and their impact on women on the ground.

One element of WPS was included in the project, namely online training seminars on the ZOOM platform on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for peacekeeping forces and state law enforcement officials, which – as reported – culminated in the adoption of the Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolutions 1325. Nevertheless, given the narrow scope of the activities under the WPS agenda in the project, the evidence of the actual crucial contribution of Umbrella to these could not be fully mapped, including as there is no full understanding of the other initiatives carried out in this field that might be more instrumental in achieving such change.

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<sup>28</sup> With the Law "On Amendments and Additions to Some Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on social protection of certain Categories of citizens",

Additionally, different products and outcomes were developed through Umbrella, which – depending on their future uptake – provides the potential to achieve sustainability of the project, including:

- **Several studies have been initiated** and produced across all three outcomes, such as functional analysis of the National Commission of Women (Outcome 1); studies of women’s unpaid domestic work, causes and effects of women’s economic inactivity and their involvement in the informal economy, gender aspects in entrepreneurship, identification of barriers at institutional and legislative levels for the development of women’s entrepreneurship, concrete policy instruments to promote the employment of rural women, including in entrepreneurship, sexual harassment on the workplace, occupational injury, etc. (Outcome 2) and draft concept law on prevention and response to domestic violence (outcome 3). These present a good baseline for future program developments in different fields. However, for several studies, particularly under Outcome 2, there was limited evidence of follow-up and their active uptake by the relevant Ministries (i., evaluation of Centers for Active Longevity and Support of the Family Institute; Study of gender aspects of occupational injuries in the Republic of Kazakhstan, among few); thus the sustainability of such initiatives is yet to be fully assessed.
- **A range of media products across all three Outcomes was developed, including three portals (the National Commission official website ([www.ultcom.kz](http://www.ultcom.kz)), the UNICEF resource page on positive parenting, and the independent platform on gender and family issues on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/shnrq.kz/>)).** These continue to be utilized and updated by relevant partners and informational support is provided to National Commission under the Ministry of Information funded 3-year project. This also offers a potential to 'reuse' some of the developed materials.

## 4. LESSONS LEARNED

1. Importance of investing sufficient efforts in building capacities of all counterparts on the results-based management and human rights-programming, monitoring and evaluation to ensure

effective project design, which is not supported by a solid theory of change, and accompanied by a results-based framework with measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators.

2. Fragmentation of initiatives and listing too many different interventions under one outcome, without ensuring its complementarity and linkages through well-developed TOC, limits the project's ability to achieve long-term and gender-transformative changes needed in the field of GEWE.
3. The development of clear reporting procedures, accompanied by reporting templates that also ask for changes on outcome and impact level and collects impact/change story, by being adequately supported through capacity building opportunities (i.e. webinars) to clarify reporting obligations, can ease the reporting procedures and reduces the pressure on partners. Such an approach also requires allocating sufficient resources for project monitoring and reporting.
4. The extensive risk and mitigation strategies are crucial to foresee and mitigate the challenges that can impact project implementation due to complex structures and processes, including budgetary processes, in which public institutions in Kazakhstan operate. Having such an understanding can support development of solid project design and allow the project to adjust its strategies and timelines to – to the extent possible – mitigate such barriers.
5. A careful balance is needed to ensure the strategic focus of each project, with open dialogue with donors to ensure that shifting gender priorities do not significantly impact the gender-transformative potential of the projects and the achievements of the goals.
6. A realistic reflection of the capacities of the current GEWE expert/consultants' pools in Kazakhstan, including effective and impartial evaluation processes following consultancies, can help to source the most qualified consultants and prevent political and value-based influences on selecting experts.
7. Given the multisectoral nature of the problem, any VAWC program requires cooperation from several institutions, including the Ministry of Health and Education. The integration and consultations of all relevant stakeholders at the design stage of the project, while ensuring their commitment, can support more smooth implementation of interventions reaching. This also includes more strategic engagement with CSOs to support advocacy, particularly to mobilize their constituency and provide expertise on envisioned legislative changes.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1:** The project demonstrates a strong alignment with international commitments and national priorities regarding gender equality and women's empowerment. It encompasses a wide

range of thematic areas, such as women's economic empowerment, elimination of gender-based violence, and strengthening the capacity of national women's machinery. The project's objectives are closely linked to the country's international commitments and national strategic programs.

**Conclusion 2:** The project's transformative potential is limited due to its fragmented nature and lack of interlinkages between interventions. While some individual interventions show promise in addressing gender inequalities, the overall project design lacks a comprehensive and multilayered approach needed to tackle root causes of gender inequality. To achieve transformative results, long-term investments and upscaling of initiatives are necessary, along with a stronger focus on understanding and challenging gender norms and patriarchal values.

**Conclusion 3:** Although the project aims to leave no one behind and targets socially vulnerable women, there is room for improvement in terms of participatory project design, monitoring, and evaluation. While the project addresses the needs of beneficiaries to some extent, the actual outreach and perspectives of the most vulnerable women have not been fully established. Enhancing participatory approaches and incorporating the voices of beneficiaries can lead to more effective and inclusive interventions.

**Conclusion 4:** The existing funding modality and dependence on the Governmental fundings, affected the project's efficiency. The long budgetary and decision-making processes and limited resources created delays in the implementation of the project and often shortened the implementation period for individual activities to a few months. The complex budgetary processes, preference for national consultants and late disbursement of funds also affected effective procurement processes, which were one of the main implementation modalities of the project. No risk and mitigation strategy was developed at the project's design stage, which would allow project partners to better design activities, taking into account the systemic constraints of working with governmental funding.

**Conclusion 5:** The synergies and integrated working among the UN agencies have been limited to preventing overlapping and increasing the visibility of each agency's interventions. However, the UN actors implemented activities in rather individual ways. Although the UN Women increased its visibility and credibility and built a good working relationship with government agencies, particularly National Commission, the coordinating role of UN Women on GEWE has not been yet fully maximized through this project.

**Conclusion 6:** Despite notable achievements in some areas, the project faces challenges in achieving its intended outcomes. The findings highlight significant limitations in the overall effectiveness of the project. The absence of a consistent monitoring system prevents a comprehensive assessment of outcomes and results beyond output counting. The project's theory of change lacks strong causal mechanisms and fails to establish clear interrelations between interventions and expected outcomes, resulting in a fragmented approach. To enhance the project's impact, there is a need for rigorous assessment of interventions, scaling up successful initiatives, and addressing the underlying systemic issues that perpetuate gender inequality and violence against women.

**Conclusion 7:** Direct technical assistance and financial support to National Commission contributed to strengthening the national gender machinery, particularly in terms of clarity of roles and level of visibility. Nevertheless, lack of funding, different levels of capacities, approach to GEWE, and limited outreach continue to hamper gender-transformative work and the impact of the Commission.

**Conclusion 8:** A number of knowledge products were developed through the project under different outcomes, some also added through the project duration. Although some have been recognised as creating a positive basis for advocacy leading to changes (i.e., ratification of ILO Convention 190, or abolition of list of prohibited professions for women), for some, it was too early to find evidence for

their active usage and application. Nevertheless, with necessary follow-up, they present a good basis for evidence-based program development and advocacy.

**Conclusion 9:** A key achievement under the Outcome 3 was the development of the methodology for women's entrepreneurship centres in all regions of Kazakhstan, with reach to rural areas, which was an activity not foreseen in the initial project design but designed as a response to mitigating of economic consequences of Covid-19. More than 8,000 women were reached with services and with the continuous support of the Ministry of Economy and supported with other interventions to address the barriers to women's economic participation, including solo entrepreneurship, the centres offer the potential for a sustainable impact on the lives of women.

**Conclusion 10:** The project aimed to address some of the deeply-rooted gender patterns and norms through several information and behaviour change materials, campaigns, and capacity-building events. However, including aiming to address different aspects of gender inequality and adopted some new strategies for the Kazakh context, including engaging men in promoting GEWE. Nevertheless, the initiatives range in scale, scope, and reach, with no assessment to assess the transformative potential of different methods and inform future behavioural change campaigns in Kazakhstan available.

**Conclusion 11:** Although the project did not develop sustainability of exit strategy, it has made some strides towards sustainability through funding efforts and capacity-building initiatives, including by securing funding for three-year Tied Grant with the Ministry of Information and Social Development, covering some of the elements of Umbrella project and uptake of the women's entrepreneurship centres by the Ministry of Economy. Nevertheless, continued dependency on government funding pose challenges. Overall, it remains important to place sufficient efforts on development of comprehensive sustainability strategies and diversification of funding sources to ensure the long-term impact and continuity of the project's initiatives.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been constructed aiming to support future programming and decision-making related to GEWE in Kazakhstan and beyond. They are mostly addressed towards UN



Agencies, most notably UN Women, and relevant governmental institutions. The recommendations were developed using the 'Progression Table', supporting the structured way of developing recommendations progressing from findings, conclusions to recommendations.

