

**Mid-term Review of the UN Women
Kenya Country programme 2023-2026,
November 2024**

List of Acronyms

AfDB:	African Development Bank
AGPO:	Access to Government Procurement Opportunities
BETA:	Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COG:	Council of Governors
CSO:	Civil Society Organization
DAMS:	Donor Agreement Management System
DG:	Democratic Governance
DRF:	Development Results Framework
ERP:	Enterprise Resource Planning
EVAW:	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
GATE:	Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use
GEWE:	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GIHA:	Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action
GSWG	Gender Sector Working Group
IASC:	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDA:	International Development Association
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
KCO:	Kenya Country Office
KII:	Key Informant Interview
KNBS:	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KOICA:	Korea International Cooperation Agency
M&E:	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPTF:	UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund
MTP:	Medium Term Plan
MTR:	Medium Term Review
NDB:	New Development Bank
NDMA:	National Drought Management Authority
ODA:	Official Development Assistance
OEE:	Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency
PGAMS:	Partners Agreement Management System
PWD:	Persons With Disability
RMS:	Result Management System
SDFGAA:	State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
SMT:	Senior Management Team
TfGBV:	Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence
UN OCHA:	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UNCT:	United Nations Country Team
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNSDCF:	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WEE:	Women's Economic Empowerment
WFP:	World Food Programme
WPS:	Women, Peace, and Security

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Executive Summary

The UN Women Kenya Country Office (KCO) is implementing a four-year Strategic Note (2023-2026) aligned with Kenya’s national goals and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). This Mid-Term Review (MTR) assesses the programme’s progress, relevance, and effectiveness, aiming to optimize KCO’s contributions to gender equality in Kenya.

Methodology

The MTR findings and recommendations are based on a mixed approach, drawing on both desk review, interviews and surveys.

Key Findings

Relevance and Theory of Change: The MTR confirms the Country programme’s Theory of Change and its alignment with Kenya’s UNSDCF and the evolving needs of women and girls. The programme’s adaptability to Kenya’s shifting political and economic landscape enhances its relevance and impact.

Progress on SN Performance: By the end of 2023, UN Women’s Kenya Country Program had achieved 40% of the targets of its 10 outcome indicators, with 10% ongoing and 30% not achieved. Key successes include advancements in gender-sensitive policies, increased women’s leadership, and improved social services. The program also saw 56% of output indicators met or exceeding targets.

Strategic Partnerships: Partnerships are crucial for achieving gender equality goals. Collaborations with entities like the Council of Governors (COG) and the State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action (SDfGAA) support gender mainstreaming and local policy implementation. However, there is room for improving the partnership effectiveness, particularly in aligning legislative and policy support at the grassroots level.

Resource Mobilization resource mobilization has faced challenges due to shifting donor priorities, affecting critical outcome areas like women’s governance participation, Ending violence against women and girls, and Women, Peace, and Security. Strengthening local partnerships and diversifying funding sources,

including by engaging with private sector entities and international philanthropies, could bolster financial stability.

UN Coordination: UN Women Kenya has significantly advanced gender equality by leading the Gender Theme Group, coordinating stakeholders, and supporting national frameworks like the National Gender Sector Working Group. Its efforts have mainstreamed gender in policies, programs, and advocacy, aligning with global frameworks such as the SDGs. While impactful nationally, its coordination is less effective at the county level, necessitating increased focus. Through capacity building and technical assistance, UN Women has strengthened gender advocacy and integration across sectors in Kenya.

Programme Delivery and Operations Efficiency: Effective resource management and risk mitigation systems are essential, but funding constraints and operational imbalances challenge efficient delivery. Enhancing cross-functional collaboration with other UN entities could alleviate resource strains, strengthening a more integrated approach to program delivery.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting: KCO's robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks provide a strong foundation for tracking programme progress. However, limited M&E staffing and resource constraints affect data analysis and reporting. Investing in integrated reporting systems and advocating for adequate M&E funding in project budgets would strengthen program accountability. Expanding the team is crucial to balancing workloads and enhancing performance.

Communications and Knowledge Management: Knowledge Management and Communications function has limited staffing due to insufficient funding. While processes like SOPs, weekly meetings, and centralized documentation help maintain continuity, they need strengthening to address workflow disruptions and ensure long-term quality. Additionally, formalizing knowledge-sharing mechanisms is necessary to improve consistency and leverage institutional memory effectively.

Key Recommendations:

- i. *Sustainability:* To ensure long-term impact, KCO should integrate gender-responsive policies into county development plans, promote local ownership, and align with Kenya's Vision 2030 and gender strategies. Strengthening partnerships with government, private sector, and community organizations, leveraging financial innovations like gender bonds, and strengthening adaptive learning platforms will ensure scalability and sustainability.

- ii. *Programme Coherence:* KCO should strengthen coordination at the county level by integrating programs into County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs). This includes aligning programs with local frameworks, reducing duplication, promoting synergies among stakeholders, and deepening partnerships like WEPS and climate financing to drive gender-responsive innovation across governance levels.
- iii. *Strategic Partnerships:* KCO should engage more deeply with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Women's Rights Organizations (WROs), including youth-led organizations. This will amplify the voices of young women, introduce fresh ideas, and ensure youth perspectives are included in gender equality programmatic strategies, strengthening new leadership and change in the sector.
- iv. *Private Sector Engagement:* UN Women Kenya should expand private sector engagement by leveraging Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) for strategic partnerships, including with companies like Safaricom. Targeted business cases, visibility opportunities, and collaboration in tech and agriculture will diversify funding sources, enhancing partnerships and increasing support for gender equality initiatives.
- v. *Resource Mobilization:* To address funding gaps, KCO should diversify resource mobilization efforts by engaging private sector partners and international donors like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Collaborating with development banks and exploring innovative financing, such as social impact bonds, will strengthen financial sustainability. Additionally, hiring a Resource Mobilization Specialist will help secure long-term funding.
- vi. *Programme Delivery and Operations Efficiency:* KCO should address staffing gaps to improve expertise distribution across program and operational areas, ensuring effective and efficient program delivery. Strengthening staff capacity through training and recruitment will enhance operational performance, managing all program aspects with required expertise and attention to detail.
- vii. *Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting:* KCO should integrate reporting systems and advocate for adequate M&E funding to strengthen program accountability and track outcomes. Securing dedicated funding will stabilize operations and expand the team, ensuring balanced workloads and optimized reporting across thematic areas.
- viii. *Communications and Knowledge Management:* To reduce turnover and enhance expertise, KCO should invest in long-term contracts and training. Updated tools and technology, such as modern equipment and plagiarism checkers, will improve efficiency. Formalizing knowledge management with a centralized repository will strengthen institutional memory and ensure sustainable, high-quality outputs for future initiatives.

- ix. *Participation in Public Life:* UN Women should focus on enhancing women's political participation by advocating for the two-thirds gender principle, promoting structural reforms, and offering mentorship programs. Addressing barriers like underrepresentation in county planning and budgeting will ensure women's needs are prioritized, while empowering youth-led Women's Rights Organizations to amplify advocacy.
- x. *Devolution:* KCO should prioritize inclusive public participation, especially for women and marginalized groups, through transparent mechanisms at county levels. Efforts should focus on improving budget transparency, civic education, and citizen engagement in planning and oversight. Strengthening gender-responsive policy formulation and intergovernmental coordination will promote sustainable governance reforms.
- xi. *Gender and Statistics:* UN Women should advocate for better investment in gender data systems and their integration into planning and SDG tracking. Addressing barriers like cultural norms and digital exclusion, alongside improving technical and financial resources, will ensure gender data is used effectively in policy formulation, budgeting, and addressing gender disparities.
- xii. *Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action:* KCO should target women and girls' vulnerabilities in disaster-prone areas by providing safe spaces, GBV protection services, and legal support. Integrating IASC Recommendations into programming will strengthen coordination with humanitarian actors and ensure gender priorities are aligned, especially during climate-induced crises.
- xiii. *Addressing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TfGBV) and Femicide:* KCO should focus on strengthening regulatory frameworks and technological solutions to address TfGBV and femicide. This includes advocating for laws, implementing safety apps, and collaborating with tech companies to create safer online spaces, alongside promoting male engagement in shifting harmful gender norms.
- xiv. *Women's Economic Empowerment:* KCO should expand women's economic opportunities through initiatives like Digital Financial Inclusion and E-commerce. Exploring emerging sectors such as digital, blue, and purple economies will enhance women's economic resilience by diversifying income sources and promoting long-term sustainability in sectors like entrepreneurship, marine industries, and creative arts.
- xv. *UN Coordination:* UN Women should continue strengthening coordination within the UN Country Team (UNCT) by providing capacity-building and technical support for gender mainstreaming. Regular monitoring, evaluation, and reporting will ensure gender equality is integrated across

all UN programs, ensuring accountability and continuous progress toward achieving national and international gender equality goals.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

UN Women, rooted in the vision of equality as enshrined in the United Nations Charter, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, the empowerment of women, and the achievement of gender equality. The organization plays a pivotal role in supporting Member States' efforts to meet their gender equality goals and builds effective partnerships with civil society and other key stakeholders.

