

Final Evaluation of the UN Women Project Enhancing Economic Security of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan

Report

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TABLE OF CONTENT

LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION	8
2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES	9
2.1 Specific objectives	9
2.2 Scope	9
2.3 Risks and Limitations	9
2.4 Evaluation Questions and Criteria	9
3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	10
3.1 Evaluation Framework.....	10
3.2 Methodology.....	11
3.2.1 Data Source	11
3.2.2 Data Collection and Data Analysis Methods	12
3.2.3 Evaluation Matrix.....	13
3.2.4 Consultative Evaluation	13
3.3 Work Plan.....	13
3.3.1 Document Review and Initial Meeting with UN Women Staff	14
3.3.2 Meetings with Implementing Partners and Government Officials.....	14
3.3.3 Field Visits: Meetings with Project Participants and Beneficiaries	14
3.3.4 Presentation of Preliminary Findings.....	14
3.3.5 Reports.....	15
3.4 Key Limitations.....	15
4 CONTEXT OF EVALUATION.....	15
5 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT.....	16
6 FINDINGS	18
6.1 Outcome 1: Legislations and policies that promote and protect women’s property and inheritance rights formulated and implemented	19
6.2 Outcome 2: Institutions demonstrate commitment, capacity and accountability in ensuring economic security of the rural population during the food and energy crisis, and observance of women’s property and inheritance rights.....	23
6.3 Duty-bearers and rights holders working in partnership to ensure timely and effective response to the energy/food crisis and to observance of and respect for women’s property and inheritance rights at community/local levels.....	26

6.4	Outcome 4: Internal organizational arrangements strengthened to deliver projects outcomes and to provide for external quality	32
7	ANALYSIS	33
8	CONCLUSION	35
9	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	36
10	LESSONS LEARNED.....	41
	ANNEX.....	43
1	UN Women Project Activities in Kyrgyzstan	43
2	Sample Questions	44
3	Documents, Records and Instruments Used for Source Data	45
4	Evaluation Field Visit Itinerary.....	46
5	Evaluation Matrix.....	47
6	Evaluation Work Plan	49
7	Meetings with Individuals and Organizations.....	50
8	UN Women Project Budget and Partner Contributions	52
9	Project Logical Framework.....	53
10	Project Trainings, Seminars, Workshops and Consultations.....	58
11	Legal Clinic Consultation Services	61
12	Informational and Training Material, and Publicity	63
13	Current UN Women Programs and Projects in Kyrgyzstan.....	66
14	Terms of Reference of Evaluation	67
15	Evaluation Team Personnel	76

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CDA	Community Development Alliance
EECA SRO	Eastern Europe and Central Asia Sub-Regional Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
NGO	Non-governmental organization
STA	Social Technologies Agency
WB	World Bank
WESA	Women Entrepreneurs Support Association
WFP	World Food Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project, Enhancing Economic Security of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan, aims to enhance the economic security and livelihood of rural women through increasing the capacity of central and local governments to engage in gender-responsive governance; and to empower rural women in exercising their rights to access social and economic infrastructure assets.

Project Description

The Project is funded by the Government of Norway, managed by UN Women and implemented by three major implementing partners that are domestic non-governmental organizations with experience in policy, research, advocacy, developing training materials and conducting trainings, and community mobilization. The Project began in January 2009 for a planned period of two years. Due to the volatile political situation in Kyrgyzstan in the spring and summer of 2010, which affected the entirety of the country, the Project was extended for six months. It will conclude on 30 June 2011.

The original project budget was about USD 1.24 million, with USD 1.14 million from the Government of Norway and USD 100,000 from UN Women. Partnerships established by the Project with the World Food Program, the World Bank and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization on a food security and economic livelihood component, and with Kumtor Operating Company, which supported a grant program, provided about USD 630,000 more to the budget, resulting in a total project budget of nearly USD 1.87 million.

The project beneficiaries are central and local government officials, local institutions, and rural women. Overall, the number of project beneficiaries — from training events, legal consultations, grant programs, and food security and economic livelihood activities — totals about 89,000 people (nearly 46,000 women).

The Project uses a holistic approach to reach its four planned outcomes: 1) legislation and policies that promote and protect women's property, and inheritance rights formulated and implemented; 2) institutions demonstrate commitment, capacity and accountability in ensuring economic security of the rural population during the food crisis, and observance of women's property and inheritance rights; 3) duty-bearers and rights holders working in partnership to ensure timely and effective response to the food crisis and to observance of and respect for women's property and inheritance rights at community/local levels; and 4) internal organizational arrangements strengthened to deliver projects outcomes and to provide for external quality.

These outcomes correspond with the three levels at which the Project has concentrated its efforts. The Project works at the policy level, which focuses on the facilitation of rights-based and gender-responsive governance, national development planning and budgeting processes to ensure that gender equality commitments are translated into resource allocations. It works at the institutional level, which focuses on the support for effective legal enforcement of the legislation critical to ensure that women have rights to economic resources, property and inheritance. It works at the community level, which supports community activism to ensure that rural women have food and economic security and sustainable livelihoods. Finally, the Project worked on management and support.

Context and Present Situation

Kyrgyzstan is one of the poorest countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States region. It has a population of approximately 5.3 million, of which about two-thirds live in rural areas. Recently, Kyrgyzstan has experienced a slowdown in economic growth, which was compounded by the global financial crisis, and by the domestic political and social upheavals in 2010. In an economy in which about one-third of the population depends on agriculture for

its livelihood, rural women have been inordinately affected by these international and national events. These developments have thrown into question the legislation and policies that have been implemented to empower rural people. Although women have equal rights to land ownership, they are restricted by traditions, institutions and practices from fully accessing their rights to land, property and inheritance, and thus the use of these assets for agricultural activities to improve their livelihood and that of their families. Responding to this situation, the Project works to improve gender equality and women's human rights in Kyrgyzstan, and to enhance the economic security and livelihoods of rural women.

Evaluation Purpose, Objectives, Methodology

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide the Government of Norway, UN Women and other stakeholders with an independent assessment of the overall effectiveness of the Project. The evaluation of the Project's short- and long-term impacts and contributions will be useful to demonstrate the correlation between aid effectiveness and gender responsiveness. The evaluation aims to distill lessons learned from the Project's efforts to promote and advance gender equality and women's human rights in Kyrgyzstan.

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the efforts that the Project have made to help government officials and policy makers to increase their capacity to formulate and implement gender-sensitive concerns into planning and budgeting; to help institutions increase their capacities to provide services to women; and to improve the food security and economic livelihood of rural women. The evaluation assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of these efforts.

The evaluation methodology consists of a framework, and uses qualitative and secondary quantitative data. It accounts for source data, follows a matrix, and uses data collection and data analysis methods. The evaluation is consultative, adheres to a work plan and acknowledges limitations. The main components of the evaluation are: meetings with government officials, and project stakeholders, participants and beneficiaries; presentation of findings; and reports. The evaluation's audience is the Government of Norway, UN Women, the Project's strategic and implementing partners, and stakeholders.

Findings

The Project has been effective, efficient, relevant and sustainable.

Finding 1: Effectiveness

Project activities are effective at the policy, institutional and community levels, and in the management of the Project, producing changes in attitudes, behavior and capacity. Government officials and state agency representatives have higher awareness and knowledge of gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance. They have formulated and implemented legislation and policies concerning promoting and improving gender equality and women's rights. At the institutional level, State Registry officials have increased awareness and knowledge of gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance. They have enhanced capacities to provide services to women, and to the public. *Aksakal* courts (court of elders) have incorporated acquired knowledge and skills into their work to resolve land, property and inheritance disputes brought to them by women clients. At the community level, rural women have resolved legal disputes over their land, property and inheritance rights through the assistance of project-sponsored legal clinics. Grant programs have mobilized rural communities to carry out successful activities, incorporating community mobilization and technical skills, and knowledge about gender equality and women's rights into their training. Project interventions have strengthened food security and raised the economic livelihood of rural women through training integrating technical skills and knowledge about gender equality, and women's human rights. In the management of the Project, participation in project processes has raised the knowledge and skills of the Project Team and implementing partners, thus contributing to their professional development.

Finding 2: Efficiency

Activities are efficient, using available and immediate resources. At the policy level, the Project works with extant legislation and policy, wasting no efforts to formulate new laws, regulations or policies. Implementing partners are domestic non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with capacity to work at the national and local government levels, and community levels, needing no time to adjust to the conditions of the country. Specialists and experts are national citizens. Training material is developed domestically, and trainings are conducted in Kyrgyz or Russian. Eschewing interpreters and translators has boosted efficiency. At the institutional level, activities engage with existing institutions and do not squander resources (time, personnel, funds) to set up new or parallel institutions. At the community level, legal clinics are staffed with competent lawyers who are nationals and live in the areas they served. In the grants programs, the Project have provided grants on a competitive basis, attracting applicants instead of seeking applicants, thus increasing cost effectiveness and efficiency. The Project's partnerships with other international organizations to marshal the available monetary and material resources to initiate economic security activities avoid needless duplication of efforts. In the management of the Project, the new professional relation between the Project Team and implementing partners is efficient: staff consists of citizens, and implementing organizations have presence at the grassroots level. They work directly and immediately with beneficiaries, and can respond faster changing circumstances.