**Recommendation 1: For UN agencies & government institutions:** Continue building capacities of relevant government agencies on human rights-based programming and results-based management, including on designing results-based MEL systems with meaningful and measurable results-based indicators combining qualitative and quantitative approaches and disaggregated data collection. These need to be linked to a clear and realistic theory of change. Consider integrating tools such as human interest or human change stories or outcome harvesting methodology into the MEL systems to allow for more effective tracking of the qualitative aspects of the change. Ideally, the project, depending on the strategic focus and quality of the MEAL system, shall be linked to broader action plans and programs of relevant institutions to allow for measuring effectiveness and achieved changes over time and improvement programming synergies (linked to Conclusion 3 & 2).

**Recommendation 2: For government institutions:** Integrate extensive MEL requirements as part of the procurement systems, and support and build capacities for all the sub-contracted service providers to design and use effective MEL tools. Apart from providing information on the effectiveness of certain approaches and enhancing learning, this will also support Ministries and UN agencies in evidence-based communication, including with voters and donors, and other constituencies on their achievements (linked to Conclusion 3).

**Recommendation 3:** Design future projects using the support of TOC to help identify needed linkages and gaps, and assess the ability of the listed activities to contribute to the change envisaged. This might also support improving the strategic focus of the projects, reducing the fragmentations, and improving the project's coherence (linked to Conclusion 3).

**Recommendation 5:** Ensure that reporting requirements by donors and existing procedures are fully understandable to all partners, ideally at the design stage, and if not at least at the inception stage of the project, and support the MEL system and collection of indicators therein. This requires developing effective reporting tools and obligations and necessary capacity-building opportunities, such as webinars, to explain different requirements and provide necessary clarifications (linked to Conclusion 3).

**Recommendation 4: For UN agencies & government institutions:** Ensure more inclusive project design while engaging and reaching out to all stakeholders playing a role in specific interventions to ensure smoother implementation of the project and increased ownership at all levels. This shall include designing effective consultation mechanisms with final beneficiaries, particularly the most socially vulnerable women, to hear their perspectives and inform interventions (linked to Conclusion 3).

**Recommendation 6: For UN agencies & government institutions:** Clear guidelines and processes for contributing and approving outputs developed by the projects might want to be considered in future multi-partner projects, setting reasonable deadlines and expectations to avoid unnecessary delays and last-minute interventions, which, as a consequence, put a strain on the quality of the outputs and relationships. Such a mechanism might be particularly relevant in the context of the National Commission, where the feedback is expected to be provided by a number of stakeholders, who often work on a voluntary basis and might have other priorities and parallel obligations (linked to Conclusions 3).

**Recommendation 7: For government institutions:** Strengthen the system of effective evaluation of consultants used under different projects to create a joint pool of gender experts in Kazakhstan, which will be supported by an effective assessment of their expertise and the quality of the deliverables. This

might contribute to minimize potential political influencing in selecting consultants and indicate the gap in the expertise of the national expert base (linked to Conclusion 4).

**Recommendation 8: For UN agencies & government institutions:** Ensure that extensive risks and mitigation analysis is performed for each project at the design stage, including the risks and constraints linked to national institutional set-ups and related processes (particularly expected delays in fund disbursements, resource constraints, and lengthy decision-making processes), and adequately design the projects anticipating such limitations. Depending on the project's size, governmental institutions' anticipated resource constraints could be mitigated by seconding a person responsible for a project at the key responsible institution to ensure smooth coordination and implementation of the project, including coordinating different outcomes and ensuring effective responses (linked to Conclusion 4).

**Recommendation 9: For UN Agencies:** Continue efforts to strengthen the national gender mechanisms, particularly the National Commission of Women, on different levels, including by (i.) supporting the Commission to institutionalize the written reporting obligations of the institutions on how they are mainstreaming gender equality in their work and status of the implementation of the Commission's recommendations; (ii.) supporting strengthening Commission's presence at the local/akimat levels; (iii) continuous capacity building provision on most pressing concepts of gender equality, which can also be developed into the online self-paced courses; (iv) designing and/or strengthening mechanisms and strategies to directly involve final beneficiaries in the work of Commission, including those most vulnerable groups. (v.) supporting Commission with a design of a comprehensive MEAL system allowing for monitoring its effectiveness and inducing learning. Different UN agencies currently providing capacity building to the Commission may also consider developing joint online and offline training packages for new Commissioners to ensure synergies, prevent overlap and maximize resources (linked to Conclusion 7).

**Recommendation 10: For UN Agencies:** Continuously work with and build capacities of the National Statistics Committees to maximize the findings of the knowledge products developed through such projects and their effective usage for evidence-based decision-making. To prevent fragmentation and support the maximization of limited resources available within the Bureau, consider working with Bureau through a unified UN approach, where one UN agency would coordinate efforts and capacity-building opportunities related to effective data collection and management (linked to Conclusion 8).

**Recommendation 11: For UN agencies & government institutions:** Continue supporting women entrepreneurship centres while addressing some of the identified opportunities to maximize their functioning, efficiency, and effectiveness, including by developing (i.) an effective information management system containing all information for each woman/case supported; (ii.) an automated system of accepting applications (iii.) feedback mechanisms from beneficiaries and comprehensive monitoring mechanism to monitor outcomes and assess the achievements of the support provided; including tracking success cases. Additionally, any WEE interventions should be accompanied by suitable behavioural change and information campaigns on WEE, which also target husbands and men to contribute to a more supportive environment for women's entrepreneurship. Additionally, project partners can also consider integrating GBV and WEE components, including into the entrepreneurial work centres, to help to address some of the tensions that promoting the WEE in a fairly patriarchal society might entail, as well as maximizing the opportunity centres to support awareness raising around GBV and VAVC (linked to Conclusion 9).

**Recommendation 12: For UN agencies & government institutions:** Continuous implementation of extensive transformative behavioural change campaigns using innovative and interactive approaches, which have the potential to address the root causes of gender inequality, is needed. Nevertheless, given the specific context of Kazakhstan, these need to be accompanied by adequate tools and

mechanisms to assess their impact, including gender-transformative potential and contribution to transforming gender norms. Such efforts will also allow for learning for different enstatites currently designing such campaigns (linked to Conclusion 10).

**Recommendation 13: For UN Women:** Build on UN Women’s coordinating mandate in GEWE and continue supporting cross-sectorial engagement in gender equality projects, including capitalizing on UN Women's convening role to bring together key stakeholders to foster joint programming, advocacy, and awareness-raising efforts. This can also include ensuring civil society participation in programming in different thematic areas, not only as sub-contractors but project partners. As well as working through its coordination mandate, in cooperation with newly developed relationships with the Resident Coordinator's Office, continue to optimize the expertise, programs, and resources on GEWE by different UN agencies while seeking opportunities for future joint programing. At the same time, all UN agencies need to work on the diversification of funds to ensure a level of independence from government-shifting gender priorities while allowing for long-term strategic focus on interventions (linked to Conclusion 5).

## Annex 1: Evaluation framework

CRITERIA	Evaluation-related questions	Indicators	Method of data collection	Data source
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<b>RELEVANCE: Are we doing the right things?</b>				
<b>Relevance</b>	How does the project design match with the complexity of national structures, systems, and decision-making processes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of the proper assessment of the complexity, and anticipated risks and mitigation strategies due to the complexity of national structures/decision-making processes</li> <li>• The existence of the accurate feasibility and/or constraints study during the project design and launch phase [and its updates as required]</li> <li>• Evidence of the gaps/challenges in project implementation due to national structures, systems and decision-making processes</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National gender strategy and action plans, national development frameworks, UN agencies strategic notes</li> <li>• UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff</li> <li>• National counterparts</li> </ul>
	Are the programmatic strategies and interventions appropriate to address the identified needs of beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable groups, including women and men with disabilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis and the quality of the intervention setting at the initial stage, including understanding the needs and priorities of project beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable groups</li> <li>• Absence of indications of incompatibility of the intervention with the priority/needs of the target beneficiaries</li> <li>• Feedback from the beneficiaries on whether the project meets their demands/needs, including those most vulnerable and left behind (women with disabilities, rural women, those facing multiple discrimination)</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions FGDs with final beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff</li> <li>• National counterparts Reports of the civil society groups (for the needs of vulnerable groups)</li> </ul>
	Is the project aligned and reflects Kazakhstan's international obligations and commitments including national plan to achieve SDGs, CEDAW, Beijing Declaration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documental evidence of adherence to international obligations and commitments</li> <li>• Feedback of the stakeholders on the level of alignment with international frameworks</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National gender strategy and action plans, national development frameworks</li> <li>• UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff</li> <li>• National counterparts</li> </ul>