The UN Women Kenya Country Office (KCO) is currently implementing its four years country programme 2023-2026 under the auspices of the Strategic Note. The country programme is one of the key strategic planning documents for UN Women Country Offices (COs). It outlines the strategic direction and expected results in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and UN Women's Global Strategic Plan (SP) 2022-2025. KCOs' Country programme integrates both the Development Results Framework (DRF) and the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency (OEE) framework.

The country programme is fully aligned with Kenya's national priorities, including the Constitution of Kenya, the Fourth Medium Term Plan (MTP IV) 2023-2027, and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA). It is further guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2022-2026) strategic priorities, theory of change, and key results areas.

KCO's country programme is predicated on four outcome areas namely: *Outcome 1) Inclusive governance and gender-responsive, peace and security*¹, *Outcome 2) Women have increased productivity, income and access to resources and the capacity to mitigate and adapt to CC & DRs*², *Outcome 3) Women and girls enjoy quality basic social and protection services*³, *Outcome 4) UN System*

¹ That by 2026, all people in Kenya at risk of being left behind – particularly all women and girls, all youth and children, all in the ASAL counties and all in the informal urban settlements – inhabit an inclusive, enabling, socially cohesive and peaceful environment, while enjoying human rights, trust institutions and participate in transformative governance systems that are gender-responsive, just and rule of law compliant.

² That by 2026, all people in Kenya at risk of being left behind – particularly all women and girls, all youth and children, all in the ASAL counties and all in the informal urban settlements – have improved, inclusive and equitable social and protection services.

³ That by 2026, all people in Kenya at risk of being left behind – particularly all women and girls, all youth and children, all in the ASAL counties and all in the informal urban settlements – benefit

coherence -where UNCT and GEWE stakeholders work together to deliver GEWE commitments⁴. The programme has five outputs under Outcome 1; three outputs under Outcome 2; two outputs under Outcome 3; and one output under Outcome 4.

KCO implements and delivers on the outcomes and outputs of its programme through four thematic areas, namely 1. *Governance & Participation in Public Life (DG) which has three portfolios—Normative work & Devolution, Gender and Statistics, and Women Political Participation*; 2) *Women Economic Empowerment (WEE)*; 3) *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG)*; and 4) *Women, Peace & Security, Humanitarian Action, & Disaster Risk Reduction (WPS)*. Instructively, Outcome 4 of the programme on UN System coherence is implemented through the Coordination Function.

1.2 Objectives of the Mid Term Review

Following the commencement of implementation of the country programme in early 2023, the Kenya Country Office (KCO) conducted in October-November 2024 a voluntary Mid-Term Review (MTR) to assess the extent to which the planned results were on target, identify areas that required improvement, and evaluate the relevance of the programme within the ever-changing global and national contexts.

The following were the objectives of the MTR for the country programme 2023-2026.

- a) To analyze and reflect on the progress of the country programme and the validity of UN-Women's strategy in Kenya and re-examine the country programme's theory of change and outcome areas (Women in Leadership and Decision Making; Women's Economic Empowerment; Ending Violence Against Women and Girls; Women Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action and Coordination).
- b) To analyze the programming context (including normative developments) and operational context, key UN Women strategic priorities and to facilitate alignment of the country programme with the analysis including taking corrective measures where gaps are identified.

from inclusive, sustainable, diversified and environmentally / climate-sensitive quality livelihoods with decent work in the sector economies and realize growth that is resilient, green and equitable.

⁴ The UN system coherently and systematically contributes to progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

- c) To assess key management issues, such as availability of data and evidence, to allow for informed and credible analysis of performance, and the 'evaluability' of the Country programme.
- d) To identify strategic directions for the next Country programme period after 2026, namely 2027-2030.
- e) To develop practical recommendations based on all the findings to address major gaps in the current Country programme.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The MTR findings and recommendations are based on a mixed approach, drawing on both desk review, interviews and surveys.

A thorough desk review of strategic documents was conducted to derive the findings of this mid-term review. This included the UN Women Kenya Country Office (KCO) Strategic Note (SN) 2023-2026, United Nation Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022-2026, KCO Corporate and Donor Reports, UN Kenya Annual Results Report, Common Country Analysis (CCA) 2023, and Key Government reports among others. The reviewed documents have been listed in Annex 1.

Fifteen Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted face to-face as well as online, targeting various UN agencies, Government Partners, donors collaborating with UN Women as well as the Senior Management Team (SMT) within KCO.

Two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with the Thematic Team Leads and the M&E Team to gather insights on the ongoing programme's implementation and coordination function. The MTR consultant also conducted two online surveys targeting implementing partners and KCO staff.

3.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

3.1 Governance and Participation in Public life

Public participation is a cornerstone of Kenya's Constitution, ensuring citizens' involvement in governance, policymaking, and decision-making. The Public Participation Act of 2018 provides guidelines for engaging citizens, but challenges remain, such as limited access to information, public awareness gaps, and logistical hurdles. While county governments have facilitated some citizen participation in local planning, the quality of participation remains poor, with marginalized groups, particularly women, underrepresented. This leads to gender-insensitive budget allocations, where the unique needs of women and girls are overlooked. Despite some improvement in budget transparency, with a 2% increase in the county transparency index from 35% to 41% between 2021 and

2022, women's underrepresentation continues to hinder the realization of gender-responsive budgeting.

To address these challenges, UN Women should focus on supporting gender-responsive public participation processes by implementing mentorship and training programs to empower (young) women in governance. The June 2024 protests against the Kenya Finance Bill highlighted youth frustration over exclusion from governance, underscoring the need for greater citizen engagement. Public participation must go beyond procedural formality and become a genuine effort to solicit citizen opinions. UN Women can advocate for gender inclusivity in public decision-making processes, ensuring women's active participation and representation.

The 2022 elections marked a significant increase in women's political participation, with more women running for and successfully securing leadership positions. However, challenges remain, as women still only constitute 23% of Cabinet positions, falling short of the constitutional target of 30%. Though the representation of women in political leadership has grown, structural reforms are still needed to ensure women's inclusion in key government positions. The dynamics offer both challenges and opportunities for UN Women to continue advocating for gender equality and the two-thirds gender principle in decision-making.

3.2 Devolution

Kenya's 2010 Constitution established a framework for devolution, yet challenges persist in achieving equitable service delivery, especially for marginalized groups. Disparities in regional development, lack of disaggregated data, and weak transparency and accountability mechanisms undermine devolution's potential. Devolved functions often remain underfunded, with substantial funds retained in national government ministries for responsibilities constitutionally assigned to counties. This misalignment hinders counties' capacity to fulfill their mandates effectively, as seen in sectors like health and water⁵. Public participation, while improving, remains inconsistent in quality and inclusiveness. Many citizens lack simplified information to engage meaningfully or hold county governments accountable for service delivery. Strengthening village administrations and fostering civic education could enhance citizen engagement and representation of marginalized voices in governance processes. Oversight by county assemblies is also underdeveloped, exacerbated by a dualistic relationship between governors and assemblies, unclear roles, and high turnover of MCAs. Greater

5 <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/520481645582955062/pdf/Making-Devolution-Work-for-Service-Delivery-in-Kenya.pdf>

clarity in roles and stronger civic education are essential to enable assemblies to provide effective oversight⁶. Finally, weak integration between county development plans and budgets undermines service delivery. Counties must improve planning processes, linking priorities to resources and outputs. This alignment would enhance accountability, enable monitoring, and improve service delivery outcomes.

3.2 Gender Data and Statistics

Kenya has made significant progress in the generation and use of gender statistics. A 2018 assessment,⁷ conducted by UN Women, identified limited demand for data-driven decision making, siloed data communities and lack of trust in data as some of the challenges facing production of gender data in Kenya. However, good strides have been made by the government of Kenya through the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) to enhance gender data⁸. For instance, the 2019 Population and Housing Census and the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2022 provided rich gender data. Despite these commendable trends, application of gender data in policy formulation, planning and budgeting, and tracking of SDGs remains a challenge due to limited production, accessibility and utilization. Some factors limiting production of gender data include cultural barriers such as gender-based violence, gender-data digital inclusion, and resource constraints including technical and financial limitations. It is important to note that the limited production and use of gender data in policymaking pose challenges to addressing gender disparities effectively. The progress by KNBS presents however an opportunity for UN Women to advocate for enhanced investment in gender data systems and promote its integration into evidence-based planning and SDG tracking.