Finding 3: Relevance

Activities are relevant. At the policy level, activities have responded to the need to improve policy so that women can fully access equality in general, and land, property and inheritance rights in particular, and the assets related to these rights to improve their livelihoods and those of their family. Therefore, working with government officials and policymakers is appropriate. At the institutional level, activities have engaged state agencies and social institutions, incorporating their knowledge and procedures on training and education efforts to enhance their capacities to provide services to women. Activities and products raising the level of awareness of women's rights in *aksakal* courts have incorporated the collective experience and opinions of court members, without which activities and products would be viewed as alien and irrelevant to the real-world environment in their communities, and rejected. At the community level, activities have responded to current and real needs. Legal clinics assist poor rural people unable to seek private counsel. The Project's grant programs have implemented initiatives that communities themselves have decided as priorities. In food security and economic livelihood interventions, the Project interventions have identified and worked with rural women groups to initiate activities germane to their communities. In all its community interventions, the Project integrates gender equality and women's rights into training, thus making reinforcing this knowledge for rural women to use in their activities. In the management of the Project, the Project Team and implementing partners have had opportunities to grow professionally and take on more responsibilities, endeavors that are relevant as the civil society sector, 15 years strong, continues to integral in Kyrgyzstan.

Finding 4: Sustainability

Activities are sustainable. At the policy level, the participation of government officials and state agencies in the discussion and analysis of legislation and policies has fostered stakeholderhood in processes and results, thereby improving the prospects for continuing work to craft legislation and policies are relevant, appropriate and implementable. At the community level, the Project has engaged extant institutions, and elicited their contributions. This sense of ownership has made them recognize that the successes of the activities are their successes, and enhances the prospects for continued progress and new endeavors. At the community level, legal clinics need to seek partnerships to continue providing their services to the more vulnerable and poorer segments of society. They have arranged with local governments for the use of office space when clinic lawyers arrive in the field to provide services. Such arrangements indicate the type of collaboration needed to support these legal services in the future. In partnerships with other organizations, the Project has mobilized

funds and resources to target rural women. This investment leads to sustainability in activities. Women farmers are using revenues from farm activities to buy seeds and fertilizer for subsequent planting seasons, contributing profits to set up rural funds, paying for additional technical training and helping to establish similar self-help groups for vulnerable groups in their communities. Participation in these catalytic activities has imbued women farmers with greater confidence and optimism. In the management of the Project, the new professional relation between the Project Team and implementing partners has given staff opportunities to incorporate new knowledge and skills in their professional development.

Conclusions

The project, Enhancing Economic Security of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan, has made achievements in the promotion and the observance of gender equality and women's land, property and inheritance rights in Kyrgyzstan, and in the improvement of food security and economic livelihood of rural women. These accomplishments are worth learning from and applying to other activities and countries.

First, a holistic approach is needed to improve and promote gender equality and women's human rights. The Project works at the policy, institutional and community levels simultaneously because impacts made at one level has consequences on the other levels. Improving legislation and policies means that institutions have the legal obligation to implement laws and regulations, and the legal 'arsenal' to enforce their legislation when citizens are treated unfairly. In turn, citizens have access to services and to opportunities, regardless of their gender. Second, state actor stakeholders should be engaged in dialog and activities. Development work in gender equality and women's human rights needs the participation of state actors and other relevant individuals. Without this support, the work to promote and improve gender equality and women's human rights will likely be stymied. Third, capable implementing partners are critical to a project. In the Project, implementing partners have the experience and the capability to work at the policy, institutional and community levels. They are familiar with the features unique to Kyrgyzstan, understand the culture and speak the languages, and can adapt to changing circumstances with minimal time for adjustment. The advantages in working with experienced and capable domestic organizations are: improved cost-effectiveness, gained efficiency, higher relevance and better prospects of sustainability. Together, these factors — holistic approach, engagement with government stakeholders and capable domestic partners — can contribute to the success of future activities that promote and improve gender equality, and work to enhance women's land, property and inheritance rights.

1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide the Government of Norway, UN Women (formerly UNIFEM – United Nations Development Fund for Women) and other stakeholders with an independent assessment of the overall effectiveness of the Project, Enhancing Economic Security of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan (Annex, 1). The evaluation was obligatory and aimed to assess the overall effectiveness of the Project.

The evaluation of the Project's impacts and contributions will be useful to demonstrate the correlation between aid effectiveness and gender responsiveness, in particular to underscore the commitment by UN Women in this endeavor. Through an assessment of the Project, this evaluation aims to be a forward-looking and constructive learning exercise to distill lessons learned and advance recommendations for possible future activities in gender equality and women's human rights in Kyrgyzstan.

The results of the evaluation will be used as significant inputs to:

- Replicate the expertise and knowledge generated by the project for the implementation similar projects in the region as supported by UN Women EECA.
- Distill lessons learned to sustain capacities and skills of the UN Women implementing partner organizations: the Women Entrepreneurs Support Association, the Social Technologies Agency and the Community Development Alliance.
- Draw lessons learned and make recommendations to the members of the Steering Committee of the Project, academia and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to sustain the coordination and linkages among the central level and regional level authorities obtained through project results.
- Use participatory tools and instruments to contribute to the strengthening of the project ownership feeling by beneficiaries and the stakeholders.

The use of the evaluation findings is important in the context of the setting in which the evaluation took place. The global financial crisis and the more recent social and political turmoil have cleaved all levels of society in the country. In particular, rural women have been adversely affected, in terms of their roles in the agriculturally dominant economy, and their access to land, property and inheritance rights.

In accordance with the UN Women Strategic Plan, the Project employed a holistic approach to work at the policy, institutional and community levels. Consequently, the evaluation objectives can help reflect on the progress made thus far on gender equality and women's human rights observance in Country Development Strategy/sectoral and local programs; on the effectiveness of the legal enforcement of women's rights to economic resources, property and inheritance, and social protection services; and on the capacity of women to manage land and other economic resources.

The structure of this evaluation report follows the guidance of UN Women set forth in the document, *Guidance: Quality Criteria for Evaluation Reports*, published in October 2009 as part of the UN Women's *Evaluation Guidance Note Series*. The evaluators have made efforts to adhere to these guidelines to prepare a meaningful, useful and credible evaluation report.

2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The evaluation had specific objectives, operated within a geographic scope, and carried limitations and risks objectives.

2.1 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Assess the extent of progress towards ensuring that the gender equality commitments are translated into relevant sectoral program and local development plans from the results of the mainstream actions undertaken by the Project.
- Assess the changes made from the results undertaken by the project towards livelihood in Kyrgyzstan with focus on women's access to economic resources, including land, irrigation, and agricultural extension services.
- Assess the partnership established between duty bearers and rights holders to ensure timely and effective response to the energy/food crisis and to observance of and respect for women's property and inheritance rights at community/local levels.
- Assess the role and results of the initiatives on community level that aim to promote women's property and inheritance rights through project activities.
- Review the capacity of the communities to express their needs and partner with NGOs and local governments to jointly address development priorities.
- Provide analysis of efficiency of project management and provision of recommendations for management of future programs/projects.

2.2 Scope

The evaluation of the Project was conducted from 20 April 2011, the date when the desk/document review started, to 13 June 2011, the date when the final evaluation report was submitted. The evaluation does not cover the entire period of the Project, which will conclude on 30 June 2011.

The geographic area of the evaluation covered three oblasts (provinces): seven villages in three districts, and Kara-Kol city, in Issyk-Kul Oblast; six villages in two districts, and Osh city, in Osh Oblast; and three villages in three districts, and Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, in Chui Oblast. The field visit sites provided a fair representation of the range in type and location of the Project's activities, which took place in all seven oblasts.

2.3 Risks and Limitations

There were risks and limitations that may have challenged the reliability and validity of the evaluation results. These risks were of two categories: access to informants and access to documents. For example, informants could have been reluctant to speak freely about their roles in the Project. This hesitation may have been more pronounced in government officials and representatives, who feared that their comments could have adversely affected their offices. Minimizing this risk required that the Evaluation Team reassure that the evaluation was about the Project as a whole, and not about their participation and performance in the Project. Access to documents presented the risk that documents might not have contained all necessary information or information most appropriate to the Project. To minimize this risk, the Evaluation Team asked for documents from the UN Women Project Team, its strategic partners and implementing partners when needed during the evaluation period, and received cooperation in the matter.

2.4 Evaluation Questions and Criteria

Following the Terms of Reference, the evaluation assessed the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of the Project. Effectiveness concerns whether the Project produced a desired effect and its contribution in realizing the outcome as described in the project logical framework. Efficiency centers on whether the Project produced the desired

effect using available and immediate resources (funds, time, personnel) with as little waste as possible. Relevance focuses on whether the Project made sense given the needs, priorities and policies of those engaged in the activities. Sustainability concerns whether the initiatives and activities implemented by the Project can continue with minimal intervention from outside the environment of Kyrgyzstan. These elements are important in and to the Project, as they are for other activities, especially those in the development sector.

One crucial component of the evaluation to gauge these four elements was the set of questions (Annex, 2) that the Evaluation Team posed to UN Women and its Project Team, implementing partners, strategic partners, stakeholders, participants and beneficiaries. The questions were developed by the Evaluation Team in the initial phases of the evaluation and elaborated throughout the in-country phase of the assignment. These questions did not constitute an unalterable template but reflected the dynamics of the evaluation as the Evaluation Team gained insight from additional documents, informants, meetings and project activities, results and achievements.