	Is the project aligned and reflects Kazakhstan’s national development strategies in the area of gender equality, family and gender policy, women’s empowerment, and ending violence against women and girls as well as reflects national and local priorities and commitments on GEWE/WEE and the EVAW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documental evidence of adherence to national strategic plans and normative and international obligations and commitments</li> <li>• Feedback of the stakeholders on the level of alignment with national frameworks and priorities</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National gender strategy and action plans, national development frameworks, UN agencies strategic notes</li> <li>• UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff</li> <li>• National counterparts (government, CSO, experts)</li> </ul>
Relevance – Gender Equality and Human Rights	Has gender equality and human rights-based analysis been carried out and findings integrated in the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence and quality of the initial diagnosis/analysis of the context and challenges of the country, including the level of integration of the gender and human rights [and necessary updates of the initial analysis, as required]</li> <li>• Documental evidence of the project integrating gender and HRBA analysis and principles [following analysis] Feedback of individuals to analysis and integration of gender equality and human rights &amp; absence of such</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National gender strategy and action plans, national development frameworks, UN agencies strategic notes</li> <li>• UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff</li> <li>• National counterparts (government, CSO, experts)</li> </ul>
	To what degree were adequate resources provided for integrating a human rights-based approach and gender equality in the interventions,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on the unmet needs, including resources and technical and other support to integrate human rights and gender equality in interventions</li> <li>• Gaps in the integration of human rights-based approach and gender equality due to insufficient human, financial and other resources</li> <li>• Evidence suggesting adequate allocation of resources for HR</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions FGDs with CSOs / beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff</li> <li>• National counterparts (government, CSO, experts)</li> </ul>

	including reaching the most marginalized?	and GE equality in the project interventions The proportion of the project budget distributed to interventions aimed to address the needs of those most marginalised		
	To what extent have the capacities of relevant duty-bearers and rightsholders been strengthened?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of interventions aiming to strengthen the capacities of duty-bearers and rights holders</li> <li>Evidence of rights holders articulating their priorities and needs;</li> <li>Evidence of duty bearers improving the provision of their responsibilities, including services</li> </ul> Existence of capitalisation processes (formal or informal) at the project or individual levels, including clear indications of the application/use of the gained capacities by duty bearers/rights holders	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions FGDs with CSOs / beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff</li> <li>National counterparts (government)</li> </ul>
	To what extent has the project been catalytic in addressing some of the root causes of inequalities related to gender inequality as specified in Family and Gender Policy, WEE and EVAW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of the extent to which the project interventions are based on a proper analysis of the root causes of inequalities</li> <li>Evidence of interventions aiming to address the root causes of inequalities, as specified in the Family &amp; Gender Policy</li> </ul> Assessment of the stakeholders, including beneficiaries, on the transformative nature of the interventions (and their impact)	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions FGDs with CSOs / beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National gender strategy and action plans, national development frameworks, UN agencies strategic notes</li> <li>UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff</li> <li>National counterparts (government, CSO, experts)</li> </ul>
	To what extent is the project and its interventions gender transformative?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of the interventions implemented, which are critically examining, challenging and transforming the gender norms, practices and structures that create and maintain gender inequality</li> <li>Evidence of shifting social norms and attitudes underlying gender inequalities</li> <li>promote positions of social and political influence for women in communities, and address</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions FGDs with CSOs / beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National gender strategy and action plans, national development frameworks, UN agencies strategic notes</li> <li>UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff</li> <li>National counterparts (government, CSO, experts)</li> </ul>

		<p>power inequities between persons of different genders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indication of noticed gaps and failure of the project to design and implement gender transformative intervention</li> </ul>		
<b>EFFICIENCY: Are we doing things right?</b>				
<b>Efficiency Alignment</b>	<p>Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriateness of human resources to project objectives (number and organisation of HR, technical expertise of teams, level of required expertise and qualifications, etc.) to achieve planned results</li> <li>• Gaps between the planned resources and needed resources and the existence of proposed reorientations to adapt the project to constraints faced</li> <li>• Feedback on the needs, including resources and technical and other support needed to achieve results</li> <li>• Gaps in the implementation of the project, including the quality of the implementation, due to insufficient human, financial and other resources</li> <li>• Existence of regular monitoring and re-adjustments of the budget allocation and spending</li> </ul>	<p>Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions</p>	<p><a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff Project documentation</p>
	<p>Are the interventions implemented within the intended timeframe and budget? Are there mechanisms in place to ensure this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of delays in the project implementation</li> <li>• Evidence of underspending and overspending of project budget</li> <li>• Evidence of what hinders the timely implementation of the budget</li> <li>• Evidence of necessary monitoring and coordination mechanisms to ensure timely and financially effective implementation of the project</li> <li>• Appropriateness of administrative means and management capacities, including the functioning of the Steering committee, to project objectives (including meetings, opportunities for exchange, monitoring tools, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions</p>	<p><a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff Project documentation</p>

	To what extent is the project's implementation cost-effective and provides value for money?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The clarity in the roles and responsibilities of project partners at all levels, avoidance of duplication, the existence of effective coordination mechanisms, including effective functioning of the Steering Committee</li> <li>• Existence of considerations/analysis of the different approaches and methods and their rationalisation</li> <li>• Existence of more cost-effective strategies/approaches/less expensive solutions for the same objectives</li> <li>• Effective procurement and other administrative mechanisms are in place</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions	<a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff Project documentation
<b>Efficiently</b> <i>Coherence</i>	To what extent are the interventions achieving synergies with the work of the UN Country Team and the project and other interventions jointly implemented by UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of the coherence between UN Women threefold mandate, work/strategies of other UN agencies and the project</li> <li>• Evidence on coherence between UN Women and UNCT</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions	<a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff Project documentation
	To what extent coherence and is achieving synergies with similar initiatives of other stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of formal interactions and synergies with activities conducted by other stakeholders</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions KIIs with CSOs / beneficiaries	<a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff Project documentation



	<p>What is UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF's comparative advantage in the Umbrella projects area of work compared to other UN entities, and key partners and stakeholders in Kazakhstan?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of each agency's comparative advantages vis-à-vis each other (UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF) and vis-à-vis other UN entities and partners</li> </ul>	<p>Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions</p>	<p><a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff</p>
<p><b>EFFECTIVENESS:</b> Are the things we are doing working?</p>				
<p><b>Effectiveness</b></p>	<p>Has the project achieved its expected outcomes and expected results? What are the results achieved, including any unforeseen results, either positive or negative? What are the good practices in project implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difference between the planned expected activities, results and objectives and achieved activities, results and objectives</li> <li>Nature, type and degree of change for the project's key target groups/ beneficiaries</li> <li>Evidence of the progress of achievement towards set project goals, including the presence of intended and unintended results</li> <li>Evidence of the unforeseen results, either positive or negative</li> <li>Evidence of the good practices in project implementation</li> </ul>	<p>Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions</p>	<p><a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff Project documentation National government institutions Beneficiaries</p>
	<p>What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results, including external and internal factors affecting project implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External and internal factors explaining delays or the achievement or non-achievement objectives, including the COVID-19 pandemic and evidence of steps taken to overcome them</li> <li>Evidence of the impact of specific country context and circumstances on the achievement of results and operational effectiveness</li> <li>Mapping, analysis and evidence of the obstacles and shortcomings encountered in</li> </ul>	<p>Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions FGDs with CSOs / beneficiaries</p>	<p><a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff Project documentation National government institutions Beneficiaries</p>

	n (including COVID-19 and country specific context)?	the implementation of the project due to external and internal factors affecting project implementation		
	How effectively project adapted and reacted to the changing situations, including the COVID-19 pandemic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evidence of the reorientations and adaptations of the project proposed to adequately adapt to the changing settings, including COVID-19 pandemic</li> <li>● Absence of indications of incompatibility of the intervention with the changing setting/context</li> <li>● Existence of comprehensive risks assessment and mitigation strategies</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions FGDs with CSOs / beneficiaries	<a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDPA programme staff Project documentation National government institutions Beneficiaries
	The project has effective monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Existence and clear logical framework/ intervention logic of the project, clearly explaining links between the inputs, activities, outcomes and impacts</li> <li>● Level of appropriateness and utilisation of the MEAL mechanisms to measure progress and achievements of project goals, including type and quality of the indicators and methodology used (SMART, supported by adequate baseline data)</li> <li>● Feedback on the effectiveness of the different components of the MEAL system</li> <li>● Existence of discussion on the positive and negative achievements of the projects and on the expected and unexpected effects due to MEAL system</li> <li>● Evidence of changing/adjusting project activities due to information gathered from the MEAL system</li> <li>● Indications of sufficient capacities for effective utilisation of MEAL system on all levels</li> <li>● Existence and functioning of effective coordination mechanisms, including Steering committee to ensure proper monitoring of the project</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions	<a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDPA programme staff Project documentation National government institutions Beneficiaries