3.3 Gender Based Violence

Gender based violence remains prevalent in Kenya. According to the 2022 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS), 34% of women in Kenya have experienced physical violence since the age of 15. This includes 16% who faced such violence often or sometimes in the 12 months preceding the survey⁹. In comparison, 27% of men have experienced physical violence since age 15, with 10% experiencing it in the past year. The survey also highlights a decline in the percentage of women experiencing physical violence in the 12 months before the

⁶ Ibid

⁷ https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Kenya_national-gender-stats-assessment.pdf

⁸

<https://data.unwomen.org/country/kenya#:~:text=The%20adolescent%20birth%20rate%20is,Kenya%20to%20achieve%20gender%20equality.>

⁹ <https://www.knbs.or.ke/reports/kdhs-2022/>

survey, from 20% in 2014 to 16% in 2022¹⁰. For men, this figure slightly decreased from 12% to 10% over the same period. Age appears to be a significant factor, with 20% of women aged 15–19 having experienced physical violence since age 15, compared to 42% of women aged 45–49. Marital status also plays a role; women who have ever been married are more likely to have experienced violence since age 15 than those who have never been married (41% versus 20%). FGM is on the rise in the counties. Further data indicates a rise in cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in certain counties. Between January and December 2020, a total of 5,009 GBV cases were recorded through the National GBV toll-free helpline (1195), marking an increase of 1,411 cases (36%) compared to the previous year. Nairobi, Kakamega, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Kiambu Counties reported the highest cases of GBV during this period¹¹.

Furthermore, cases of Femicide¹² have been on the rise in Kenya. A report by the Africa Data Hub indicates that at least 500 women and girls have been murdered since 2016 with 75 women having been murdered in 2024¹³. Family members and intimate partners constitute majority of the perpetrators of femicide. Important to note, most of the cases of femicide are because of family quarrel including attempts by women to walk away from relationships. In addition, Kenya has experienced an increase in the number of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TfGBV), especially for women in urban areas. Notably, women below the age of 40 years are more likely to experience TfGBV compared to those over the age of 40 due to their gender identity and higher level of information communication technology¹⁴.

3.4 Disasters and Conflicts

Climatic shocks have significantly impacted communities in Kenya. After five consecutive failed rainy seasons from 2020 to 2022, Kenya experienced above-average rainfall during the short rains of 2023 and 2024. In 2024, El Niño floods caused the deaths of at least 174 people and displaced over 500,000 households. Additionally, approximately 17,000 acres of farmland were destroyed, and around 13,000 livestock perished. A report by UN OCHA highlighted that 90% of those affected by the floods are in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) of Mandera, Garissa, Tana River, Wajir, Isiolo, and Meru counties¹⁵. Following the floods, 21

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ See a statement by the Government of Kenya: <https://gender.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Statement-by-Cabinet-Secretary-on-Increased-GBV-in-the-Country.pdf>

¹² Murder of women

¹³ <https://www.africadatahub.org/femicide-kenya>

¹⁴ <https://www.kictanet.or.ke/mdocs-posts/unmasking-the-trolls-research-on-online-gender-based-violence-in-kenya/>

¹⁵ El Niño floods worsen humanitarian needs in Kenya:

https://reliefweb.int/attachments/8cc4cead-f8cf-4e28-b724-b4ba53d5972c/REACH_KEN_Floods-brief_March-2024_final.pdf

ASAL counties were categorized under the “normal” phase, indicating that environmental, production, access, and utilization indicators were within their usual ranges due to good performance. However, Garissa and Kilifi counties were placed under “alert” drought phase due to delayed rainfall.

Women and children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Currently, 479,498 children aged 6 to 59 months and 110,169 pregnant and breastfeeding mothers from the ASAL counties are acutely malnourished and in need of treatment¹⁶. Persisting, climatic fluctuations are intensifying existing vulnerabilities and worsening the humanitarian crisis in the country especially for women and children.

Regarding conflicts, two examples of Garissa and Isiolo have shown that during the ‘alert’ drought phase, as per classification by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), there has been disputes between pastoralist communities in respect to natural resources like water. The fact that water resource points have dried up, has led to competition due to scarcity, which has often escalated into violent clashes. Furthermore, floods displaced communities into areas where pre-existing tribal conflicts over land and grazing intensified due to the new strain on resources

3.5 Economy

Kenya’s economy has experienced significant growth with real Gross Domestic Product increasing by 5.6% in 2023 compared to 4.9% in 2022. Notably, the wage employment in the formal sector grew by 4.1% in 2023, while growth in informal sector employment grew by 4.5%¹⁷. Under Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO), the amount reserved for procurement of goods and services by targeted interest groups is expected to increase by 10.9% from KSh 84.3 billion in 2022/23 to KSh 93.5 billion in 2023/24 while the value of tenders awarded is expected to increase by 10.8% to KSh 28.7 billion in the same period. The total number of tenders awarded to women is expected to increase by 22.1% from 20,706 in 2022/23 to 25,288 in 2023/24. The number of tenders awarded to Youth, Women and PWDs are expected to increase by 22.4%, 21.6% and 24.8% to 8,828, 14,422 and 2,038, respectively, in 2023/24. Women are expected to be awarded a majority of the tenders accounting for 57.0% of the total number of tenders in 2023/24¹⁸. In terms of the gender digital divide, the gap in internet

¹⁶ National Drought Early Warning Bulletin September 2024:

[https://knowledgeweb.ndma.go.ke/Public/Resources/ResourceDetails.aspx?doc=deac55b9-dbe9-44f5-90ad-](https://knowledgeweb.ndma.go.ke/Public/Resources/ResourceDetails.aspx?doc=deac55b9-dbe9-44f5-90ad-1fba9b564834&_gl=1*1ijha0j*_ga*Mjk1NDI0MTY0LjE3MzAxMjA1NDU.*_ga_RVYWZRJTGS*MTczMDYyMDU0NS4xLjEuMTczMDEyMDY2Mi4wLjAuMA)

[1fba9b564834&_gl=1*1ijha0j*_ga*Mjk1NDI0MTY0LjE3MzAxMjA1NDU.*_ga_RVYWZRJTGS*MTczMDYyMDU0NS4xLjEuMTczMDEyMDY2Mi4wLjAuMA](https://knowledgeweb.ndma.go.ke/Public/Resources/ResourceDetails.aspx?doc=deac55b9-dbe9-44f5-90ad-1fba9b564834&_gl=1*1ijha0j*_ga*Mjk1NDI0MTY0LjE3MzAxMjA1NDU.*_ga_RVYWZRJTGS*MTczMDYyMDU0NS4xLjEuMTczMDEyMDY2Mi4wLjAuMA)

¹⁷ <https://www.knbs.or.ke/reports/2024-economic-survey/>

¹⁸ <https://www.knbs.or.ke/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-Economic-Survey.pdf>

usage between men and women in Kenya is 14.9% with men constituting 52.6% of the mobile or internet users while women only constitute 37.6%¹⁹. The foregoing data is indicative that more efforts should be made in enhancing capacities of women to have access to both formal and informal employments, and access to government procurement opportunities. In addition, to close the digital gender divide in Kenya, more efforts should be made towards skilling and employability of women.

4.0 RISK ANALYSIS

Kenya's economic landscape is strained due to rising taxation and the increasing cost of living as the government grapples with balancing fiscal responsibility with the need for economic growth and social equity. This has created several risks impacting gender equality initiatives and sustainable development, especially for marginalized communities in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL).

4.1 Political and Social Risks

Rising taxes have triggered protests, particularly by the younger population (Gen-Z). Their demands for reduced government expenditure, including cutting the wage bill, could undermine critical policy commitments, such as implementing the two-thirds gender rule, and stalling or reversing progress on gender parity in leadership. This may also deprioritize gender-responsive budgeting, reducing the allocation of resources to initiatives designed to address women's and girls' needs in key sectors such as education, healthcare, and social services. Working closely with government and development partners, UN Women KCO and other stakeholders can advocate for the prioritization of gender-responsive budgeting within the national and county fiscal frameworks to safeguard critical gender equality programs from austerity measures.

4.2 Economic Risks

Government efforts to control spending may involve cuts to county-level budgets, which could disproportionately affect marginalized populations in ASAL regions, already prone to climate challenges and poverty. This might lead to increased internal migration from drought-stricken areas, amplifying the humanitarian crisis and placing additional pressure on fragile ecosystems and infrastructure in neighboring counties or urban areas. The recent 16.7% decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Kenya²⁰, poses a major threat to the financing

¹⁹

<https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/economies/kenya#:~:text=Women%20represented%2049.6%25%20of%20those,available%20between%202014%20and%202024.>

²⁰ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.CD?locations=KE>

of gender equality programs risking Kenya's progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4.3 Operational and Programmatic Risks

Budgetary constraints at the national and county levels, hinder the UN Women and other implementing partners' (IPs) capacity to support gender-focused initiatives in Kenya. ASAL regions are particularly vulnerable to the economic and environmental shocks arising from budget cuts and austerity measures. However, the participation of UN Women in the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) and its leadership in the Gender Technical Working Group presents an opportunity to mitigate these risks by ensuring gender is mainstreamed across the interventions in joint programs.