The criteria applied in the evaluation assignment focused on the performance and results of the Project as developed and foreseen in the logical framework. The logical framework was revised to respond to the volatile political and social events of 2010 in Kyrgyzstan. Although the logical framework had been modified, the outcomes, outputs, and indicators remained, on the whole, the same, needing only the longer timeline required by the dramatic turn of events in the country in the spring and summer of 2010.

The evaluation criteria also reflected the issues of gender equality and women's human rights in Kyrgyzstan. In particular, the criteria considered, for example, the participation in, and empowerment and social transformation of stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Project. The evaluation compared the levels and changes in attitude and behavior before, during and after the intervention of the Project. The limitation in the observance of these possible changes was that such an examination required approaches more qualitative than quantitative in nature. But the qualitative perceptions could be supported by quantitative data that were relevant to the observation. For example, the declaration by rural women that they were better off economically could be corroborated by data on increases in crop yields from seeds provided by the UN Women project and its partner organizations.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology consisted of a framework and approaches. It accounted for source data, followed a matrix, and used data collection and data analysis methods. The evaluation was consultative and adhered to a work plan that contained different activities, and acknowledged limitations.

3.1 Evaluation Framework

The evaluation was guided by the logical framework of the Project. The logical framework detailed the intervention activities and the expected outputs that lead to the corresponding outcomes. Specifically, these activities aimed to bring about changes in the present environment in Kyrgyzstan that hinders the economic security of rural women and gender equality in land, property and inheritance rights as manifested in policies, legislation, institutional capacity and community activities.

The evaluation consisted of quantitative and qualitative assessments. In this evaluation, quantitative assessment refers to secondary document analysis of project documents that contained data about the performance of the project in terms of indicators developed and monitored as the Project progressed, and in UN Women documents and those of its strategic partners and implementing partners. This data included records kept by beneficiaries, and was an indication of how well they had absorbed the administrative and

financial training received under the Project. The data also consisted of surveys conducted by implementing partners on training sessions to gauge the attitudes and views of participants. Qualitative assessment consisted of interviews, mostly with individuals, and semi-structured interviews, mostly in settings where two or more individuals were involved. The former was with government officials at the central and local levels, while the latter was with larger groups, such as community groups. The use of quantitative and qualitative methods helped to ensure that the Evaluation Team gained as much insight as possible during the short, intensive period of its assignment.

3.2 Methodology

The methodology consisted of a review of existing data on the program and of background information, adherence to an evaluation matrix, and the use of participatory data collection and data analysis methods. This approach facilitated the linkages and collaboration among various stakeholders, thus making the process responsive and relevant to them.

The evaluation included: individual and group discussions; in-depth interviews with implementing partners; informative discussions with the Project Team and UN Women EECA SRO staff; semi-structured interviews with national partners, counterparts, beneficiaries, including participants of trainings organized by the Project in the areas of gender mainstreaming, gender responsive governance and budgeting. The methodology referred to key data sources, which were continually referenced throughout the evaluation process, and accounted for the existence of risks and limitations.

The evaluation fully accorded with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Millennium Development Goal 3, and contributed directly to UN Women Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) Management Results Framework outputs 1.1–1.5. As a state that has ratified the Convention, Kyrgyzstan is required to enshrine gender equality into its domestic legislation, repeal discriminatory provisions in its laws, and enact new provisions to guard against discrimination against women. Furthermore, as a United Nations member state that adopted the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 and agreed to achieve these goals by 2015, Kyrgyzstan has committed itself to realize Millennium Development Goal 3, which is to promote gender equality and empower women. Finally, as an activity that falls under the aegis of UN Women, the Project adheres to a management results framework that stresses increased coherence and accountability, and effective partnerships with civil society organizations. This evaluation assessed the efforts of the Project to help the country's central government and local governments, and institutions and organizations, and communities in their work in gender equality and women's human rights.

3.2.1 Data Source

The data sources that informed the evaluation were of three categories: people (informants), documents, and site visit observations.

People

The evaluation involved more than 170 individuals, of which 153 were project beneficiaries and the rest representatives of the UN Women senior personnel and Project Team, and the Project's strategic partners and implementing partners. The overwhelming majority of this interaction involved in-person discussions. Questioning also took place over email and telephone. The evaluation placed emphasis on the experience and opinions of informants. This input contributed to the efforts of the Evaluation Team to draw lessons learned and make recommendations for possible follow-on activities.

Documents

The data source was comprised of project documents and records, instruments and media (Annex, 3), project stakeholders and partners, and media. The source data that were reviewed included:

- The original application for funding of the Project.
- The logical framework as originally developed and modified.
- Progress reports from UN Women, its strategic partners and implementing partners.
- Minutes from the Steering Committee and the Grant Committee.
- Implementation plans of implementing partners.
- National and international reports on gender equality status.
- Literature review of qualitative methodologies.

The list of documents expanded as the Evaluation Team began the in-country phase of the assignment. The data included those made available by UN Women, its strategic partners and implementing partners, and the Project's stakeholders and beneficiaries. One limitation of the source data was the impossibility of obtaining copies of the administrative and financial records of the women's self help groups for subsequent analysis. The reason was that many of the records were handwritten and no copy machine was available to make duplicates of the records. To ameliorate some of these difficulties, the Evaluation Team examined the documents and made notes on them during the semi-structured interviews. The sampling from each of these events showed that the data kept by the groups were accurate, up-to-date and detailed, and made them valid to serve as source data.

Site visits

As part of an observation and description phase, the Evaluation Team made field visits over a seven-day period (Annex, 4). The Evaluation Team conducted interviews with key informants and semi-structured interviews with project beneficiaries.

3.2.2 Data Collection and Data Analysis Methods

Data was collected by the Evaluation Team, which asked the Project Team for additional data for clarification when needed. The Evaluation Team compared the data to the logical framework and to the progress and reports written. This comparison aimed to be precise in matching what was reported to what was realized, especially for indicators, which were part of the logical framework. Surveys from trainings, seminars and workshops were examined to gauge possible changes in attitudes and behaviors of participants due project interventions. Unlike the comparison of reports to the original project documents, this analysis was qualitative because the responses of informants depended on the type of questions asked.

The Evaluation Team also looked at materials published and produced by UN Women on the Project. These materials included media products and publications, and events that highlighted and publicized project activities so that readers and viewers could see the benefits brought to and the impacts made by the Project on communities. For the semi-structured interviews with beneficiary groups (which became more like discussions given the number of informants, and the ebb and flow inherent in these talking sessions), the sampling came from 153 beneficiaries from 32 community/women's self-help groups. The sampling was random and purposeful. The sampling was random in that the groups were not chosen or asked to be chosen by the Evaluation Team. The sampling was purposeful in that the groups represented project beneficiaries and therefore may have biases towards the Project. The tight schedule of the evaluation and the field visits meant that the sampling came from the three oblasts of Chui, Osh and Issyk-Kul and precluded sampling from the four oblasts of Naryn, Batken, Jalal Abad and Talas. The data collection and data analysis methods used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, which reflected the dynamic nature of the interventions of the Project, and was a justifiable approach given the intensive period of the evaluation. The average number of informants who participated in each of the

semi-structured discussions (10 such events during the evaluation assignment) was about 15, with representation from 32 women's self-help groups or community groups.

3.2.3 Evaluation Matrix

The Evaluation Team developed an evaluation matrix (Annex, 5) to guide it in its work. The main elements of the matrix consisted of sample questions, data, data sources and sampling that corresponded to each outcome as developed in the logical framework. The matrix was submitted to UN Women for approval.

3.2.4 Consultative Evaluation

The evaluation was consultative, and engaged informants in discussions and exchanges of experience and opinions. The Evaluation Team stressed at each session that the evaluation was of the Project, and not of the informants, their performance, their work or their institutions. The historical legacy of Kyrgyzstan from the Soviet period and the presence of evaluators who were not part of the local communities could have raised caution and suspicions from the informants. The Evaluation Team did its best to dispel these notions.

3.3 Work Plan

The evaluation was conducted from 20 April 2011 to 13 June 2011. A work plan (Annex, 6) was developed by the Evaluation Team and submitted to UN Women for review, discussion and approval. The initial four days were for document review; seventeen days for in-country activities such as additional document review, field visits, interviews and presentation of the preliminary evaluation findings to project stakeholders and partners; and five days for writing and then submitting a draft evaluation report. Another five days were dedicated to incorporating the comments of the UN Women senior personnel and Project Team, and the Project's stakeholders and partners before the Evaluation Team submitted the final report.

The methodology and tools for the evaluation was a combination of quantitative (secondary quantitative analysis) and qualitative methods, and was consultative. For quantitative methods, the Evaluation Team collected data from the project documents of the UN Women Project Team, and from its strategic partners and implementing partners. Qualitative methods consisted of interviews, and semi-structured interviews, which contained aspects of individual interviews, and focus group discussions, for larger groups. The intensive schedule and geographic range precluded strict focus group methodologies.

Common sources for quantitative and qualitative data included:

- Project stakeholders and partners.
- Project documents and records.
- Information systems/databases.

The evaluation work engaged UN Women, its Project Team and the Project's strategic partners, implementing partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries. The Evaluation Team emphasized that the evaluation would be enriched by the opinions of all partners, stakeholders, participants and beneficiaries of the Project.

The major elements of the methodology consisted of:

- Document review and meetings with UN Women;
- Meetings with implementing partners and government officials;
- Field visits, and meetings with project participants and beneficiaries;
- Presentation of preliminary findings;
- Draft report, which incorporated the feedback of partners and stakeholders;
- Final evaluation report.