<b>SUSTAINABILITY: Will the changes last?</b>				
<b>Sustainability</b>	To what extent were relevant stakeholders and actors included in the project planning and implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of actual involvement of beneficiaries (or their representatives) in the different project cycle phases (initial diagnosis, project launch, evaluation, etc.)</li> <li>Existence of mechanisms and strategies to involve final beneficiaries, including those most vulnerable and left behind</li> <li>Existence of indications that the beneficiaries (or their representatives) have been encouraged and empowered to express their level of satisfaction during the implementation phase]</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions FGDs with CSOs / beneficiaries	<a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff National government institutions Beneficiaries
	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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The concepts, methodology and approaches are designed in a way to ensure the transfer of outputs and their sustainability</li> <li>Existence of efforts to ensure arrangements at the institutional/policy level allowing project results/outputs to continue (legislative, policy changes, MOUs, new and strategic partnerships, expansion to other projects, partners, etc.)</li> <li>Existence of the indications of the continuation of the use of project outputs and outcome after the end of the project (developed capacities/skills &amp; products, utilisation in other projects, partners)</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions FGDs with CSOs / beneficiaries	<a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff National government institutions Beneficiaries
	Do national/local institutions demonstrate ownership leadership commitment and technical capacity to continue to replicate some project activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of ownership, leadership, commitment and existence of capacities of the national institutions</li> <li>Existence of capitalisation processes (formal or informal) at the project or individual levels, including clear indications of the application/use of the gained capacities/outputs</li> <li>Feedback of relevant stakeholders on their involvement and role in the project and level of ownership of project results;</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions	<a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff National government institutions Beneficiaries

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of usage of project outputs by relevant stakeholders, particularly government representatives</li> </ul>		
	To what extent has the project's exit strategy been well planned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence and the quality of a sustainability strategy/plan within project documents with a definition of available measures, sources and resources needed</li> <li>Existence of a sustainability strategy/plans discussed by UN, its partners and other relevant stakeholders [<i>target groups/final beneficiaries</i>]</li> <li>Or the existence of a vision for the second cycle of a project with a definition of available sources and resources</li> </ul>	Desk research Project documents review KII with UN agencies / governmental institutions FGDs with CSOs / beneficiaries	<a href="#">All project stakeholders</a> UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP programme staff National government institutions Beneficiaries

## Annex 2: List of documents consulted

### Normative documents:

- Government of Kazakhstan, 2018. Fifth periodic report submitted by Kazakhstan under Article 18 of the Convention, in Russian and English
- Ministry of National Economy, 2019. Voluntary National Review of Kazakhstan on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, June 2019, in Russian and English, available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/kazakhstan>
- The National Commission for Women's Affairs and Family and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan, May 2019. The Comprehensive Review of the BpfA Implementation Progress, in Russian and English
- The National Commission of Women and Family Demographic Issues, 2016 -2030 Concept of Family and Gender Policy,
- The National Commission of Women and Family Demographic Issues, Action plans of the Concept of Family and Gender Policy for 2018-2020, 2020 - 2022
- United Nations, Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, 27 October 1995, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3dde04324.html>

### Strategic documents

- Agency of Statistics, Ministry of National Economy, Key Socio-Demographic and Economic Indicators

8. Asian Development Bank, 2019. Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment, p.17, available here <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/479136/kazakhstan-country-gender-assessment.pdf>
9. CEDAW Concluding observations on the 5th report of Kazakhstan, November 2019, CEDAW/C/KAZ/CO/3, Employment para 37, available at [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fKAZ%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fKAZ%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en)
10. Donor Agreement of the project and its extension (2022) Background/Context Documents and Resources
11. Franke, A., Gawrich, A., & Alakbarov, G., 2009. "Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan as post-Soviet rentier states: resource incomes and autocracy as a double 'curse' in post-Soviet regimes". *Europe-Asia Studies*, 61(1), 109-140
12. OECD, Social Institutions and Gender Index, 2019. Global Report, Kazakhstan profile, available here <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/KZ.pdf>
13. Project Document "Assistance in strengthening national capacity, coordinating, and creating effective interdepartmental measures to implement family and gender policies, expand women's contribution to national production and its growth in order to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 5, 8 and 10 and introduce a multisectoral approach to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Kazakhstan" (the Umbrella Project)"
14. Sange Research centre, March 2020. Study of gender perspective of entrepreneurship
15. UNDP, 2019 and 2020. Human Development Report 2019, 2020, available at <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2019> and <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2020>
16. UNFPA, 2019. We, Kazakhstan. Population Situation Analysis of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Available here [https://gender.stat.gov.kz/page/frontend/detail?id=71&slug=-58&cat\\_id=9&lang=ru](https://gender.stat.gov.kz/page/frontend/detail?id=71&slug=-58&cat_id=9&lang=ru)
17. UN Women CO Kazakhstan, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
18. UN Women CO Kazakhstan, 2019-2021 Annual work plans,
19. UN Women. Annual Project Progress Reports for 2019, 2020, 2021 on the project "Assistance in strengthening national capacity, coordinating and creating effective interdepartmental measures to implement family and gender policies, expand women's contribution to national production and its growth in order to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 5, 8 and 10 and introduce multisectoral approach to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Kazakhstan."
20. UN Women SP 2018-2021 <https://undocs.org/en/UNW/2017/6/Rev.1> Programme Documents (developed by UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF):
21. UN to UN agreements between the Umbrella project implementing agencies
22. UN agencies quarterly reports to UN Women with annexes (except for 2022)
23. World Bank, Kazakhstan Overview, available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kazakhstan/overview>

24. World Bank, Economic Recovery During Challenging Times, Kazakhstan Economic Update Winter 2021/2022, available here

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kazakhstan/publication/economic-update-winter-2021-2022>

25. World Economic Forum, 2021. The Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Report, Kazakhstan: country profile, available at [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2021.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf)

### Evaluation Guidance Resources and other relevant evaluation reports

26. Guidance note for Inception Reports, UN Women

27. UN Women Evaluation Handbook

28. UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports

29. UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN System

30. UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System, UNEG

31. UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation

### Annex 3: List of stakeholders

Stakeholder group	Name of institutions/agencies	Region
<b>UN Agencies</b>	UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF	n/a
<b>Government Institutions</b>	National Commission for Women Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan Statistics Committee (Ministry of National Economy Parliament Ministry of Information Kazakh Institute of Public Development "Rukhani Zhangyru" Child Protection Committee under the Ministry of Education Ministry of Healthcare	Astana
<b>Local government representatives</b>	Local administrations (akimats) involved in WEE and EVAW interventions (Shymkent, Turkestan) - pilot program "Kazakhstan without domestic violence"	
<b>CSOs</b>	NGOs Sange Public Opinion	Astana
	Applied Economics Research Centre INIDI RRIOS Center of Study of Public Opinion	Astana, Almaty
	Civil Society Advisory Group NGO "Association of Businesswomen of Southern Kazakhstan" NGO "People Management Center"	Astana, Almaty

	the Public Foundation "Hope Foundation" Center for Legal Policy Research PF "Just Support PF "Korgau" PF "Ark" PF "Paradise" PF "Intellect" PF "Syr Ulandary" PF "Fund for Information Support for the Development of Society, the Youth Health Service NGO "Urkendeu"	
<b>Private sector representative</b>	National Chamber of Entrepreneurs Atameken (FGD with staff) the Fund for the Development of Social Projects "Samruk Kazyna Trust" (KfIs)	Astana, Almaty
<b>Academia / Consulting groups</b>	Narxoz University AEO "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" Ernst & Young Red Point, Tochka Agency Text and The City" Agency	Astana, Almaty
<b>Consultants</b>	Shuga Naurzybayeva, Dmitryi Machel, Dina Smailova, Khalida Azhigulova, Aliya Ilyassova	n/a

## Annex 4: List of consulted stakeholders

### UN Women

1. Country Director, UN Women Kazakhstan
2. Programme Specialist, UN Women Kazakhstan
3. Programme Specialist, UN Women Kazakhstan

### UNCT

4. Programme Specialist UNICEF, UNGTG Gender Focal Point
5. Project Manager, UNDP
6. Programme Specialists, UNFPA
7. Program specialist, UNICEF

### Government

7. Deputy head of Department, Ministry of Interior
8. Head of Department of Social Protection, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
9. Expert, National Commission on Women and Family Demographic Affairs

10. Ex-Secretary, National Commission on Women and Family Demographic Affairs
11. Expert, National chamber of entrepreneurs ATAMEKEN
12. Expert of the Department of Social Programmes, Samruk
13. Leading Expert, Centre of Family Studies
13. Programme officer, National Statistica Bureou.