4.4 Reputational Risks

Failure to implement the two-thirds gender rule due to fiscal pressures could significantly impact Kenya's country programming agenda by undermining alignment with international frameworks like CEDAW and UNSCR 1325, as well as hindering progress on SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 16 (Peace and Justice). This could lead to strained relations with international donors who prioritize gender equality, potentially reducing funding for key programs. Additionally, gender-responsive initiatives, particularly those focusing on women's political participation and empowerment, may be deprioritized, weakening the effectiveness of gender-focused programming. To mitigate these risks, Kenya must consider a phased approach to the rule's implementation, strengthen partnerships with donors, and align gender equity goals with broader national development strategies.

4.5 Decreasing funding volume

The International Development Association (IDA) and the World Bank reported a decrease in funding for gender programming from \$62 billion in 2020 to approximately \$52 billion in 2022²¹. This decline is notable given that total official development assistance (ODA) increased by 12% during the same period²². In 2022, only 2.8% of bilateral aid was explicitly targeted at gender equality, marking a decrease from 3.6% in 2020²³. Furthermore, just 18% of total bilateral aid allocated to gender equality specifically focused on SDG 5. Most of the funding continues to be directed towards gender-based violence and health initiatives,

²¹ <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/oda-trends-and-statistics.html>.

²² Ibid

²³ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/0f24c247ee7ff97f6034aba59d3e16e1-0410012023/original/ida-piecing-together-gender-equality-4-2023.pdf>

with less emphasis on areas like economic empowerment²⁴. In 2024, the effects of inflation and geopolitical instability, including the war in Ukraine, are expected to further strain resources, potentially exacerbating the funding crisis.

5.0 PROGRESS ON SN PERFORMANCE

The progress on the performance of the Strategic Note 2023-2026 mid-term review of years 2023 and 2024, was based on data drawn from UN Women's Results Management System (RMS).

5.1 DRF Outcome Indicators Performance

UN Women's Kenya Country Program monitors 10 outcome indicators, each with updated baselines and defined targets. By the end of 2023, 40%²⁵ of these indicators were either partially or fully achieved, indicating steady progress in most areas. However, 10% of the indicators, mainly those related to elections, were reported as having *No Status* pending the 2027 General Election. Additionally, 30% of the indicators were reported as ongoing, suggesting that more interventions are needed to meet these targets in the next phase of the country programme's implementation.

Key achievements include significant advancements in development, adoption and implementation of gender-sensitive policy frameworks, particularly at the county level, increased women's participation in leadership roles, more inclusive and equitable social and protection services, and the promotion of inclusive, sustainable, diversified, and environmentally/climate-sensitive livelihoods. Efforts to enhance peace and security have seen moderate success, as reflected in Kenya's low ranking in the Women Peace & Security index.

²⁴ See Focus 2030: <https://focus2030.org/Which-countries-support-gender-equality-in-their-Official-Development>

²⁵ This percentage and subsequent ones within the sub-section are based on the 10 Outcome Indicators

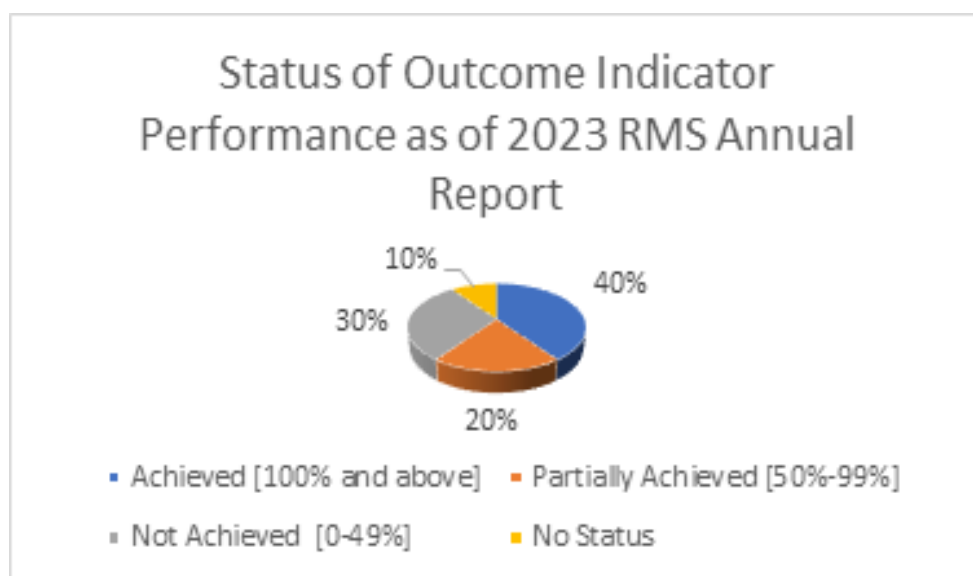


Figure 1: Outcome Indicator Performance as of 2023

5.2 DRF Output Indicator Performance

KCO's Development Results Framework (DRF) comprises 16 outputs with 45 indicators. As illustrated in Figure 2 below, the 2023 annual report indicates that 56% of these output indicators *achieved* or exceeded their targets, demonstrating notable success in gender-based initiatives. Specifically, outputs RD_D_1.3.1, RD_D_1.4.1, and RD_D_1.1.9 fully met or surpassed all their indicator targets. Furthermore, 22% of the indicators exhibited *significant progress*, while 7% reported *no progress*. In the forthcoming phase of the country programme's implementation, the KCO should intensify its efforts to ensure that activities related to the unachieved indicators are executed and that results are meticulously tracked and reported.

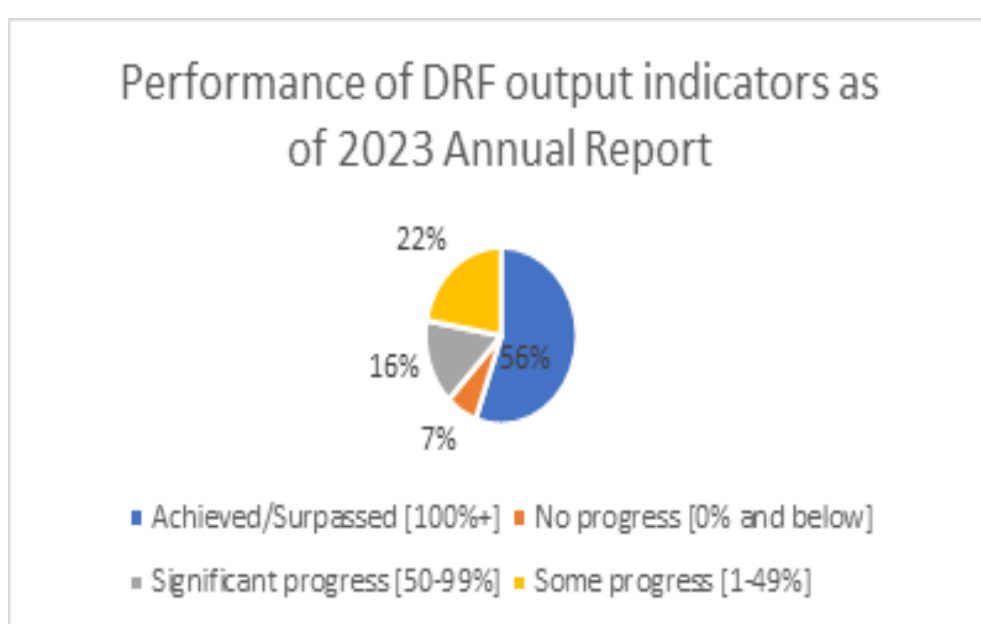


Figure 2: DRF Output Indicator Performance as of 2023

5.3 DRF Activities Implementation

As illustrated in figure 3 below, the 2023 workplan had 106 activities, while the 2024 plan had 107 activities. By the end of 2023, 63% of the activities were *achieved*, with the remainder either *on track* or moved to 2024 for completion. The *on-track* activities were primarily focused on women's economic empowerment and ending violence against women and girls. Additionally, most of the activities related to gender and statistics were moved to 2024 for completion. A review of the RMS system shows that as of October 2024, all the activities related to gender and statistics have been reported on. In 2024, 55% of the activities remain on track, 12% have been *achieved*, but 6% show *no progress* due to resource constraints or due to end of donor programme.