3.3.1 Document Review and Initial Meeting with UN Women Staff

The Evaluation Team reviewed project documents and additional background information on the evaluation assignment. The Evaluation Team met with UN WOMEN regional representatives and the Project Team, in Bishkek, on 27 April 2011, for a deeper discussion on the evaluation assignment, its process and deliverables, and the field visit itinerary and logistics. The Evaluation Team continued the review of project-related information throughout its in-country presence as more documents became available. From the discussions held with UN Women personnel and from the document review phase, the Evaluation Team developed questions to ask in its subsequent meetings with implementing partners, government officials, and project stakeholders and beneficiaries. Furthermore, the Evaluation Team identified data collection instruments.

3.3.2 Meetings with Implementing Partners and Government Officials

Following the meetings with UN Women Personnel, the Evaluation Team met with implementing partners, government officials from ministries and state agencies, and the Project's international and national partners. These meetings were held in Bishkek. The goals of these discussions were to evaluate the participation of the informants in the Project. By asking questions of the informants, the Evaluation Team drew lessons learned and elicited ideas for areas of improvement in the present Project. The Evaluation Team stressed that the evaluation was not of the informants, their performance or their organizations but an evaluation of the Project, and made a sincere request for their opinions and ideas on directions in possible future follow-on activities.

3.3.3 Field Visits: Meetings with Project Participants and Beneficiaries

Following the meetings in Bishkek, the Evaluation Team made field visits over a seven-day period to project sites to meet with individuals and organizations (Annex, 7). These events consisted of meetings and semi-structured discussions, and inspection of the infrastructure of the grant programs. The Evaluation Team spoke with local government officials, NGO leaders and implementing partners' field staff in the districts of Kara-Suu and Aravan in Osh Oblast; in the districts of Jeti-Oguz, Ak-Suu and Ton in Issyk-Kul Oblast; and the districts of Chui, Kemin and Issyk-Ata in Chui Oblast. During this intensive period, the Evaluation Team met with 153 beneficiaries of these grant programs, of whom 20 were men (the men were participants in the irrigation project in Bolshevik Village) and 133 women, the latter representing 32 community groups and women's self-help groups. The goal of the meetings and interviews with these people was to assess their participation in the Project. By asking questions of the informants, the Evaluation Team drew lessons learned and elicited ideas for areas of improvement in the present Project. The Evaluation Team stressed that the evaluation was not of the informants, their performance or their organizations but an evaluation of the Project, made a sincere request for their opinions and ideas on directions in possible future follow-on activities. The sample size of these semi-structured interviews averaged 15 people.

3.3.4 Presentation of Preliminary Findings

As part of the evaluation assignment, the Evaluation Team made a presentation of its preliminary findings on 10 May 2011 to a forum at the UN House in Bishkek, which was attended by UN Women regional and national staff, strategic partners, implementing partners, project stakeholders and beneficiaries and government officials. The Evaluation Team presented its preliminary findings, lessons learned and recommendations, and involved the audience in the post-presentation discussion. The Evaluation Team took notes so that the comments from members of the audience could be incorporated into the draft evaluation report.

3.3.5 Reports

As part of required deliverables, the Evaluation Team wrote and submitted:

- An inception report, which described the evaluation objectives and scope, evaluation methodology, data collection tools and data analysis methods, key informants, evaluation questions, performance criteria, issues to be studied, work plan and reporting requirements.
- A progress report, which updated UN Women staff, and key internal and external stakeholders on the progress of field visits.
- A draft full report, which highlighted key evaluation findings and conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations; the document was distributed to national partners to ensure their participation and involvement, and to elicit their comments, which were incorporated into the final evaluation report.
- A final evaluation report (the present document), which was submitted to the UN Women, incorporating comments and feedback from all partners involved.

3.4 Key Limitations

The possible key limitations in the evaluation were mainly three: the willingness of informants to participate in the evaluation, access to documents, and a compressed schedule of field visits. However, these limitations were minimized.

First, informants, whether strategic partners, implementing partners or beneficiaries, welcomed the opportunity to discuss their roles in the Project. This willingness was due to the positive experience they had in the Project, their collaboration with and input into project activities, the meaningful impacts of project interventions and the openness of the evaluation. To foster this openness, the Evaluation Team stressed that the evaluation was not of the informants, their performance or their organizations but an evaluation of the Project

Second, access to documents was unencumbered. The Project Team, strategic partners and implementing partners provided documents, such as reports and statistics, to the Evaluation Team before they asked for them or upon request.

Third, the schedule of the field visit was compressed, due to delay in the implementation of the evaluation assignment, and necessitated visits on national holidays. On the whole, the Project Team, which supervised the logistics, made good efforts to minimize disruptions, resulting in only one missed appointment that was a consequence of an informant's last-minute social obligation.

4 CONTEXT OF EVALUATION

This evaluation was conducted in the context of the volatile social and political environment of Kyrgyzstan. The evaluation acknowledged the effects that the on-going turbulence had on the state of gender equality and women's human rights, especially concerning women's land, property and inheritance rights, in the country.

Kyrgyzstan is one of the poorest countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States region. It has a population of approximately 5.3 million, of which about two-thirds live in rural areas. Following a sustainable trend in poverty reduction from 2000 to 2008, Kyrgyzstan experienced a slowdown in economic growth, which was compounded by the global financial crisis, and then by the domestic political and social upheavals in 2010. In an economy in which about one-third of the population depends on agriculture for its livelihood, rural women have been inordinately affected by these international and national events.

These adverse developments have thrown into question the legislation and policies that have been implemented to empower rural people. For example, the national land reform process, which included the Law on Agricultural Land Management (2001), sought to address the decrease in agricultural productivity and food shortages that first appeared in the early 1990s. In addition, amendments made to the Law on Agricultural Land Management (2006), on which UN Women supported the initiatives of national partners to review the legislation, were essential to the expansion of rural women's economic opportunities.

Although women have equal rights to land ownership, they are constrained by traditions, institutions and practices from fully accessing their rights to land, property and inheritance, and thus the use of these assets for agricultural activities to improve their livelihood and that of their families and households. Consequently, an evaluation of the Project and its efforts to enhance the economic security and livelihoods of rural women was critical to the analysis of the Project's impact on beneficiaries, and to the development of possible future initiatives and activities to improve gender equality and women's human rights in Kyrgyzstan.

5 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The project, Enhancing Economic Security of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan, was inaugurated in December 2008 with financial support from the Government of Norway as a follow-on phase to its related programming implemented in Kyrgyzstan in 2004-2007. The Project directly met Norway's priorities in the areas of women's economic and political participation, as identified in the 8 March 2007 inauguration of the Norwegian Government's Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation. The Project aligned with the core priority of UN Women to advance women's economic security and rights worldwide, and, in Kyrgyzstan, to foster women's rights in land and property, promoting efforts to ensure that new policies and laws related to land reform empower women and widen their economic opportunities.

The goal of the Project was to enhance the economic security and improve the lives of rural women in Kyrgyzstan through increasing the capacity of central and local government to engage in rights-based gender-responsive governance; and empowering rural women in exercising their rights to access essential social and economic infrastructure assets, including land. Therefore, the beneficiaries of the Project included central and local government officials, local institutions and their members, and women in rural communities.

In addition to being beneficiaries, these entities and individuals were stakeholders in the Project, and had roles and made contributions. For example, central government officials and state agency representatives were members of the Steering Committee, contributing to the discussions, and exchanging ideas and experiences at the same time that they were informed of the Project's activities and progress. Local governments were key actors in project initiatives. Community beneficiaries were stakeholders, receiving training and education, and in turn teaching others in their communities. Finally, the beneficiaries of the Project included the Project Team and its implementing partners as they embarked on and explored a professional relationship that went beyond the usual donor-contractor dynamic. Unlike in the past, when UN Women implemented projects with contractors, a relationship entailing contractual requirements, direct and continual supervision, the Project worked with implementing partners, who were given latitude in managing and monitoring project components, seeking out other partners, collaborating with stakeholders, recruiting specialists, and working with communities and beneficiaries. This on-going process posed challenges to the implementing partners, but offered opportunities to absorb and incorporate lessons into their work. Through this innovative relationship, the parties involved gained skills and experience, and will be able to apply what they have learned to future endeavors.

The Project was funded by the Government of Norway and by UN Women, and started in January 2009 for a planned period of two years. Due to the volatile political situation in Kyrgyzstan in the spring and summer of 2010, which affected the entirety of the country, the Project was extended and will conclude on 30 June 2011. The original project budget was about USD 1.24 million, with USD 1.14 million (92 percent of the total budget) from the Government of Norway and USD 100,000 (8 percent of the total budget) from UN Women. Partnerships with the World Food Program, the World Bank and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization on a food security and economic livelihood component, and with Kumtor Operating Company, which supported a second grant program, provided about USD 630,000 more to the budget of the Project (Annex, 8), resulting in a total project budget of nearly USD 1.87 million. Overall, the number of project beneficiaries — from training events, legal consultations, grant programs, and food security and economic livelihood activities — totaled about 89,000 people (45,996 women, with the remaining figure including men and children).