#### Civil Society Organisations and Activists

14. Director, Union of Fathers of Kazakhstan
15. Head, CSO Orkendeu
16. Head, CSO Korgau
17. Civil Activist, Almaty

#### Research institutions

18. Director of Gender Studies Centre, Narkhoz University
19. Representative of Applied Economics Research Centre
20. Representative of Center for Legal Policy Research
21. Kazakh Institute of Public Development “Rukhani Zhangyru”

## Annex 5. Data collection tools

### FGD/KIIs Guide Questions guidelines [for all]

*[to be included before all FGDs/KIIs]*

**Introduction:** Introduction of the evaluators and explanation of the objectives of the meeting.

**Data Privacy & Confidentiality** Your responses during this interview/discussion and the results of the entire evaluation will be treated with strict confidentiality and used for project management purposes only. Your personal information will be protected with anonymity. Should a partner organization in the consortium need your contact details related to the evaluation, your consent will be first secured.

Please note, that you can stop the discussion anytime.

**Consent-Interview:** Are you willing to be part of the evaluation and continue with the evaluation?

Yes    No



Do you agree that our conversation is recorded? Records are going to be used only for the purpose of the evaluation and will not be shared with partner UN Women or other implementing partners.

Yes     No

**Section A. Respondent Information / For FGDs register list will be distributed to capture the information**

A1. Name of Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

(Family Name, First Name, Middle Name)

A2. Organization / Office: \_\_\_\_\_

A4. Role and title of the responded: \_\_\_\_\_

A5. Contact No. \_\_\_\_\_

A6. Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

A8. Gender of Respondent: 1 Male 2 Female 3 Others

**FGD/KIIs Guide Questions Guidelines for**

**Implementing partners /UN-level**

*The language used and the use of terminology/concepts as well as detailed questions will be adjusted to each group of respondents as perceived relevant.*

*The questions will be adjusted whether the consulted stakeholder's focus is on WEE, GEWE or EAW.*

A.	INTRODUCTION	Evaluation question / criteria
1	To give context to your answers, could you please outline your position and responsibilities within your institution?	
2	Can you tell us more about your agency? What is your mandate in relation to WEE/GEWE/ EAW?	
3	Again, to give context, please summarize your experience/involvement with the project in question. What kind of interventions are you implementing as part of the project?	
4	<p>What, in your view, are the main challenges in the fields of WEE/GEWE/ EAW in Kazakhstan?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Has this always been the same, or has it changed, and how, since the beginning of the Umbrella project?</li> </ul> <p><b>Evaluators Notes:</b> GEWE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Conceptualization of gender equality in the country (i.e. within the family law)?</i></li> </ul>	Effectiveness / impact
5	<p>To frame the question differently, what, if any, have been the main positive benefits and any (sustainable) changes you see from the Umbrella project in the field of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WEE/GEWE/ EAW?</li> <li>- For your organization?</li> <li>- For other stakeholders?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Please, clarify what activities and project interventions were taken by the project to achieve this outcome?</li> </ul>	Effectiveness/impact

	<p>➤ Are you aware of any other stakeholders and/or contextual factors that contributed to/allowed for this outcome to happen? If yes, please, clarify who and in what way.</p> <p><b>Evaluators note:</b></p> <p><i>GEWE</i></p> <p>➤ Which national laws have been strengthened and implemented as a result of the project? Please, provide concrete examples of the achievements to which the project has contributed.</p> <p><i>WEE</i></p> <p>➤ Have any systemic barriers faced by women in WEE been addressed through the project?</p> <p><i>VAWC</i></p> <p>➤ Have there been any institutional changes in approaches the institutions are using in preventing and responding to the VAWC?</p> <p><i>To find casual links with some of reported achievements:</i></p> <p>➤ Amendments and additions to the Labor Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which provide for the abolition of the list of 191 professions prohibited for women (UN Women)</p> <p>➤ Regulation for the interdepartmental response of the sectors involved to domestic violence has been developed (UNFPA)</p> <p>➤ SOPs on prevention and interdepartmental response to violence in the sphere of family and domestic relations</p> <p><i>Adoption of NAP on Women, Peace and Security</i></p>	
6.	<p>Were there any negative changes due to the project?</p> <p>➤ Do you see any challenges in how the project/project activities have been implemented?</p> <p>➤ Has these challenges been already resolved and how?</p> <p>➤ What could have been done differently?</p> <p><b>Evaluators notes:</b></p> <p><i>Were there any challenges in terms of:</i></p> <p>➤ Project planning/design</p> <p>➤ Structure/governance/coordination/management (including the role of the steering committee)</p> <p>➤ Lack of high-level dialogue with government / Interference of donor / delays in decision-making</p> <p>➤ Financial management / delays in disbursement</p> <p>➤ Some of the activities (Kazakhstan without domestic violence" pilots; UNICEF parental programme)</p> <p>[To further explore] What was the impact of Covid-19 on the project activities?</p> <p>➤ Do you think the adjustments were sufficient?</p>	<p>Effectiveness /          impact          Relevance          Sustainability          Effectiveness</p> <p>Effectiveness /          Relevance</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Looking back, could something else be done to adjust accordingly? Including as a lesson learned for future pandemic?</li> </ul> <p><i>[NOTE: For external contractors/challenges with communication, coordination, payment of funds, interference by the responsible agencies, etc.]</i></p>	
8.	<p>How well do you think you <i>key national agencies, you are working with</i> are equipped to be able to effectively contribute to strengthening/addressing WEE/GEWE/ EAW in Kazakhstan?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do you feel other key organisations you were working with, particularly government institutions, have sufficient capacities, and resources to achieve their mandate? If not, what else do you need?</li> <li>➤ Did responsible agencies strengthen their capacities to reach their WEE/GEWE/ EAW mandate/project objectives as a result of the project? In what way?</li> </ul> <p><b>Evaluators notes:</b>  <i>GEWE: Capacities of National Commission, including its communication ability</i>  <i>WEE: Ministry of Health &amp; Ministry of National Economy</i>  <i>GEVE: Ministry of Labour / Ministry of Education – Social Protection Unit</i></p>	Effectiveness/ Human Rights Sustainability
9.	<p>According to your perspective, has the project sufficient resources allocated to achieve its intended results?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If not, where there were gaps?</li> </ul> <p>Do you think the project has been designed and implemented in an efficient way?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Which factors negatively (or positively) affected the efficiency of the project?</li> <li>➤ How could these be addressed in future projects?</li> <li>➤ Did the project have sufficient/effective financial monitoring mechanisms in place?]</li> </ul> <p><b>Evaluators notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Potential challenges: Short financial cycles, late disbursement of funds and implications of that on project efficiency</li> </ul>	Efficiency / Effectiveness
10.	<p>According to your perspective, do relevant stakeholders adequately work together to achieve the WEE/GEWE/ EAW?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ With whom do you cooperate the most? <i>(Please, distinguish between government/CSOs and other actors; explore strategic partnerships with CSOs)</i></li> <li>➤ Do you think the project in any way contributed to improved coordination and coherence of WEE/GEWE/ EAW in Kazakhstan? <i>[if clarification is needed: Please, share some of the examples of improved coherence and coordination]</i></li> </ul>	Effectiveness - Coherence