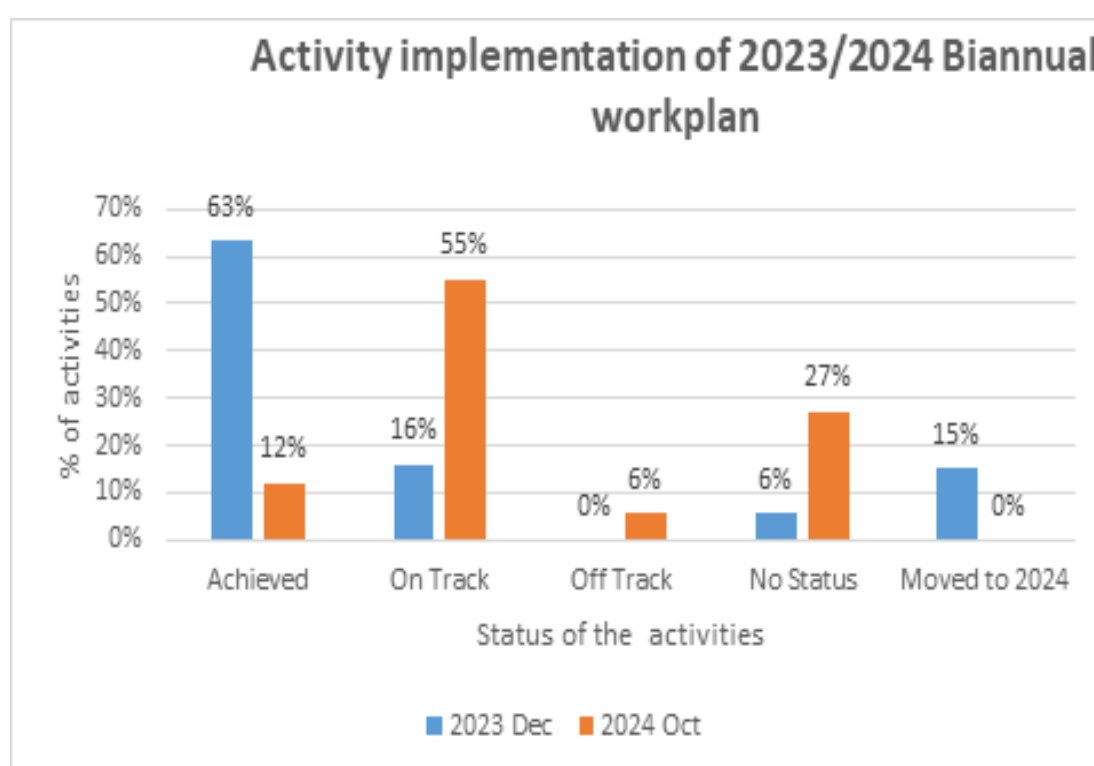


Figure 3: Activity Implementation Progress 2023/2024

5.4 Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency (OEE) Indicators performance

The OEE framework monitors eight outputs with a total of 26 indicators. As of 2023, 35% of the indicators were on track, 35% showed some progress, and 11% were achieved as illustrated in figure 4 below. Out of the 8 outputs, it is only output RD 0.6.1 which did not have any of its indicators' targets reported as *achieved/surpassed*. Overall, following the 2023 annual report, 15% of the OEE indicators showed no progress and therefore more efforts should go towards ensuring that the shortfall in the results is closed by the end of the Country programme.

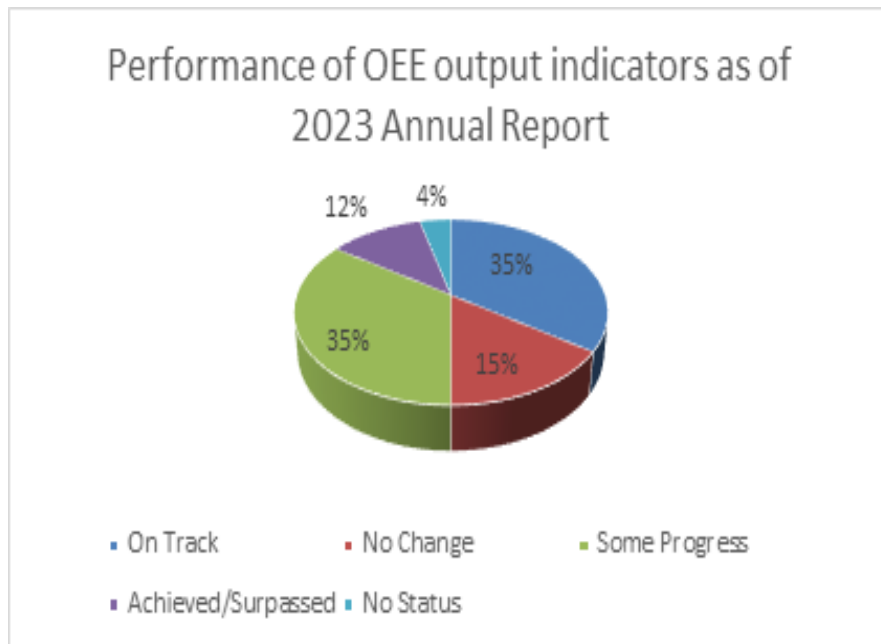


Figure 4: OEE Output Indicator Performance

5.5 OEE Activities implementation

The OEE (Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency) activity implementation for the 2023/2024 biannual work plan shows *significant progress* across both years. In 2023, which included a total of 46 activities, 85% were *fully achieved*, while 15% remained *on track*, with none having *no status*. In comparison, the 2024 work plan covered 47 activities, where 26% were marked as *achieved* and 66% were *on track* by October 2024. However, 9% of the activities *had no status*, largely because they were either completed in 2023 or are scheduled for the last quarter of 2024.

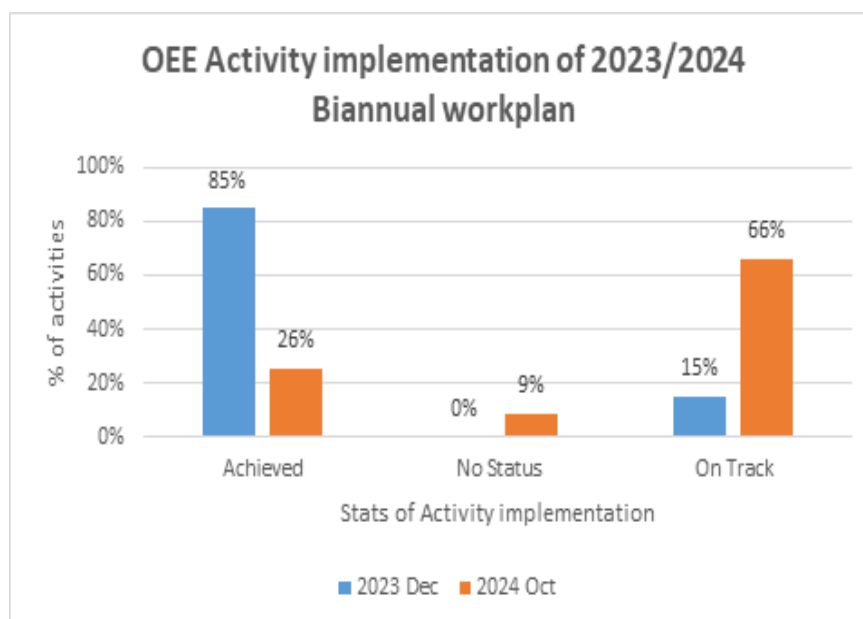


Figure 5: OEE Activity implementation

5.6 Duplicated Indicators and missing Baselines

While all 55 indicators—10 outcome indicators and 45 output indicators—have updated baseline data and defined targets, it is important to ensure that these baselines are correctly applied and utilized in tracking progress. The presence of duplicated indicators requires immediate action to prevent inflated reporting and to streamline monitoring.

6.0 STRATEGIC FINDINGS

6.1 Relevance of the theory of change

The findings of the MTR demonstrate and affirm that the theory of change and the four outcomes of the country programme are relevant and responsive to the needs of women and girls in Kenya. A review of the KCOs Country programme points to full alignment with Kenya's UNSDCF with three of the Country programme's Outcomes drawn from the UNSDCF in verbatim. Furthermore, a review of the results framework in the country programme shows that there is a consistency between the current gender context and situation in Kenya. A consistent theme that emerged from the KIs with the donors and UN agencies is that the country programme is adaptable to the ever evolving political, economic and social situations in Kenya. As such, KCO should leverage on the adaptability of its country programme to ensure that its interventions are effective, relevant and responsive to the unique needs of women and girls.

6.2 Sustainability

Based on the analysis of the findings, the UN Women Kenya Strategic Note (SN) 2023–2026 focuses on sustainability by enhancing long-term capacities at institutional, policy, and community levels for gender equality and women's empowerment. It emphasizes stakeholder ownership, including government, civil society, and local communities, to ensure lasting impact. Aligning with Kenya's Vision 2030 and gender policies, the SN aims for systemic change. It is evident that KCO supports government institutions in mainstreaming gender and empowers grassroots organizations to implement gender initiatives. Its partnership model includes diverse stakeholders, ensuring shared responsibility for outcomes. Monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms support adaptive learning, maintaining relevance and effectiveness. By embedding gender equality into existing systems and fostering partnerships, the SN aims for enduring change in Kenya.