The UN Women Project Team oversaw management of the Project, which was conducted through partnerships with three NGOs as major implementation partners. They were:

- The Women Entrepreneurs Support Association (WESA), which works to secure women's economic rights in Kyrgyzstan. The organization has expertise in land management issues and maintains partnerships with the central government, local governments, and state agencies, parliamentary representatives, media professionals, and civil society organizations. In the Project, WESA worked with the Ministry of Agriculture, the State Agency for Property Registration, the *muftiat* (the religious leadership) and *aksakal* courts (courts of elders) to build their knowledge and strengthen their capacity so that they are able to promote and protect women's land, property and inheritance rights.
- The Community Development Alliance (CDA), which works on community development, social mobilization, gender-responsive local planning, and participatory results-based management. The organization has expertise in mobilizing women's groups towards prioritizing gender needs and in working with local governments on integrating gender needs into local development plans and budgets. In the Project, CDA worked with provincial and local level governments to strengthen their capacities for participatory and gender responsive planning and budgeting.
- Social Technologies Agency (STA), which works to bring a gender-based approach to policy documents, research and advocacy. The organization is a board member of the NGO forum, the Alliance for Women Legislative Initiatives. In the Project, STA worked with the State Agency for Social Provision; Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration; and the Department of Cadastre and Real Estate to strengthen the capacities of ministerial staff to mainstream issues related to social protection standards, labor management and protection, labor migration and property into their policies and operations

Project implementation was coordinated with and guided by the Project's Steering Committee, which was chaired by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Labor Employment and Migration. Steering Committee representatives included officials from the Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration; State Agency for Social Protection; State Registry Service; Chui Oblast administration; and NGOs.

The Project used a holistic approach in implementing activities to reach its four planned outcomes, which were interconnected. These outcomes represented inter-linked changes made at all levels for promoting gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights, and for ensuring the economic security and livelihood of rural women. Necessary changes in legislation and policies (the macro-level) contribute to the observance of women's rights in land, property, inheritance and social protection. This level corresponds to the UN Women Development Results Framework, Outcomes 1-4.

At the same time, an increased understanding of these rights on the part of state institutions and their agents (the meso-level) ensure that these actors give due consideration to women's rights in Kyrgyzstan, especially in the country's rural areas. This level corresponds to the UN Women Development Results Framework, Outcomes 5-6.

Concomitantly, community activism by and for women (the micro-level) raises the demand for the observance of women's human rights. This level corresponds to the UN Women Development Results Framework, Outcome 8.

These levels correspond with the three levels at which the Project worked. The Project, which was managed by the Project Team and implemented by its implementing partners, worked at the:

- Policy level, which focused on the facilitation of rights-based and gender-responsive governance, national development planning and budgeting processes to ensure that gender equality commitments are translated into resource allocations, including relevant sectoral programs and local development plans.
- Institutional level, which focused on the support for effective legal enforcement of the legislation critical to ensure that women have rights to economic resources, property and inheritance.
- Community level, which supported community activism to ensure that rural women have economic security and sustainable livelihoods.

These levels — policy, institutional, community — corresponded to the outcomes of the Project, as developed and elaborated in the Project's logical framework (Annex, 9). The logical framework identified inputs, outputs and their correlating activities and indicators and outcomes. This framework showed a logical progression from development and inception to implementation, and results were measurable.

The logical framework did not have baseline data for all outcomes. For some outcomes, such as Outcome 1, which concerns legislation and policies, quantitative baseline data is almost impossible because the activities on legislation and policies concentrate not on their quantity but on their substance, which requires a qualitative approach. Likewise, Outcome 2 lacks baseline data because work with institutional capacity requires a qualitative perspective. For Outcome 3, the Project completed a profile of 2,200 households, the data informing its work with rural women in the food security and economic livelihood component. For Outcome 4, quantitative baseline data on the administrative and financial support would have been inappropriate because the professional relationship between the UN Women Projects and implementing partners was new, to the extent that, at the time of the evaluation, an assignment was underway to finalize the feasibility and parameters for such professional relations in other UN Women projects in Kyrgyzstan.

The scope of the Project was nation-wide, working in all seven oblasts of Kyrgyzstan, collaborating with central and local government authorities, and working with communities to implement grant activities. Through its implementing partners, the Project trained and educated government officials and specialists, local institutions and citizens to promote women's economic security and rights, foster women's rights to land and property, and ensure that policies and laws related to gender equality and women's human rights are fully implemented to broaden women's economic opportunities.

6 FINDINGS

Overall, the project, Enhancing Economic Security of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan, was effective, efficient, relevant and sustainable in its efforts to reach its planned outcomes. First, the Project made significant inroads to assist and support government officials develop legislation and policies to promote and protect women's property and inheritance rights.

Second, the Project trained and educated, and consulted with members of traditional social institutions in Kyrgyzstan so that they were committed to, capable of and accountable to ensuring the economic security of the rural population, and to observing women's land, property and inheritance rights. Third, the Project worked in partnership to implement timely and effective interventions in communities, to promote and respect women's land, property and inheritance rights. Finally, the Project strengthened its internal structure and organization to produce interventions and meaningful impact at the policy, institutional and community levels, and provide an external quality evaluation.

6.1 Outcome 1: Legislations and policies that promote and protect women's property and inheritance rights formulated and implemented

Towards Outcome 1, the Project realized two outputs. Output 1.1 focused on legislation and policies that have impact on rural women. Output 1.2 focused on budgeting, which is critical to gender priorities because the implementation of these concerns has to be feasible and practical. These outputs, and the correlating outcome, concern policies and legislation, and require working with central and local government officials, and state agencies. Such work is formidable and challenging, and requires a long-term commitment and investment of resources to make achievements.

To realize these outputs, the Project operated at the policy level, training and educating central and local government officials and state agency representatives so that they could incorporate gender-sensitive issues into policies, national planning and budget processes. Toward these efforts, the Project, through its implementing partners, WESA, CDA and STA, conducted training sessions, seminars, workshops for and consultations with government officials and representatives (Annex, 10), and lobbied to help bring changes to and alignment in legislation pertaining to women's land, property and inheritance rights. As part of these activities, 262 people (159 women, 103 men) were trained and educated in gender equality and women's rights in land, property and inheritance. In turn, these participants incorporated their newly gained knowledge and skills to ensure that women's land, property and inheritance rights were safeguarded.

The timeliness and quality of these sessions were remarked upon by participants, who completed post-event questionnaires. For example, the 18 participants (15 women, 3 men) of the seminar, *Instruments of gender-sensitive planning and budgeting*, held in Bishkek in October 2009 and conducted by STA, gave high marks to the substance and style of the seminar, and to the trainers and training materials. In another example, the 27 participants (all women) in the seminar, *Factors, prevention and resolution of rural women's property and inheritance issues*, held in Batken city in August 2010 and conducted by WESA, indicated that the event had raised their

Today's Lessons, Tomorrow's Work

Two specialists, one from the Ministry of Social Provision and one from the Department of Land Cadastre and Management, participated in UN Women-supported training sessions that introduced and elaborated on incorporating gender-sensitive concerns into national planning and budgeting. The two women had received similar training in the past. However, they remarked that the recent seminars and workshops they had attended featured relevant material and outstanding trainers. These specialists expressed enthusiasm for integrating their newly acquired knowledge into the work they do on women's land, property and inheritance rights. But they realize that the present uncertain political climate presents other priorities for the government. Nevertheless, they remain hopeful about future opportunities.

knowledge of the issues concerned. Such comments demonstrate that these events made a significant impact on participants, imparting to individuals knowledge of and skills in gender equality and women's land, property and inheritance rights.

Output 1.1 called for effective mechanisms for dialog between government actors and gender equality advocates on how to develop and enforce legal frameworks and processes that promote and protect women's human rights in the areas of land, property and inheritance rights exist. These mechanisms consisted of the review and revision of laws and policies; development of recommendations; and establishment of dialogs between relevant state officials and gender advocates. In this range of activities, the Project, through its implementing partners, actively engaged central government offices, academia, lawyers, NGOS and NGO networks in the incorporation of gender issues into legislation and policies. In particular, sessions with these actors were essential to the research, analysis and advocacy related to public consultations on the Law on Agricultural Land Management, and the Family and Civil Codes.

A major part of this suite of efforts was the development and submission of instructions (e.g., regulations, guidelines, rules) to the State Registry, which is responsible for land and real estate, to ensure that it implements the amended articles in the Law on Agricultural Land Management. From 2009 to 2011, the Project assigned lawyers and experts to assist the State Registry, in particular its Department of Cadastre and Real Estate, to bring extant normative acts and procedures into compliance with the amended law. It also conducted a review of the authorities of the Department of Cadastre and Real Estate and of local governments, and made recommendations to these entities to improve the access of these services pertaining to the land, property and inheritance rights to women in particular and to all citizens in general. During this period, the Project, through its implementing partners, conducted monitoring of the implementation of the Law on Agricultural Land Management in all seven oblasts. From this work, the Project developed a monitoring and evaluation manual for civil society organizations and provided training so that they could participate in monitoring activities.

Another undertaking under Output 1.1 was working to align the Family and Civil Codes with women's human rights in land, property and inheritance. For the period 2009-2011, WESA conducted a gender analysis of Family and Civil Codes, identifying 10 articles (Articles 1, 14, 18, 25, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 44) that limited or unduly affected the observance of women's land, property and inheritance rights. As a public education aspect of this undertaking and in line with the activities developed in the logical framework, the Project conducted presentations and discussions in all seven oblasts on the changes and alignments in the Family and Civil Code.

The Project expanded these efforts to work with the Ministry of Justice. Two project experts participated in the ministry's working group, which successfully crafted amendments to the Family and Civil code that incorporated the revisions of the 10 articles in question. As of this evaluation, the bill to introduce these amendments into the Family and Civil Code has been submitted by the Ministry of Justice for presentation in the national Parliament.