11.	<p>➤ Do you see that cooperation, synergies and coherence could be <b>strengthened</b> in any way? [if not discussed above], please, differentiate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ At the project level</li> <li>○ Among the UN agencies</li> <li>○ At the system level for [WEE/GEWE/ EAW]</li> </ul> <p>[if the additional question is needed: Do you see any synergies/duplication or lack of coherence among different UN agencies as well as other stakeholders? If yes, how could duplication be avoided in the future?</p> <p><b>Evaluators notes:</b> To explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Internal synergies between UN Women projects (i.e., Assistance to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, The Spotlight Initiative Regional Programme, etc.)?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Synergies between the different interventions of UN agencies carried out as part of the project (i.e., parenting programmes of UN Women &amp; UNICEF, WAVC interventions of UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA) Synergies with other interventions of partners and broader UNCT team</i></li> </ul>	
12.	<p>How effective, do you think, is UN Women in carrying its mandate as coordinating agency in the field of gender equality?</p> <p>➤ Do you see any challenges how the agency is fulfilling its mandate? Do you have any recommendations how this could be strengthened improved?</p>	
13.	<p>What do you think is an added value of your and other UN agency in the specific field of intervention you are working in the Umbrella Project?</p>	Effectiveness - Coherence
14.	<p>Is the Umbrella project contributing to implementation of UN Women’s integrated triple mandate of normative, coordination and operational work?</p> <p>➤ Where do you think most progress has been achieved and weather the progress has been lacking?</p> <p>How you are measuring or tracking progress in ensuring that?</p>	Effectiveness - Coherence
15.	<p>How has the sustainability of the project been achieved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Which activities/interventions will continue after the end of the project and which outputs will be used?</li> <li>➤ What can be done to strengthen the sustainability of project and its activities/interventions?</li> </ul> <p><b>Evaluators notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Any partnerships with the CSOs established? If yes, will they continue to carry out certain aspects of the project? [if not answered under the question on the capacity building above: Did stakeholders gained sufficient capacities and resources, including institutional arrangements and financial and human resources, to be able to continue</i></li> </ul>	Sustainability

	<p><i>implement the project? Will they be able to use outputs developed?</i></p> <p><i>To explore:</i>  <i>WEE: Implications of trilateral partnership and cooperation agreement on the development of women's entrepreneurship between the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the National Commission and NCE "Atameken"</i></p>	
16.	<p>Do you think the project MEAL system is effective in supporting the implementation of the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Where there any concrete changes in project implementation due to information captured through the MEAL system?</li> </ul> <p>Do you share the results with others (beneficiaries, partners, etc.)? How?</p>	Gender equality / human rights
17.	<p>Do you think the project sufficiently addressed the root causes of gender inequality in Kazakhstan? What are some examples of root causes the project aimed to address?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How successful was the project in achieving that?</li> </ul>	Gender equality / human rights
18.	<p>Did the project adopt any strategy to reach the most vulnerable groups in project interventions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If yes, what kind of strategies?</li> <li>➤ If no, how this could be improved?</li> </ul>	Gender equality / human rights
19.	<p>Were, according to your perspective relevant stakeholders, including final beneficiaries, particularly the most vulnerable group, such as rural women and women with disabilities, sufficiently engaged/involved in the project planning and implementation? Please, specify your answer according to each stakeholder group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government stakeholders</li> <li>- CSOs/CBOs</li> <li>- Private sector</li> <li>- Final beneficiaries (man, women, girls and boys), including how you ensured that most vulnerable individuals and groups were reached, including rural women and women with disabilities?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What mechanism for their engagement and participation exists?</li> <li>➤ What could be done to improve their participation?</li> </ul>	Gender equality / human rights  Relevance
<b>Lessons Learned and Recommendations</b>		
20.	<p>Do you have any recommendations or suggestions for future joint-UN projects? What could have been done differently?</p> <p>Do you have any recommendations or suggestions on what else could be done to improve gender equality/WEE/GEWE/EVAW in the country?</p>	

**Government Agencies / Service providers / institutional project beneficiaries / CSOs**

The language used and the use of terminology/concepts will be adjusted to each group of respondents, as perceived relevant.

The questions will be adjusted whether the consulted stakeholder's focus is on WEE, GEWE or EVAW?

A.	INTRODUCTION / Understanding the context	
A.1	To give context to your answers, could you please outline your position and responsibilities within your institution/organization?	
A.2	Can you tell us more about your institution? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is the mandate/key responsibilities of your institution, particularly as regards WEE/GEWE/ EVAW?</li> <li>➤ What kind of programs do you have/services offer?</li> </ul>	
A.3	Again, to give context, please summarize your experience/involvement with the project in question. How did you get involved [as an organization/individual]?	
A.4	What, in your view, are the main challenges in terms of achieving gender equality in Kazakhstan?	Relevance
A.5.	Has this always been the same or has it changed, and how in the last years <i>[or if relevant since the beginning of the project]</i> ? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What are the factors affecting these changes?</li> <li>➤ [If additional clarification is needed: Can any of the changes be attributed to the project?]</li> <li>➤ If not, what/who can they be attributed to?</li> </ul>	Relevance / Effectiveness / Impact
A.6	<i>[if sub-question will be needed]</i> To frame the question differently, what have been the main positive benefits and any (sustainable) changes you see from the Umbrella project? [for you/your institution and other stakeholders ?] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What specific activities and interventions of the Umbrella project contributed to these achievements?</li> <li>➤ Were there any other stakeholders and or factors that contributed to the achievement of the project? Please, specify.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evaluators notes:</b>  <i>To triangulate some of the reported achievements and contribution of the Umbrella project:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Amendments and additions to the Labor Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which provide for the abolition of the list of 191 professions prohibited for women (UN Women)</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Regulation for the interdepartmental response of the sectors involved to domestic violence has been developed (UNFPA)</i></li> <li>➤ <i>SOPs on prevention and interdepartmental response to violence in the sphere of family and domestic relations</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Adoption of NAP on Women, Peace and Security</i></li> </ul>	Effectiveness / Sustainability
7	Do you see any challenges in how the project has been implemented? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Have the challenges been resolved?</li> <li>➤ Could something, in your opinion, be done differently?\</li> </ul>	All criteria

	<p><b>Evaluators notes:</b> In terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Project planning/design</li> <li>➤ Structure/governance</li> <li>➤ Coordination/management</li> <li>➤ Synergies/coherence/overlapping of different project initiatives</li> <li>➤ Financial structure and management of the project [short financial cycle, delays with decision-making, administrative requirements]</li> </ul> <p><i>[NOTE: For external contractors - challenges with communication, coordination, payment of funds, interference by the responsible agencies, etc.]</i></p>	
8.	<p>How is the dialogue between government and UN agencies / implementing partners achieved? What are the mechanisms of cooperation and decision-making established?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Could this be improved? If yes, how?</li> </ul>	
9.	<p><b>ONLY FOR GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION ACTING AS A DONOR</b> According to your perspective, does the project has sufficient resources allocated to achieve its intended results?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If not, where there were gaps?</li> </ul> <p>Do you think the project has been designed and implemented in an efficient way?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Which factors negatively (or positively) affect the efficiency of the project? (i.e., late approval of the annual programmes, high administrative requirements, etc.)</li> <li>➤ How could these be addressed in future projects?</li> <li>➤ Did the project have sufficient/effective financial monitoring mechanisms in place?</li> </ul>	Efficiency
10.	<p><i>[if not clarified above]</i> What is the mandate or your institution in the field of WEE/GEWE/ EAW?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do you feel your institution has sufficient capacities and resources (human and financial to achieve its mission and vision, including to continue implementing some of the project activities and using its outputs?</li> <li>➤ [If sub-question is needed]: Did you strengthen your capacities in any way?</li> <li>➤ Is there additional support, resource, and guidance needed? If so, what kind?</li> </ul> <p><b>Evaluators notes:</b> <i>To discuss the use of some of specifically developed outputs, as relevant.</i></p>	Human Rights Sustainability
11.	<p>How would you assess your cooperation with different stakeholders when it comes to ensuring WEE/GEWE/ EAW?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ With whom do you cooperate the most? <i>[Please, distinguish between individual government agencies/CSOs and other actors]</i></li> </ul>	Coherence

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do you see that cooperation could be strengthened in any way? [if not discussed above]</li> <li>➤ [if additional clarification is needed: Has the project in any way contributed to improved cooperation and synergies of all stakeholders in the field of WEE/GEWE/ EAW?</li> <li>➤ [if additional clarification is needed: do you see synergies/duplications or overlaps, absence of coherence among different stakeholders working in the field of WEE/GEWE/ EAW?</li> </ul> <p><b>Evaluators notes:</b> To explore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Internal synergies between UN Women projects (i.e., Assistance to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, The Spotlight Initiative Regional Programme, etc.)?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Synergies between the different interventions of UN agencies carried out as part of the project (i.e., parenting programmes of UN Women &amp; UNICEF, WAVC interventions of UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA)</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Synergies with other interventions of partners and broader UNCT team</i></li> </ul>	
12.	<p>How effective, do you think, is UN Women in carrying its mandate as coordinating agency in the field of gender equality?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do you see any challenges how the agency is fulfilling its mandate? Do you have any recommendations how this could be strengthened improved?</li> </ul>	Coherence
13,	<p>[if relevant] Will you be able to be active/continue working in the [highlight specific field of the project] or use specific output when the project ends? [i.e. to continue to utilize gained capacities, use the outputs, continue activities]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If not, tell us why not?</li> <li>➤ [if not answered above]: Do you have sufficient institutional capacities and resources to be able to continue to work?</li> <li>➤ Do you think a level of ownership has been achieved over the project activities and resources? If now, why not?</li> <li>➤ What can be done to strengthen the sustainability of project activities/interventions?</li> </ul>	Sustainability
13.	<p>Do you think the project is sufficiently addressing the root causes of gender inequality in Kazakhstan (to adjust systemic barriers in WEE, root causes of GBV, etc)? What are some examples of root causes the project aimed to address?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How successful were you/your project in doing that?</li> </ul>	Human Rights & Gender equality
14.	<p>Were you sufficiently engaged in the project planning and implementation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How about other stakeholders, including final beneficiaries, particularly the most vulnerable men and women (rural women, women with disabilities, etc.)</li> <li>➤ What mechanism for their engagement and participation exists?</li> </ul>	Human Rights & Gender equality Relevance



Lessons Learned And Recommendations	
15.	Do you have any recommendations or suggestions on what could be done differently in future projects of such type?
16.	Do you have any recommendations or suggestions on what else could be done to improve WEE/GEWE/ EAW in the country?