To ensure sustainability, UN Women must strengthen program integration into county policies like the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs), fostering local ownership, institutionalizing gender-responsive budgeting, and aligning

policies with structured funding mechanisms. Collaborating with private sector partners through initiatives like the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPS) can secure resources and financial innovations, such as gender bonds, while engaging community-based organizations (CBOs) ensures grassroots impact and avoids short-term interventions. Enhancing knowledge sharing via digital repositories and publishing success stories enables replication and scalability of programs. Flexibility in funding mechanisms allows for responsiveness to emerging issues, while improved coordination among stakeholders reduces duplication and enhances efficiency. Establishing clear sustainability metrics and monitoring impacts post-implementation will ensure long-term results

6.3 Programme Coherence

Regarding Coherence, the SN aligns well with UN Women's global mandate, emphasizing gender equality and women's empowerment. It integrates cross-cutting themes like governance, economic empowerment, and humanitarian response, ensuring that gender mainstreaming is embedded across programmatic areas. The inclusion of institutional capacity building, gender-responsive budgeting, and stakeholder partnerships demonstrates an integrated approach to achieving systemic change. Moreover, the SN complements and leverages partnerships with diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector entities, and international donors. Through the WEPS and collaboration on climate financing, the SN positions itself as a key driver of gender-responsive innovation. Challenges exist in sustaining coherence at the county level, where program integration and stakeholder coordination require strengthening to reduce duplication and enhance impact.

6.4 Partnerships

The mid-term review of KCO highlights the essential role of partnerships in advancing gender equality and sustainable development outcomes. Insights from key informant interviews (KIIs) with partners, including Council of Governors (COG), The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action (SDFGAA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), underscore the need to strengthen engagement and alignment of international agreements with local realities. While there are attempts at this, more of joint coordination efforts was proposed in most of the KIIs with the donors and partners. For instance, COG's Gender Committee is instrumental in localizing gender goals within international agreements, while AICS emphasizes expanding access to justice which connects also with regional and international agreements. FAO advocates for deeper investments in local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to avoid short-term

"helicopter"²⁶ approach, ensuring project continuity. The helicopter' approach in the present partnership was identified as one of the challenges that UN Women KCO needs to look at with their Implementing Partners. Effective reporting and feedback mechanisms with KOICA enhance accountability, while UNDP aligns gender plans with national priorities, supporting women's participation in public processes. Additionally, collaboration with the SDFGAA, particularly through programs like Women Count, strengthens data-driven policy formulation. Online survey conducted among KCO staff, 46.7% of respondents found that implementing partners have been "somewhat effective" in collaborating with UN Women, while 40% rated the partnerships as "very effective." However, 13% of the staff expressed that the collaboration has "not been effective." This feedback highlights areas for improvement in partnership effectiveness, particularly in deepening policy support and understanding government operations to address legislative and policy gaps.

6.5 Private Sector Engagement

The findings of the MTR indicate that KCO has weak private sector engagement especially in resource mobilization and programme implementation. To enhance private sector engagement, UN Women Kenya should adopt strategies that align corporate interests with gender equality goals. Leveraging Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), the organization can strategically target companies like Safaricom and other key players, emphasizing tailored, impactful partnerships. Developing business cases that clearly link gender empowerment to corporate benefits, offering visibility opportunities, and highlighting shared value can incentivize private sector involvement. Programs pooling resources from multiple companies and aligning proposals with sectors like tech, agriculture, and sustainability will appeal to corporate objectives. Strengthening partnerships with institutions such as KEPSA, Equity Bank, and regional hubs will also foster long-term collaboration.

To diversify funding, UN Women Kenya can expand into regional and international markets, collaborating with other UN Women offices and targeting philanthropists whose missions align with its goals. Investing in strategic communications to enhance visibility and crafting compelling value propositions will strengthen the organization's appeal. Building frameworks for consistent reporting under WEPs and showcasing success stories through case studies can solidify trust and engagement. Hosting private sector roundtables and fostering

²⁶ The Helicopter approach was defined in the KIs as the approach where implementing partners would get sub grants and leave their offices in Nairobi and take a flight to Eldoret to go and implement activities locally in Eldoret. After the activities, they would come back to Nairobi and report results. The idea is to invest more in local organizations that are domiciled in an area of intervention for sustained ownership.

partnerships with embassies, insurers, and financial institutions will open new avenues for collaboration and funding while enhancing UN Women's role as a transformative partner.

6.6 Resource Mobilization

The estimated country programme funding requirement is \$ 58,149,957 with a total estimated funding gap of \$ 43,563,781 at the inception²⁷. By mid-point of the country programme implementation, the amount mobilized was below 40% of the total resources to be mobilized. In addition, key donors under the previous country programme such as Finland are currently not funding the current programmes contributing to significant decline in resources for UN Women. For Finland, this is due to cut in the overall development funding to Kenya. Canada has also changed its approach, to channel the development money through the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund MPTF and joint programmes instead (other donors have decided to do the same). The current resource/funding gap has been compounded by the fact that UN Women relies heavily on a few donors, which makes them vulnerable.

Considering the decline in resources, most of the KIIs highlighted that the funding landscape in Kenya is highly competitive. They recommended that KCO diversify its funding sources by exploring partnerships beyond traditional government donors. This includes engaging private sector entities such as the Safaricom Foundation, known for its work in healthcare, education, and water initiatives, and the Equity Group Foundation, which supports financial literacy and entrepreneurship for youth and women. Additionally, organizations like the Mastercard Foundation, which focuses on youth employment, education, and entrepreneurship, present valuable opportunities for collaboration, particularly for vocational training and capacity-building initiatives.

Non-traditional donors such as philanthropists, development banks, and foundations from emerging economies; development banks such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the New Development Bank (NDB), and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB); and influential foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, and the Mastercard Foundation, all of which align with goals of gender equality and women's empowerment remain key to broadening the funding base. KCO has thus far been successful in securing funding from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Furthermore, KCO should explore innovative financing mechanisms such as social impact bonds, which link private sector investments to measurable social outcomes, to strengthen its financial base and stability.

²⁷ SN narrative 2023-2026

Current efforts in strengthening local partnerships and aligning with national priorities can be effective in building new donor frontier trust. Continued emphasis on collaborative cross thematic projects has been well-received and should be expanded to further enhance program visibility and impact²⁸.

From the findings, it emerged that KCO does not have dedicated personnel to lead the resource mobilization efforts. Nested on this, UN Women Kenya should hire a Resource Mobilization Specialist to address the critical funding gap and enhance financial sustainability (depending on availability of funds). This role would focus on diversifying funding sources by engaging private sector partners, non-traditional donors, and development banks, while exploring innovative financing mechanisms like social impact bonds. By strengthening donor relationships, fostering new partnerships, and aligning with national priorities, the specialist can position UN Women as a competitive player in Kenya's funding landscape, ensuring program continuity and long-term impact.

6.7 UN Coordination

UN Women has played a pivotal role in leading and facilitating gender equality efforts in Kenya by chairing the Gender Theme Group (GTG), which brings together gender specialists from 25 UN agencies²⁹ and other UNSDCF groups. The Planning and Coordination Unit provides technical support on gender mainstreaming and the gender scorecard, while also offering secretarial services to the Development Partners on Gender Group (DPGG), coordinating meetings, and setting agendas. UN Women also supports the National Gender Sector Working Group (NGSWG) with capacity building and technical assistance, particularly in developing the National Male Engagement and Inclusion Strategy. Through these efforts, UN Women has influenced the integration of gender equality in joint programs, policies, and advocacy, conducting capacity-building sessions on gender mainstreaming and developing tools like the gender checklist for joint programs (JPs). This coordination has ensured that gender considerations are embedded in key initiatives, including the UNSDCF and UNCT meeting agendas, advocating for issues like the two-thirds gender rule.

UN Women's leadership has also been instrumental in aligning the coordination mandate with global frameworks such as the SDGs by working with government and gender actors on localizing gender accelerators and reporting efforts. Additionally, through its chairmanship of the GTG, UN Women has enhanced

²⁸ FGD with the Thematic Leads.

²⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

gender mainstreaming across UN agencies and programs, driving advocacy and capacity building to ensure gender equality is prioritized in all areas of UN cooperation in Kenya. In addition, UN Women has been proactive in coordinating gender machinery in Kenya through the gender sector working group at the national level. In Kenya, UN Women's coordination mandate primarily involves leading and facilitating collaboration among various stakeholders within the "Gender Sector Working Group" to ensure a unified approach towards advancing gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives across different sectors, by bringing together government agencies, civil society organizations, development partners, and other UN entities to align efforts and maximize impact on gender issues. While the coordination efforts of UN Women are felt at the national level, they are least felt at the county level. As such, there is need to enhance this role at the county level.