In relation to the Project's activities with government actors to formulate and implement legislation and policies, and monitoring their implementation, STA conducted public hearings in June 2011 in all seven oblasts on the changes to the Family and Civil Codes, in which more than 200 representatives from civil society organizations participated. These forums of open discussion and interaction between government and the public reflected the mutually reinforcing project activities to promote and publicize gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights.

Output 1.2 called for effective mechanisms for dialog between government budget actors and gender equality advocates on including gender equality into budgeting processes.

These mechanisms consisted of budget analysis at the central, oblast and village levels; dialogs among relevant state officials, gender advocates and communities on gender issues in budgets; and priorities defined as a result of gender analysis of local development plans and budgets.

As a pilot activity for similar work in all seven oblasts of Kyrgyzstan, CDA conducted a gender analysis of the policies of Chui Oblast province (oblast, district and village levels). Based on this analysis, the Project produced training modules and guides on gender-responsive local development planning and budgeting. Using these materials, the implementing partners trained 62 people (22 women, 44 men) from women's groups and the local governments of 31 villages in joint planning and in solving priority problems of local development with gender equality and women's rights perspectives.

Also under Output 1.2, STA assisted four ministries and state agencies (Department of Cadastre and Real Estate in the State Registry, National Statistic Committee, State Agency for Social Protection and Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration) with the training of selected specialists on gender issues. The implementation partners provided training and consultations to 23 individuals on the analysis of more than 20 by-laws, internal regulations and instructions from a gender perspective, and developed and submitted recommendations on introducing and mainstreaming gender approaches in selected documents.

Towards Outcome 1 and as shown by activities leading to its two outputs, the Project made strides to assist and support government officials develop legislation and policies to promote gender equality, and protect women's property and inheritance rights. It also was successful in helping and support civil service organizations and communities understand and help in monitoring the observance of gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights.

The activities under this outcome had a multiplier effect. The active participation of government officials, legal professionals, academia, lawyers and NGOS and NGO networks in the incorporation of gender issues into legislation and policies contributed to fostering good relations and teamwork. In particular, the involvement of central government offices and academia improved their gender sensitivity and knowledge of rural women's problems related to their economic rights, as well as bolstered their experience and skills in working with the civil society sector.

Notwithstanding the achievements under this outcome, the Project faced some difficulties. First was the lack of participation by senior-level officials in the discussions and trainings on gender equality and women's human rights. Although the presence of ministerial and agency specialists indicated the degree of importance that the central government authorities placed on these trainings and their topics, the absence of senior officials meant, as pointed out by evaluation informants, that some action to incorporate gender-sensitive issues into policies and the budgeting process would not be immediately taken. But in practice, especially in Kyrgyzstan, where senior-level officials in ministries and state agencies are appointed and dismissed by the central government administration, mid-level specialists perform the major part of government work. For this reason, the Project focused its efforts on the mid-level government specialists.

Another difficulty that the Project faced was the political and social unrest in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, which affected all of society and the activities of the Project. Senior-level officials were dismissed and replaced, which meant that the Project lost time and some momentum. However, thanks to a six-month cost extension, the Project had the time to restart some of its activities. Importantly, the Project Team and the implementing partners adapted to the circumstances, re-focused its resources and worked to carry out the activities.

In its efforts toward reaching Outcome 1, the Project was effective, efficient, relevant and sustainable. First, the project activities were effective. They produced the desired effects, as outlined in the logical framework. Government officials and state agency representatives indicated that they had raised their awareness and knowledge of gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance. They participated in the Project's activities in the ministries and state agencies. They discussed and analyzed current legislation and policies concerning gender equality and women's rights, and, most importantly, formulated and implemented them.

Second, activities were efficient. They produced the desired effects using available and immediate resources. The Project worked with extant legislation and policy. No efforts were wasted on formulating new laws, regulations or policies. Working to introduce new legislation and policies would have required a larger initial commitment of time, money and energy, and could have produced an adversarial position with central and local government, ministries and agencies. Instead, the Project made a conscious effort to analyze current legislation and policies, and then worked to improve them.

For example, the implementing partners were domestic NGOs that had the capacity to work at the national and local levels, and at the government and community levels. The Project did not rely on international implementing organizations, which meant that activities were cost-effective and that personnel needed minimal, if any, time to adjust to the environment of Kyrgyzstan.

The activities were also efficient because they were conducted by implemented partners. The implementing partners were domestic organizations with experienced and capable personnel who knew the political, social and economic conditions of the country. They had the capacity to work at the national and local levels, and at the government and community levels. The Project did not rely on international implementing organizations, which meant that activities were cost-effective and that personnel needed minimal, if any, time to adjust to the environment of Kyrgyzstan. Specialists, experts and trainers were citizen, and training material was developed domestically, and in Kyrgyz and Russian, all combining to improve efficiency.

Third, the activities under Outcome 1 were relevant. They responded to the need to improve policy so that women could fully access equality in general, and land, property and inheritance rights in particular, and the assets related to these rights to improve their livelihoods and those of their family. Therefore, working with and helping government officials and policymakers to improve legislation and policy were appropriate activities. This work made sense given the priority to ensure that legislation and policies are sound, comprehensive and implementable.

Finally, activities are sustainable. The initiatives and activities implemented by the Project appear to be able to continue with minimal outside intervention. By their nature, development activities are never fully sustainable. However, efforts and activities can enhance the prospects of sustainability. For example, the Project worked closely with government officials and state agencies to ensure that they participated in the discussion and analysis of legislation and policies. As a result, they had a stake in the processes and the results. This sense of ownership improved the likelihood that legislation and policies are relevant, appropriate and implementable. Other project activities led to sustainability. Communities were trained to monitor the implementation of the amended legislation and policies. Instead of having to rely later on outsiders, these community members will be able to carry out monitoring on their own. In many ways, this sustainability can be viewed as a multiplier effect because these individuals are equipped with skills for similar endeavors in the future.

6.2 Outcome 2: Institutions demonstrate commitment, capacity and accountability in ensuring economic security of the rural population during the food and energy crisis, and observance of women's property and inheritance rights

Towards Outcome 2, the Project realized two outputs. Output 2.1 focused on the capacities of relevant state institutions to provide services related to gender equality and women's human rights. Output 2.2 focused on ensuring that informal justice systems be accessible and responsive to women.

To realize these outputs, the implementing partners worked with state agencies and community institutions to increase their awareness and knowledge of gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights, and their capacity to provide services to women. Toward these efforts, the implementing partners conducted trainings, seminars, workshops and consultations for 291 people (90 women, 201 men). As with these events that occurred toward achieving Outcome 1, the participants thought that the quality of the training was high and that the materials were relevant. For example, the 20 participants (all men and specialists from the State Registry) of the seminar, *Roles and meanings of local government organs in defense of real estate and inheritance rights of women*, held in Talas city in October 2009 and conducted by WESA, commented that their knowledge of the issues concerned had increased due their participation. These remarks point out that the training events contributed to the improvement in people's knowledge of and skills in gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights. In the oblasts of Jalal-Abad and Issyk-Kul, the State Registry departments were enthusiastic to the extent that they initiated trainings, ensured the participation of their staff from the remoter districts, provided premises for the trainings and co-facilitated the sessions.

Output 2.1 called for enhanced capacities of key policy and service delivery institutions in the sector of land and agricultural development to mainstream gender equality and women's human rights into their operations. In particular, this output centered on increasing the knowledge and skills of state agencies, for example the State Registry, and local governments to provide services to women.

Part of the activities related to this output coincided with those activities implemented under the outputs for Outcome 1. This overlap is a strength and underscores the interlinked components of the Project. Through training in and education about gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights, State Registry officials were better able to provide services to women who approached them with their problems. For the period 2009-2011, 39 State Registry officials in 22 districts provided consultation and assistance to 157 women (comprising more than 300 women and men overall) who approached their offices.

The participation in the Project's trainings gave these officials opportunities to forge working relations with the legal clinics that operated under the Project (detailed in the subsequent section on Outcome 3). For example, a representative of the Ak-Suu District (Issyk-Kul Oblast) State Registry consults regularly with the legal clinic in Kara-Kol (the oblast capital) on issues brought by women to his department. These consultations, he emphasized, are a part of his efforts to provide services pertaining to the land, property and inheritance rights to all citizens, regardless of their gender.

One important product developed by the Project, through its implementing partner WESA, concerned the process of land and real estate registration. The set of documents, expanded from an analysis by the Project on services to rural women, consists of four flow charts detailing the steps involved to register the ownership of land and property with the proper government agencies. These flow charts will be posted in district and village administration buildings beginning in late May 2011 and will serve as an aid to people approaching their local governments with registration issues. These flow charts highlight the tangible

achievements that the Project has made to help relevant state institutions improve their capacity to provide assistance and services to women who have questions on land, property and inheritance rights, and who need to resolve registration issues related to these rights.

Output 2.2 called for a relevant body of knowledge to ensure that informal justice systems, in particular, *aksakal* courts (court of elders), and religious leaders are accessible to women, and understand women's land, property, inheritance rights, and settle disputes related to these rights. Trainings, seminars, workshops and consultations targeted *aksakal* courts, religious leaders and women committees, with 160 people (68 women, 92 men) trained in and educated about women's land, property, inheritance rights. Although the Project included all three types of social institutions, it focused on *aksakal* courts.