### FGD/KIIs Guide Questions Guidelines for:

#### Final beneficiaries [men and women]

*The language used and the use of terminology/concepts will be adjusted to each group of respondents, as perceived relevant.*

1.	To give context, please summarize your experience/involvement with the project in question. How did you get involved and in which activities you participated? ➤ [if additional clarification is needed] What kind of services have you received/activities being involved?	
2.	Do you see women and men as being equal in Kazakhstan? [if relevant: how about other gender non-conforming people?]	
3.	What, if any, in your view, are the main challenges in terms of achieving gender equality in Kazakhstan [to adjust to WEE/GEWE/VAWC? ➤ [If relevant] What specific challenges, if any, you are facing, as a [add specific to the responded, i.e., women with disability, rural women]?	Relevance
4.	Has this always been the same or has it changed, and if so, how in the last years [or if relevant since the beginning of the project]? ➤ What are the factors affecting these changes? ➤ Do you think project has sufficiently addressed this challenges?  For final beneficiaries with disabilities: ➤ Do you think project sufficiently address the challenges you are facing as woman with disabilities? ➤ If not, what challenges were not taken into account?	Relevance / Effectiveness
5.	[if sub-question will be needed] To frame the question differently, what has changed in your life or life in your family/community due to the project [your participation in the activity]? ➤ How did you used the gained skilled? Is there something you or others have done differently because you have participated in this project?  <b>Evaluators notes</b> For men engage: ➤ Why do you think it is important for men to engage in addressing violence against women?	All criteria

	<p><i>For final beneficiaries engaged in the WEE:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Can you provide us with any examples of how you have used knowledge and skills to improve your economic/employment situation?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Were have you heard about the WEE opportunities for women?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>[if relevant] Who has helped you the most?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How do you see the work of the entrepreneurship development centers?</i></li> </ul>	
6.	<p>Do you see any challenges in how the project/the activities you participated have been implemented?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Have the challenges been resolved?</li> </ul> <p>Could something, in your opinion, be done differently?</p>	
7.	<p>Have you received any materials/trainings as part of the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do you think they are useful? How have you used them?</li> <li>➤ Were you consulted/involved in the development of such materials? If yes, in what way? If not, do you think that would be useful?</li> </ul> <p><b>Evaluators note:</b>  <i>Man engage:</i>  <i>Guide how to be responsible father / TOT training for Men Engage, etc.</i>  <i>Media:</i>  <i>Trainings/media brochures/PR materials</i></p>	Relevance Effectiveness
8.	<p>Asked, if relevant:  Do you believe awareness raising on gender equality has improved in recent years?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If yes, why you think this is so (what contributed to that?)</li> </ul>	
9.	<p>[if relevant] Will you be able to be active/continue working and using the skills gained in the [highlight specific field of the project/activity] when you will stop receiving support from the project? [<i>i.e. to continue to utilize gained capacities, outputs, continue with activities</i> ]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What can be done to strengthen the sustainability of project activities/interventions [or for you to be able to continue using gained skills]?</li> </ul>	Sustainability
10.	<p>Were you, at any time during the project, consulted on the project activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If yes, do you think you opinion has been sufficiently taken into account?</li> </ul>	Human rights
11.	<p>Do you think the project is reaching those who need support the most?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What else do you think could be done to reach those most excluded? Who are they?</li> <li>➤ Do you see any difference between women and men?</li> </ul>	Human rights & gender equality
12.	<p>Do you know how is the main actor in the country responsible for implementing projects and advocating for improved gender equality/WEE/VAWC?</p> <p>[If relevant] Have you ever heard about the National Commission on gender equality?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you ever come across some of its promotional materials? What kind?</li> </ul>	Human Rights Effectiveness Relevance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think about those?</li> </ul>	
<b>Lessons Learned and Recommendations</b>		
13.	Do you have any recommendations or suggestions on how projects of such type can be improved?	
14.	Do you have any recommendations or suggestions on what else could be done to improve WEE/GEWE/ EAW in Kazakhstan?	

## Annex 6. Terms of Reference of Evaluation

Final Evaluation of the project “Assistance in strengthening national capacity, coordinating, and creating effective interdepartmental measures to implement family and gender policies, expand women's contribution to national production and its growth in order to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 5, 8 and 10 and introduce multisectoral approach to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Kazakhstan” jointly implemented by UN Women, and UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP in Kazakhstan.

### Background

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women’s equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women’s leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women’s economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system’s work in advancing gender equality.

The Government of Kazakhstan has taken important steps to eliminate gender-based inequalities and improve the status of women. Kazakhstan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1998 and Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was ratified in 1989. In 2015 Kazakhstan joined the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030. In 2021 Kazakhstan has joined two Action Coalitions (GBV and

Economic Justice and Rights) in a framework of the Generation Equality Forum 2021 and the Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.

The National Commission for Women and Family Affairs and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan was created by a presidential decree in 1998, to implement gender and family policy and coordinate work among the Government, Civil Society, and International community. Furthermore, in 2009, laws On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities of Men and Women and On Prevention of Domestic Violence were adopted. Currently, national stakeholders are working on the new Draft Law on the strengthening of the Family institution in Kazakhstan which includes amendments pertaining to the Domestic Violence legislation and normative acts.

In this context in 2019 with the support of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the National Commission for Women and Family Affairs and Demographic Policy UN Women Kazakhstan Country Office launched the project “Assistance in strengthening national capacity, coordinating, and creating effective interdepartmental measures to implement family and gender policies, expand women's contribution to national production and its growth in order to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 5, 8 and 10 and introduce multisectoral approach to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Kazakhstan”.

Total Programme budget is \$2,143,311 which includes \$285,000 contribution of UN agencies (UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, and UNDP).

The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan has provided \$1,858,311, or 87% of the funds for the programme. Tranches made according to the following schedule stipulated in the Donor Agreement:

#	Tranches	Amount in USD
1.	First tranche	USD 575,842
2.	Second tranche	USD 605,200
3.	Third tranche	USD 677,269
	Total	\$1,858,311

Tranches among UN agencies are distributed as follows:

#	UN agency	Amount in USD
1.	UN Women	USD 1,166,620
2.	UNFPA	USD 375,299
3.	UNICEF	USD 252,749
4.	UNDP	USD 63,643
	Total	\$1,858,311

The project became a platform for building organizational capacity, strengthening partnerships, expanding and mobilizing joint efforts at all levels, as well as supported research and knowledge accumulation. It has contributed to the implementation of the strategic areas of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Strategic Plan of the UN Women 2018-2021 Framework in the field of promoting gender equality, expanding women's economic opportunities and providing comprehensive support in the prevention and combating violence against women in Kazakhstan.

The project uses a strategy of comprehensive multidimensional approach in solving the most acute social problems of women and girls in the country today. The Project sets the goal to impact the lives of citizens of Kazakhstan, since the overarching component of the Project - effective implementation of the Family and Gender Policy was designed to introduce new gender responsive programmes on a national level, strengthen the capacity and institutional framework of the National Commission on Women and Family Affairs and Demographic Policy, improve national gender and family policies, raise awareness about gender issues, reduce gender stereotypes, and develop social norms for a stronger and inclusive society. In addition, in the framework of EAW and WEE components, the Project reaches-out to specific target audiences of women and girls, including in rural areas in order to deliver direct outcomes. Key beneficiaries are socially vulnerable women, including in rural areas, survivors of domestic violence, unemployed women; women in informal sector of the economy, parents, children, men and boys.

Government investments have improved infrastructure and social services, and the country has made progress in human development, however, social and regional disparities are widening rather than narrowing, and Kazakhstan faces numerous complex development challenges in the field of human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment.