6.8 Country programme Delivery

The KCO emphasizes the need for effective resource management grounded in a principled approach that prioritizes results and accountability. This focus is on achieving efficient resource stewardship, ensuring impact delivery while minimizing unnecessary operational costs. The Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) highlighted the importance of ensuring that programme delivery is done in a cost-effective manner as well as in a holistic approach. For instance, leadership empowerment under the WEE portfolio should connect with women's success in public and political participation. This shift toward integrated results is important in helping to avoid siloed interventions. Under the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) portfolio, cost-effectiveness could involve leveraging existing community structures such as women's savings and credit groups to deliver leadership empowerment training, rather than establishing entirely new systems. This approach not only reduces duplication of efforts but also ensures sustainability by building on familiar and trusted platforms. Additionally, integrating leadership training with financial literacy and political participation workshops would maximize resources while addressing interconnected needs.

To meet funding requirements, UN Women Kenya relies on robust risk management systems to address potential issues like fraud and delays that could impact program delivery. Reporting is stringent, demanding detailed financial audits and verifications, which, while necessary, can affect project timelines. The challenges in meeting donor expectations in terms of financial reporting sometimes led to extended timelines and missed targets, with delayed the partner reporting further, affecting funding advancement.

A key operational challenge lies in collaboration with other UN agencies, as some agencies focus heavily on their own mandates without fully engaging in cross-

system collaboration. Canada's decision to launch a call for proposals requiring 50% of outcomes to be transformative for women was a significant step in prioritizing gender equality across development programs. However, this initiative had unintended consequences for UN Women. It resulted in a reduction in bilateral funding, leaving UN Women dependent on smaller allocations from the two Joint Programmes (JPs) that were ultimately selected. This funding shift caused competition among UN agencies, which complicated efforts to promote collaboration and cohesion in advancing gender equality. While the initiative brought attention to transformative gender outcomes, it underscored the challenges in maintaining a unified approach within the UN system when resources are redistributed in ways that impact key stakeholders like UN Women. Nonetheless, there is still a good possibility that in 2025, there will be more involvement of UN Women with other UN Agencies towards joint fundraising and implementation. This aspect can help to close the current funding gap and help build the already positive perspective by the staff (*91.7% as per the staff online survey*) who believe that there are enough funding possibilities to sustain their projects between 2024 and 2026.

6.9 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Mechanisms

KCO has put different monitoring tools and systems in place including quarterly and annual reporting templates used by implementing partners which feed into donor reports and corporate reporting systems such as RMS, tracking both qualitative and quantitative program performance. Additional corporate tools such as Donor Agreement Management Systems (DAMS), Quantum Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Partners Agreement Management System (PGAMS) support broader aspects like risk management and partner onboarding. Data collection is enhanced through the development of specific tools and outcome harvesting methodology, which help capture results that might be overlooked in regular reporting.

The UN Women KCO has demonstrated remarkable progress in enhancing the quality of its donor evaluations over the past few years. According to the UN Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use (GATE) system, KCO's evaluation ratings have improved significantly, moving from a "Fair" rating in 2020 to a "Very Good" rating in 2023/2024. This improvement underscores the office's commitment to accountability, evidence-based decision-making, and adherence to rigorous evaluation standards.

Additionally, KCO achieved Tier 1 status in early 2024, marking a significant milestone in its operational performance. This recognition is attributed to the office's delivery of timely and high-quality donor reports between 2022 and 2024, which have met and often exceeded international standards. The elevation to Tier

1 reflects KCO's enhanced capacity to provide strategic guidance, foster donor confidence, and contribute meaningfully to UN Women's global objectives.

Evaluation Reports

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SNo	Evaluation	Evaluation Type	Completion Date	Quality Rating	Management Response
1	End-line evaluation for the Japan-funded LEAP III Programme 2021 -2023	Final Evaluation-Programme Evaluation	2024	Very Good	Yes
2	End-line evaluation for the Italy-funded Let it not Happen Again Programme 2020 -2023	Final Evaluation-Programme Evaluation	2024	Very Good	Yes
3	End-line evaluation for the Finland-funded Programme 2020-2023	Final Evaluation-Programme Evaluation	2023	Very Good	Yes
4	Project Evaluation - Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access & Protection in Crisis Response (LEAP)	Final Evaluation-Programme Evaluation	2020	Very Good	Yes
5	Project Evaluation - Integrating Gender in Peace Support Operations	Final Evaluation-Programme Evaluation	2020	Fair	Yes
6	Kenya Country Strategy Final Evaluation	Final Evaluation-Strategy/Policy Evaluation	2018	Good	Yes
7	CVE Project Evaluation	Final Evaluation-Thematic Evaluation	2018	Good	Yes
8	Kenya Country Strategy Mid-Term Evaluation	Mid Term Evaluation-Country-level Evaluation	2017	Good	Yes
9	Final Project Evaluation - Engaging Women in Preventing and Countering Extremist Violence in Kenya	Final Evaluation-Country-level Evaluation	2017	Good	Yes
10	Final Project Evaluation - Integrating Gender in Peace Support Operations	Final Evaluation-Country-level Evaluation	2017	Good	Yes

Source: Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use - GATE System

Stakeholder trust in UN Women's evaluation findings, particularly among donors, is a vital asset in securing ongoing and future program support, as it reflects accountability and program impact alignment. However, the potential loss of M&E staff poses a significant risk to evaluation quality, given the heavy workload and limited resources that already strain data analysis, fieldwork, and reporting efforts. System integration remains an issue, as existing platforms require manual consolidation of reports, though efforts to link systems, such as through Quantum Plus, are underway. Opportunities for improvement include continuous investment in M&E and advocating for the inclusion of M&E costs, especially human resource in new project budgets.

6.10 Efficiency of Operations

The review has highlighted imbalances in the Programme-Operations staffing ratio within the UN Women Kenya Country Office. The KCO struggles to reflect the intensive programme support demands specific to the Kenya office, particularly in procurement. The operational functions of the office are further strained due to limited human resources across key teams, including Communications and Knowledge management, M&E, finance, and human resources. This misalignment underscores the need for a more tailored approach to staffing that adequately supports the high level of programme activity and operational efficiency required in-country.

6.11 Communication and Knowledge Management

The MTR identified significant challenges and opportunities within the Knowledge Management and Communications function. The current team, comprising of one staff member and a consultant, is overstretched, and struggling to balance the growing demands of internal and external stakeholders. High staff turnover exacerbates the strain, as onboarding new personnel disrupts operations and delays productivity. Additionally, limited funding, primarily reliant on variable sources like fundraising, undermines the team's ability to sustain or scale efforts.

Processes to ensure continuity and quality are in place but require strengthening. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) and documentation mitigate disruptions during staff transitions, while weekly team meetings and one-on-one sessions foster real-time updates and problem-solving. However, resource limitations and frequent turnover hinder the establishment of robust workflows, jeopardizing long-term quality and consistency, particularly during high-demand periods.

Knowledge sharing and capturing best practices are moderately effective, supported by weekly discussions and a centralized system for documenting and disseminating lessons learned. These mechanisms enhance institutional memory, enabling teams to leverage past experiences for future initiatives. However, there remains room for improvement in formalizing these processes to ensure comprehensive and consistent application.

To address these challenges, the MTR recommends securing dedicated funding to sustain high-quality outputs and investing in longer-term contracts to reduce turnover and build institutional knowledge. Regular training and upskilling of the communications team are necessary to stay ahead of emerging trends. Upgrading equipment, such as cameras and laptops, alongside procuring dedicated tools like a plagiarism checker, would enhance operational efficiency. Establishing a centralized repository for lessons learned and best practices would improve institutional memory and facilitate seamless team transitions. Finally, expanding to a five-member team would distribute workloads effectively, enable specialization, and support all communications initiatives comprehensively.

7.0 KEY LESSONS LEARNT

Lesson 1: Sustainability Requires Local Integration: For long-term impact, integrating gender-responsive policies into county frameworks is essential. Local ownership, institutionalizing gender budgeting, and aligning initiatives with Kenya's Vision 2030 are key. Partnerships with governments, private sectors, and grassroots organizations will ensure scalable, sustainable programs that adapt to changing needs.

Lesson 2: Diversification of Resource Mobilization: Heavy reliance on a few traditional donors' limits KCO's financial stability. Broadening partnerships to include the private sector, philanthropists, and innovative financing mechanisms (e.g., social impact bonds) will address funding gaps. Hiring a Resource Mobilization Specialist is vital for enhancing partnerships and ensuring program sustainability.

Lesson 3: Enhancing Partnerships for Greater Impact: Effective partnerships with civil society, youth-led organizations, and local governments are critical. Avoiding short-term "helicopter" approaches and aligning with community needs will amplify grassroots voices. Strengthened collaborations with private sectors through Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) can drive systemic change.

Lesson 4: Prioritizing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting: Robust monitoring frameworks ensure accountability but require adequate staffing and funding. Investing in integrated systems, securing dedicated M&E funding, and expanding teams will improve tracking, reporting, and outcome analysis. This fosters evidence-based decision-making and donor confidence.