Aksakal ('white beard' in Kyrgyz) courts are courts of elders (mostly men but, despite the meaning of *aksakal*, includes women), the traditional, informal arbitrating bodies in Kyrgyz society. The community respects the experience and the judgment of the *aksakal* courts.

Local grievances are usually brought to the *aksakal* courts, with only a few cases (less than 10 percent of all cases according to evaluation informants) going to the district courts, and fewer to higher courts. The decision to approach *aksakal* courts to resolve conflicts stems from the traditional practices of Kyrgyz society, the relatively faster time to reach a decision, less bureaucracy and no court fees.

However, many *aksakal* courts, as admitted by one evaluation informant who is a court member, are not as fully aware of the laws pertaining to land, property and inheritance rights due to amendments made to laws pertaining to these rights. Consequently, many women may feel that decisions are biased against them because *aksakal* courts, in the view of many observers, lack knowledge on current laws and policies, and apply tradition and precedents, which have a patriarchal partiality, in their decision-making.

'White Beard' Wisdom

The senior member of the *aksakal* ('white beard' in Kyrgyz) court in Boru-Bash Village (Ak-Sui District, Issyk-Kul Oblast) and his colleagues – men and women – mediate conflicts in the community. When residents approach the *aksakal* court, they rely on this traditional institution of Kyrgyz society to draw upon collective knowledge, experience and customs to settle disputes to the satisfaction of all concerned parties. This senior member has noted the increasing number of cases involving women and their land, property and inheritance rights that have come to the court. He frequently consults with legal experts in Kara-Kol, the oblast center, to ensure that the decisions that the court make comply with customary laws and national laws. This senior member acknowledges that legislation on land rights has changed. He and his colleagues welcome training and education to raise their legal knowledge and competencies so that the *aksakal* court remains a vital, informed and respected institution in the community.

To address the situation, WESA developed a significant product, a manual to aid *aksakal* courts in making decisions on land, property and inheritance issues. Expanded from a project analysis of *aksakal* courts, and incorporating the contributions of local governments and, in particular, *aksakal* court members to ensure that the contents were appropriate and pertinent to their work, the manual aims to raise the knowledge of *aksakal* court members about women's land, property and inheritance rights. *Aksakal* courts have begun using the manual in their work to settle disputes with decisions that account for women's rights in general and their land, property and inheritance rights in particular, based on written law.

The manual meets a real need and should be a valuable reference. An example that shows the potential contributions that the manual could make comes from an informant discussion with an *aksakal* court member in Issyk-Kul Oblast. He showed the land law manual, *Women's Rights to Land: Questions and Answers*, which was produced in an earlier phase of a UN Women project to promote and improve women's land rights. He pointed out that he

and the other members of the *aksakal* court often refer to the manual (of which only two copies are shared by the five court members), formatted in question-and-answer sections and sample situations, when deciding cases brought before them. The present manual will build upon and expand the tools and references that *aksakal* courts have so that they can remain an intrinsic, respected and valued part of the community.

Despite the achievements made towards this outcome, the Project had some challenges. In context of the two significant products — the land and property registration flow charts, and the *aksakal* court manual — one factor that worked against the Project was time, which was affected by the turbulent events in 2010 affecting Kyrgyzstan in general and the Project in particular. The abrupt, dramatic events prevented efforts to fully monitor the effects of the aforementioned interventions to see how and to what degrees local institutions have adopted and used the products to improve the observance and promotion of women's land, property and inheritance rights.

In its efforts to reach Outcome 2, the Project was effective, efficient, relevant and sustainable. The activities were effective, producing in individuals and institutions changes in attitudes in and approaches to gender equality and women's rights. State Registry officials indicated that they had increased their awareness and knowledge of gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance through participation in trainings, seminars, workshops and consultations. They took advantage of other aspects of the Project (legal clinics) to increase the quality of their services to women. Evidence from informant discussions and document review shows that state agency representatives have enhanced capacities to provide services to the public. Informal institutions, in particular *aksakal* courts, participated in trainings, seminars and consultations, and indicated that they had incorporated their acquired knowledge and skills into their work.

The activities were also efficient because they used available and immediate resources. Implementing partners worked with existing institutions and wasted no resources (time, personnel, funds) instead of setting up new or parallel institutions. As with activities that worked towards Outcome 1, Outcome 2 activities were efficient due to the role of implementing partners. The implementing partners were experienced and had a history of working with local governments and social institutions. They worked with specialists who were national citizens and who understood the political, social and economic environment. Training materials were developed domestically, and were in Kyrgyz or Russian, meaning no time was lost in translation and interpretation.

Activities were relevant. They responded to the need in Kyrgyzstan to engage with state agencies and social institutions, and to educate and train them to enhance their capacities to provide services to women. Activities and products to raise the level of awareness of women's rights in *aksakal* courts incorporated the opinions of *aksakal* court members. Without such contributions from the target beneficiaries, here the *aksakal* courts, the activities and products would have been viewed as alien and irrelevant to the real-world environment of their communities, and would have been rejected.

Finally, activities are sustainable. Building on existing institutional procedures and operations in the communities meant that the parties involved, in this instance, the State Registry and relevant agencies, and *aksakal* courts, had experience and knowledge that were intrinsic to the Project's efforts. They had ownership in the activities and saw that the successes of the activities were their successes. This kind of connection between actors and initiatives, in which all parties are respected and their contributions valued, improves the prospects that activities will be sustainable.

6.3 Duty-bearers and rights holders working in partnership to ensure timely and effective response to the energy/food crisis and to observance of and respect for women's property and inheritance rights at community/local levels

Towards reaching Outcome 3, the Project realized three outputs. Output 3.1 focused on increasing the awareness of rural women on their rights and influencing the development processes. Output 3.2 focused on enhancing community and local government partnerships for the observance of women's rights. Output 3.3 focused on the advocacy for the observance of women's rights.

To realize these outputs, the Project worked mostly at the community level, training and educating beneficiaries on gender equality and women's land, property and inheritance rights, and providing services to women (and men) who had problems pertaining to these rights. The tools to train and empower women were grant programs, and the food security and economic livelihood component that emanated from the partnerships that the Project had with international organizations.

Output 3.1 called for women subject to exclusion and/or discrimination to have enhanced capacities to participate in and influence the development of policies in the areas of land, agriculture. Towards this goal, WESA made legal clinics operational in the all seven oblasts. For the period 2009-2011 to date, the clinics served 2,567 clients (Annex, 11). Of the 1,576 women who received assistance from the clinics, 1,260 (80 percent) of these clients had their cases resolved to their satisfaction. Furthermore, 20 cases were successfully resolved in the courts, and the rights of more than 100 women and men were protected with the support of the Project. These cases involved family affairs, housing, land relations, economic issues, and civil matters, the latter disputes related to the protection of women's land, property and inheritance rights.

Most cases involving women concerned appeals to higher courts after an unfavorable decision against the plaintiffs. In these cases, the materials and documents provided by women were often insufficient and their legality in question, which meant that clinic lawyers had to examine available documents and evidence to justify appeal procedures. The lawyers corresponded with the authorities and government bodies involved in the dispute, requesting missing documents and materials, and clarification of facts. When necessary, the lawyers and other project experts went to villages to meet with the parties concerned and with the appropriate government bodies to request necessary documents for a more detailed examination of the case in question. In special cases, the lawyers sought assistance from an independent panel of experienced legal experts who were well versed in the specifics of the dispute and of the judicial system.

The clinics, whether at the offices proper or on regular trips to remoter rural areas, where their legal professionals often worked in physical spaces in local government administrations, provided services to poor rural citizens, often women, who had problems related to land and property ownership/registration and documentation. These clients did not have the money to obtain the services of private lawyers and relied on the knowledge and counseling of the clinic professionals. According to evaluation informants, the information and assistance provided by these clinics were invaluable. In addition, the legal clinics worked with clients to ensure that the assistance was an educational process in which clients learned about legislation and policies that pertained to their concerns on land ownership and registration, property and inheritance rights. Through an understanding of their problems and of the approaches used by the clinic lawyers, clients became more knowledgeable and empowered.

The political events of the Kyrgyzstan in 2010, in particular the riots in the Osh areas, had an enormous impact on the work of the legal clinics. The number of clients who sought the

services of the clinics increased, especially for those cases involving the loss of documents to proof of residence and land ownership, and consequent land use rights. The events in Osh and the general situation of land, property and inheritance rights underscore the need for legal assistance to be provided to the rural poor.

Output 3.2 called for an enhanced number and quality of community-level initiatives to advance women's human rights and to eliminate gender inequality in rural poverty reduction, food crisis prevention, and in promoting practical observance of women's property and inheritance rights. As part of this range of activities, the Project implemented its own grant program. Later, it implemented a grant program with funding with Kumtor Operating Company. The Project also entered into partnerships with international organizations to implement activities to ensure the food security and economic livelihood of rural women.

The Project implemented a grant program in which 10 villages received funding. Except for one project, the maximum grant amount was for USD 10,000, with community contributions ranging from about 10 percent to 43 percent of the grant amount. The Project also implemented a grant program, with funding from the Kumtor Operating Company, in 10 villages of the Ton District (Issyk-Kul Oblast). For these grants, the maximum grant amount was USD 10,000 with community contributions of 30 percent of this amount. For both programs, the grant application procedure stimulated a learning process in which applicants first applied to undergo training in project management and budgeting, then wrote and submitted a proposal for grant financing with the local government providing cost-share. Applicants then supported additional monitoring and hosted visits by the Grant Committee (established by the Project, and composed of government officials, business people and NGO representatives) to their grant sites before a decision was made about receiving grant money. Members of the Grant Committee and successful grant applicants remarked that the competitive process was rigorous but transparent, and offered itself as an outstanding model of good governance and accountability.