Kazakhstan aligns its national plans and programmes with its Strategy "Kazakhstan 2050" and has the goal to join the top 30 most developed countries in the world by 2050. Achievement of this goal will depend on Kazakhstan's ability to become a more inclusive society, with equal opportunities for women and men, with more participatory decision-making and more sustainable, human-centered growth.

The project is being implemented in order to achieve the long-term goal of promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls in Kazakhstan through work on 1) effective implementation of gender and family policy in Kazakhstan, 2) economic integration of socially vulnerable women, development and implementation of policies and draft laws in the field of social protection that will provide decent employment opportunities for vulnerable women and will contribute to the elimination of gender discrimination related to unpaid work of women caring for family members, and 3) provision of comprehensive support for the integration of multisectoral response measures and an integrated government approach to the prevention of violence against women in Kazakhstan.

The UN Women structure and the project partners are guided by the Theory of Change based on the following hypotheses:

- If national laws and policies on gender equality and family affairs are strengthened and implemented;
- If systemic barriers related to participation in unpaid work and unequal access to social protection services for rural and vulnerable women are eliminated, in order to ensure the full participation of women in the economy;
- If state institutions have adopted and are using effective approaches to preventing and responding to violence against women and girls,

then the rights and opportunities of women will be expanded and their equality in the social, political and economic spheres of life, their protection from violence and their full contribution to national sustainable development will be ensured.

The project is implemented taking into account the close relationship with national priorities, in particular with the "Concept of Family and Gender Policy until 2030", with issues of gender equality, economic empowerment of women and combating gender violence. A special focus is aimed at fulfilling Kazakhstan's commitments under the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, contributing to the implementation of the tasks provided for by the UN Kazakhstan Development Partnership Framework for 2016-2020 and 2021-2025, as well as direct correlation with the priorities of the UN Women Global Strategic Plan for 2018-2021, "UNFPA Strategic Plan for 2018-2021", "UNICEF Strategic Plan for 2018-2021", "UNDP Strategic Plan for 2018-2021" and compliance with the "UN Women Strategic Note in Kazakhstan for 2016-2020 and 2022-2025.

Moreover, the project contributes to Kazakhstan's commitment to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals: 1 "Poverty eradication", 3 "Good health and well-being", 5 "Gender equality", 8 "Decent work and economic growth", 10 "Reducing inequality", 16 "Peace, justice and strong institutes", 17 "Partnerships".

In addition, the project contributed to the implementation of the tasks provided for by the recommendations in the UN General Framework program "Leaving No One Behind: equality and non-discrimination at the center of sustainable development" (Leaving No One Behind, hereinafter LNOB). At the country level, progress has been made in targeted activities with LNOB groups, including young women and women from socially vulnerable segments of the population, as well as women with disabilities. At the global level, the UN Women Structure supports awareness-raising activities, knowledge gathering and coordination of the UN in relation to socially vulnerable women.

Evaluation purpose, objectives and intended use

A final external evaluation of the "Assistance in strengthening national capacity, coordinating, and creating effective interdepartmental measures to implement family and gender policies, expand

women's contribution to national production and its growth in order to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 5, 8 and 10 and introduce multisectoral approach to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Kazakhstan” project 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 the programmatic progress and performance of the above described intervention from the point of view of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency and sustainability.

Targeted users of the evaluation are the personnel of the participating UN agencies in Kazakhstan, implementing UN partners and responsible parties, and the government counterparts at local and national levels, CSOs, and other UN agencies, donor community and development partners present in Kazakhstan, and the programme beneficiaries.

The evaluation should also provide specific recommendations as to the priority areas that should be considered in further programming, including 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.

The findings of the evaluation will contribute to effective programming, refining the approaches of participating UN agencies to women and girls’ empowerment, learning, capacity building and ability to participate in community development. 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 role and contribution of girls and women for inclusive local development with a particular focus on gender equality, and providing comprehensive support in the prevention and combating violence against women in Kazakhstan.

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance of the Programme at the national level and alignment with the needs of the intended beneficiaries and with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women’s empowerment;
- Assess the organizational efficiency of the Programme in relation to delivering the desired results of the Programme;
- Assess the effectiveness related to the achievement of the Programme results as identified in the Programme document, as well as unintended outcomes;
- Assess the sustainability of the Programme’s results;
- Analyze how the human rights-based approach and gender equality principles were integrated in the design and implementation of the Programme;
- Identify and validate lessons learned, good practices and innovations of efforts that support gender equality and human rights in this area of work; and
- Provide recommendations with respect to future work related to provision of holistic services including engaging boys and girls in promoting respectful relationships and gender equality.

## Duties and Responsibilities

The main purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the programmatic progress and performance of the above-described intervention from the perspective of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency and sustainability. The evaluation will identify the efficiency and effectiveness of joint initiatives of the UN Women in Kazakhstan, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. The UN Women Evaluation Policy and the project “Assistance in strengthening national capacity, coordinating, and creating effective interdepartmental measures to implement family and gender policies, expand women's contribution to national production and its growth in order to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 5, 8 and 10 and introduce multisectoral approach to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Kazakhstan” are the main guiding documents that set forth the principles and organizational framework for evaluation planning, conduct and follow-up in UN Women. These principles are aligned with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, Standards for Evaluation in the UN System<sup>1</sup> and Ethical Guidelines. <sup>2</sup> Findings of the final external evaluation will inform UN Women Kazakhstan, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan and National Commission future work in the area of gender and family policy, women’s economic empowerment, and ending violence against women and girls. The external evaluation will further identify lessons learned, best practices and challenges of the Project and will greatly inform the development of the follow-up programmatic interventions. The evaluation will not be able to fully assess the Project’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 primary intended users of this evaluation are: • UN Women Kazakhstan CO, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF • Programme/project partners • National government institutions • Civil society representatives • Donors and development partners • UN Country Team and GTG Primary intended uses of this evaluation are: a. Learning and improved decision-making to support the development of the next Programme/project; b. Accountability for the development effectiveness of the joint collaboration of the UN agencies in terms of contribution to gender equality and women’s empowerment; c. Capacity development and mobilisation of national stakeholders to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Objectives (evaluation criteria and key questions) The specific evaluation objectives are as follows: 1. Analyze the relevance and coherence of the Project’s implementation strategy and approaches of “Assistance in strengthening national capacity, coordinating, and creating effective interdepartmental measures to implement family and gender policies, expand women's contribution to national production and its growth in order to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 5, 8 and 10 and introduce multisectoral approach to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Kazakhstan”; 2. Assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the project’s results; 3. Analyze how human rights based approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the programme implementation; 4. Assess the sustainability of the results and the interventions in advancing gender equality in the target group; 5. Assess how the intervention and its results relate and contribute to the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals; 6. Validate the project results in terms of achievements and/or weaknesses toward the outcome and outputs; 7. Determine the impact of the interventions with respect to family and gender policy, gender equality, women’s empowerment, and ending violence against women and girls. 8. Assess the



sustainability of the results achieved by the project;9. Document lessons learned, best practices, success stories and challenges to inform future collaboration of UN Women Kazakhstan, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan and National Commission in addressing family and gender policy, women's economic empowerment and ending violence against women and girls.10. Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices;11. Provide actionable recommendations for future programmatic developments and maximize ownership by partners in the country covered by the project;

The evaluation will apply four OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness (including normative, and coordination mandates of UN Women), efficiency, and sustainability) and Human Rights and Gender Equality as an additional criterion.

The evaluation process has five phases:1) Preparation: gathering and analysing project 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 online meetings. 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 Kazakhstan is responsible for the development of 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. Evaluation team will be responsible for phases 2-4 outlined above.

Scope of the evaluationThe final evaluation of the Project implemented by UN Women in close collaboration with UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP "Assistance in strengthening national capacity, coordinating, and creating effective interdepartmental measures to implement family and gender policies, expand women's contribution to national production and its growth in order to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) 1, 5, 8 and 10 and introduce multisectoral approach to combat domestic violence in the Republic of Kazakhstan" will be conducted at the end of project implementation and will cover the entire duration of the project 2019-2021.

The evaluation is scheduled between September 2021- and January 2022. The final evaluation of the project is to be conducted externally by an International consultant and a National consultant. It is planned to be completed in 32 days. 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 evaluation team is expected to undertake a rapid evaluability assessment in the inception phase of the evaluation. This should include the following:1. An assessment of the relevance,

appropriateness and coherence of the implicit or explicit theory of change, strengthening or reconstructing it where necessary through a stakeholder workshop;2. An assessment of the quality of performance indicators in the DRF and OEEF, and the accessibility and adequacy of relevant documents and secondary data;3. A review of the conduciveness of the context for the evaluation;4. Ensuring familiarity with accountability and management structures for the evaluation.