Lesson 5: Communication and Knowledge Management

Understaffed communication functions hamper efficiency and consistency. Investing in longer-term contracts, tools, and training will ensure quality outputs. A centralized knowledge repository and formalized best-practice sharing will enhance institutional memory and workflow continuity during transitions.

8.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Conclusion

The UN Women Kenya Country Office has made good progress in implementing its strategic initiatives, particularly in promoting gender-sensitive policy frameworks and enhancing women's leadership, as evidenced by the achievement of 40% of its outcome indicators. While 30% of these indicators remain unachieved, the KCO's performance in output indicators, where 56% met or exceeded targets, reflects a positive trend in gender initiatives, despite resource constraints. The completion of 63% of planned activities in 2023 underscores the KCO's commitment to women's economic empowerment and addressing violence against women, with a majority of activities on track for 2024.

Overall, the mid-term review reveals KCO's adaptability to the dynamic socio-political environment, the critical role of partnerships, and the ongoing necessity for strategic resource mobilization to ensure sustained project momentum in the face of funding challenges. Additionally, the effectiveness of UN coordination in integrating gender perspectives across development priorities is acknowledged,

reinforcing the importance of continued efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in Kenya.

8.2 Recommendations

8.2.1 Operational Recommendations

Programme Coherence: To enhance coherence, the Kenya Country Office (KCO) should strengthen coordination mechanisms at the county level by integrating programs into County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) and strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration. This includes aligning programmatic work with existing local frameworks, reducing duplication, and promoting synergies among government, civil society, and private sector actors. Additionally, KCO should deepen partnerships through targeted initiatives like the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPS) and climate financing, while leveraging these platforms to drive systemic, gender-responsive innovation across all levels of governance.

Strategic Partnerships: KCO should deepen its engagement with CSOs and WROs, including those led by young women. By working with innovative and youth-led organizations, KCO can amplify the voices of young women, empower new leadership, and introduce fresh ideas that can drive change in the gender equality sector, ensuring that youth perspectives are incorporated into programmatic strategies.

Private sector engagement: UN Women Kenya can boost private sector engagement by leveraging Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPS) for strategic partnerships, like with Safaricom. Tailored business cases, visibility opportunities, and resource-pooling in tech and agriculture can attract support. Expanding collaborations, targeting philanthropists, and investing in strategic communications will diversify funding and enhance partnerships.

Resource Mobilization: To address the funding gap and ensure sustainability, UN Women Kenya should diversify its resource mobilization efforts by engaging private sector partners like Safaricom and Equity Group Foundations, as well as international donors such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Collaborating with development banks and exploring innovative financing, like social impact bonds, is also vital. Strengthening local partnerships and aligning with national priorities will enhance donor trust. Additionally, hiring a Resource Mobilization Specialist will focus on diversifying funding sources, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring long-term program continuity and impact.

Programme Delivery and Operations Efficiency: KCO should address staffing gaps to ensure an equitable distribution of expertise across programmatic and operational areas, improving efficiency and effectiveness. Strengthening the

capacity of staff through training and recruitment will also enhance operational performance, ensuring that all aspects of the program are managed with the required expertise and attention to detail.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting: KCO should work on integrating her reporting systems and advocating for adequate M&E funding in project budgets to strengthen program accountability and improved outcome tracking. To safeguard the gains made in reporting and evaluations, the MTR recommends securing dedicated funding to stabilize operations and support team expansion to four members, each member to support a thematic area for balanced workloads and optimum reporting.

Communications and Knowledge Management: Long-term contracts and regular training are essential to reduce turnover and enhance expertise. Investments in updated tools and technology, such as modern equipment and plagiarism checkers, would improve efficiency. Formalizing knowledge management practices through a centralized repository would strengthen institutional memory, ensuring sustainable and high-quality outputs for future initiatives.

8.2.2 Programmatic Recommendations:

The programmatic recommendations are drawn from the situational analysis, as well as strategic findings of the MTR.

Participation in Public Life: UN Women should strategically enhance women's political participation by advocating for the implementation of the two-thirds gender principle and promoting structural reforms to achieve gender equity in leadership. Key actions should include capacity-building programs, mentorship, and gender-responsive public participation processes, focusing on overcoming barriers such as poor representation in county planning and limited gender-responsive budgeting. Additionally, leveraging the growing involvement of Gen Z women in social change, especially through youth-led Women Rights Organizations, will amplify advocacy and empower young women leaders at national and county levels.

Devolution: To strengthen devolution, UN Women should prioritize improving public participation, especially for women and marginalized groups, through transparent and inclusive mechanisms at all county levels. Efforts should include enhancing budget transparency, civic education, and citizen engagement in planning and oversight processes. Building capacity for county assemblies and governments is vital to ensure effective gender-responsive policy formulation, equitable resource allocation, and evidence-based decision-making. Knowledge management and local innovation should be emphasized to ensure sustainable governance reforms. *Gender and Statistics:* The main recommendation is for UN

Women to advocate for enhanced investment in gender data systems and promote their integration into evidence-based planning and SDG tracking. Despite progress by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), challenges remain in the production, accessibility, and utilization of gender data. Addressing cultural barriers, improving digital inclusion, and overcoming technical and financial limitations are crucial. By focusing on these areas, UN Women can help ensure that gender data is effectively used in policy formulation, planning, budgeting, and addressing gender disparities.

Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action (GIHA): To address gender, climate change, and humanitarian issues in Kenya, UN Women Kenya should target the vulnerabilities of women and girls in disaster-prone areas by providing safe spaces, GBV protection services, and legal support. KCO should integrate Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Recommendations into Humanitarian Action Programming, particularly by assessing the IASC Gender Accountability Framework Report. This will help adapt key priorities into actionable strategies, strengthen coordination with humanitarian actors, and ensure alignment on gender priorities, especially in climate-induced crises like floods and droughts.

Addressing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TfGBV) and Femicide: In response to the growing risks of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TfGBV) and femicide, UN Women and KCO should focus on strengthening regulatory frameworks and technological solutions that address online abuse. This includes advocating for stronger national laws to criminalize TfGBV and femicide, as well as implementing technology tools like safety apps and SMS hotlines to enable women and girls to report abuse and seek help in real time. Male engagement is critical in addressing femicide, and KCO should promote initiatives that foster positive masculinity and gender equality, engaging men and boys in shifting harmful gender norms. Furthermore, KCO should collaborate with tech companies to create safer online environments for women, providing clear reporting mechanisms and response protocols. These measures should be integrated into broader public awareness campaigns on online safety, ensuring comprehensive support for victims of TfGBV and femicide.

Women Economic Empowerment: To further advance women's economic empowerment, KCO should build on the successes of its Climate Smart Agriculture program by expanding into other sectors such as Digital Financial Inclusion Social Enterprises and Impact Investing, and E-commerce and Online Platforms. These initiatives can help create more inclusive economic opportunities for women, addressing barriers to access and ownership in key sectors. In addition, exploring emerging sectors like the digital, blue, and purple economies could provide new avenues for women's sustainable income generation, particularly in areas such as digital entrepreneurship and marine

industries. Scaling up these efforts will enhance women's economic resilience by diversifying income sources and promoting long-term economic sustainability.




UN Coordination: UN Women should continue to strengthen coordination efforts within the UN Country Team (UNCT) by providing ongoing capacity-building and technical support, particularly in the areas of gender mainstreaming in planning, implementation, and reporting. Ensuring that gender equality is integrated across all UN programs and policies will require regular monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on gender commitments, to ensure that the UNCT's actions are aligned with national and international gender equality goals. This approach will not only enhance the overall impact of gender-focused initiatives but also ensure accountability and continuous progress toward the achievement of gender equality targets.

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Strategic Documents Reviewed.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. UN Women Donor Reports:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.1 UN DDP Annual Report, 2022,1.2 Women Final DDP Project Report, 2024.1.3 Global Affairs Canada, 2023.1.4 Final Finland Donor Report.1.5 UN Women Italy Report, 2022.1.6 Italian Agency for Development Cooperation Final Report on GOK-UN Joint Devolution Programme, 2023.1.7 FAO-UN Women 3rd Annual Donor Report, 2023.2. UN Women Kenya Country Office (KCO) Strategic Note (SN) 2023-2026.3. United Nation Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022-2026.4. KCO Annual Report, 2023.5. UN Kenya Annual Results Report, 2023.6. Common Country Analysis (CCA) 2023.7. Forth Medium Term Plan 2023-2027, Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda for Inclusive Growth, 2024.8. UN Women Strategic Plan 2022 -2025.9. Final UNCT Kenya Report, 2023

Annex 2: Tools Used for Data Collection

Tool	File
FGD Guide	 FGD Guide
Online Survey Questionnaire	 Online Survey Questionnaire
KII Guide	 KIs-Donor_IP and State Institutions.docx

Annex 3: Terms of Reference



TOR for the MTR
Consultant KCO.pdf

UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS IN MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and work with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, Programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.