Water — Source of Life

The farmers of Bolshevik Village (pop. 3,815), in Kara-Suu District in Osh Oblast, lacked water for their fields due to the disrepair of a nearby two-kilometer stretch of irrigation canal. The problem was especially acute for women, many of whom were farmers, because it added to their responsibilities as household caretakers. However, the farmers and the village administration did not have the funds to repair the canal. The village applied to the UN Women Project's grant program and successfully won a grant. The village administration provided cost-share and the farmers contributed in-kind labor. The farmers received technical training on maintaining and operating irrigation infrastructure, and improving agricultural techniques. The training also incorporated knowledge of gender equity, and women's land, property and inheritance rights. As a result of the project, the farmers now have water for their fields, resulting in higher crop yields. Importantly, the farmers gained knowledge and skills in community mobilization, agricultural techniques, and women's rights, and now know how to work in equal partnership with each other regardless of their gender. Through the integration of knowledge and action, which led to concrete achievements, the village has renewed its sense of community solidarity.

The two grant programs implemented by the Project had a strong emphasis on bringing benefits to rural women and to the other members of the wider community. Training to support the implementation of the grant projects stressed the acquisition of community mobilization skills and technical know-how. Training also included issues of gender equality and women's rights, emphasizing these issues as integral parts of community activities.

The Project was successful in building partnership with international organizations and ensuring synergies with their projects. The activities that emanated from these partnerships catalyzed rural women's economic activities in Kyrgyzstan and were based on the successful initiatives achieved by the Project. The synergy between the projects led to the provision to vulnerable families of cropping inputs (vegetable seeds, plastic 'greenhouse' tunnels and fertilizer), thus enhancing the food security of poor female-headed households.

These partnerships ultimately worked to increase the quantity and quality of community-level initiatives to improve women's food security and economic livelihood, and in promoting the practical observance of women's property and inheritance rights. Through a UN Women-World Food Program (WFP) collaborative program, Food Assistance to Households Belonging to Vulnerable Categories in the Program to Grow Vegetables, which focused on food security and economic livelihood activities, rural villages were identified in all seven oblasts where interventions could respond to the food crisis in Kyrgyzstan. With the help of CDA, which had conducted a profile of 2,200 households, women farmers established and maintained self-help groups. These groups became a source of social, technical and financial sustenance for members seeking moral support for in their activities, learning and disseminating technical know-how, and applying for financial assistance to expand their on-farm activities. Under this food security and economic livelihood program, which eventually included joint initiatives of the Project with the World Bank and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), women farmers established 307 women's self-help groups in 17 villages in all seven oblasts, with membership reaching 2101 and growing.

Women farmers in the targeted villages undertook training in social mobilization, which was conducted by CDA, and technical (agricultural) training, which was conducted by WESA. The training integrated with education in gender equality and woman's rights. Each woman received 200 kilograms of flour and 14 liters of vegetable oil as part of donor efforts to secure economic livelihood. The UN Women-WFP collaboration extended into a partnership with the World Bank, through the Agricultural Projects Implementation Unit within the Ministry of Agriculture, on the program, Vulnerable Groups in Rural Areas; and into a partnership with FAO on the program, Agricultural Assistance to Vulnerable, Food-insecure Female-headed Households. Both programs provided vegetable seeds and inputs to the women farmers. Armed with training and inputs, the women planted the seeds and applied what they had learned in their training to their farm work. In addition, the women farmers made and continue to make efforts to learn from each other by sharing experience and information, and making cross visits.

Bites of Cucumbers

The women farmers of Toktonaliev Village (Issyk-Ata District, Chui Oblast) have benefitted from the food security and economic livelihood activities supported by the UN Women Project and its partners. After establishing self-help groups, these women received training in social mobilization and agricultural technology, and applied their knowledge and skills to growing seeds provided by the initiative. The result from this catalytic assistance has been higher harvest yields and revenues. The women farmers have plowed money back into village funds to purchase seeds and other inputs for the next growing season. Their business acumen, which has contributed to the financial sustainability of their agricultural ventures, is sharp. Participating in tasting events to judge the quality of recently harvested cucumbers, the women recorded the kilograms of cucumbers sacrificed to the quality control sessions, and made meticulous calculations on the equivalent loss in revenue from their accumulated bites. The common cucumber has become an important business tool.

In addition, the Project assisted the women farmers set up rural funds in which they paid back up to 40 percent of the value of the inputs they had received. They also contributed

additional money from the profits of their on-farm activities. The funds finance the purchase of seeds and other inputs, and are sources for credits to fund members. By 1 November 2010, nearly USD 12,000 had been raised by the rural funds.

Although data has not been full, profits from the first-year harvests were remarkable. For example, yields from only carrot seeds have produced net profits of about USD 100 per hectare. Women farmers who had informed the evaluation were satisfied with their participation in the catalytic initiative. Although the one-year activity has concluded, the women are planning for the coming planting season. They are applying their training in managing their rural funds, budgeting forthcoming activities, purchasing quality seeds, inputs and equipment, using mini-greenhouses and exploring market expansion for their produce.

The women's economic performance has led to the promotion of the practical observance of women's property and inheritance rights. In informant discussions, women farmers related that their participation in the food security and economic livelihood program has empowered them to make discussion in their households pertaining to farming activities and land use. Furthermore, they relate that their husbands, who have seen their participation in and accomplishments from the Project, have treated them as equals when it comes to talking about and making decisions on economic issues that affect the household, which includes land use and the investments of resources to boost farm activities.

Output 3.3 called for equality experts, advocates and their organizations to have strengthened capacities to advocate for gender equality in the areas food crisis prevention, and in promoting practical observance of women's land, property and inheritance rights. For this undertaking the Project produced informational and training material, and publicity (Annex, 12), and made them available to stakeholders, strategic partners, beneficiaries and the public at large. To further raise public awareness about gender equality and women's land, property and inheritance rights, and publicize activities linked to these issues, the Project and its implementing partners produced press releases, and made regular contributions to the electronic and print media. For example, the Project, through its implementing partners, produced legal advice columns in newspapers and hosted radio talks shows on gender equality and women's land, property and inheritance rights. Although the internet is still not common in rural areas, the Project provided content to this medium as a way to publicize its project activities and impacts to reach a wider audience. Taking the initiative in publicity and information dissemination indicate that the implementing partners had the foresight and capacity for this undertaking, and show a professional growth in their organizations and missions.

For Outcome 3, the Project had additional effects: unintended but beneficial effects and multiplier effects. The Project had envisioned that women farmers would be recognized. However, the extent to which they were publicly recognized was beyond expectations. For example, In Keregetash Village (Ak-Suu District, Issyk-Kul Oblast), six women self-help groups participated in the food security and economic livelihood programs. The agricultural and economic achievements of these women were recognized by the village administration, which sponsored a public celebration of *Nooruz* (the beginning of the New Year in many Muslim societies and which traditionally marks the start of the planting season in Kyrgyzstan) in March 2011. The event, which included competitions in singing, noodle making and vegetable-growing, attracted a large audience from neighboring villages, celebrated the contributions made by the women, raised their prestige, galvanized the solidarity of the communities. This example illustrates the success that the Project had in working with women so that their efforts were recognized, and in contributing to the wider community giving its support to and bestowing honor on rural women.

Another example of an unintended, beneficial effect also comes from activities that improved the food security and economic livelihood of rural women. The Project had envisioned that women farmers become sustainable in their activities. However, the extent and the speed

that sustainability would be reached was dramatic. For example, farmers in Baltabay Village (Jeti-Oguz District, Issyk-Kul Oblast) decided to pay for technical (agricultural) training in addition to the training they had received under the program. Paying-out-of-pocket signals that women farmers are consciously analyzing the tradeoffs in and advantages of investing available resources for future gains. This kind of economic decision-making illustrates that long-term financial sustainability is becoming an integral and permanent element in the way that women are thinking about and planning for their livelihoods. This example also demonstrates the successful long-term impact that the Project made through its catalytic activities.

One multiplier effect, which originated from the food security and economic livelihood program, is that women farmers are taking part in more cross visits. Cross visits were a component of the program, serving as forums in which women farmers from different villages learn from each other by visiting other farms and seeing techniques that they might want to adapt for their farming activities. The substantial number of women farmers in the program has encouraged many cross visits, even between women farmers not originally in the program. For example, in two informant discussions, some women farmers were not original participants. In the field visit part of the sessions, which usually took place in the home of one farmer, the women were eager to ask questions about farming techniques and technology, seed quality and soil quality. The growing number of self-help groups augers well that cross visits will continue to be a part of the education of women farmers after the program ends, and will help expand knowledge and skills to more communities.

In the context of Outcome 3, the Project faced some difficulties. Activities undertaken to achieve this output were also affected by the political events in Kyrgyzstan in 2010. The purchase of seeds was held up, thus delaying the provision of seeds to some women farmers, who then pushed the planting of crops later into the year or into the following year. However, the Project's international partner organizations provided additional vegetable seeds to those women farmers that needed them for that growing season.

In its efforts to achieve Outcome 3, the Project was effective, efficient, relevant and sustainable. First, activities were effective. They produced the desired changes in the level of knowledge, access to services, attitudes and behavior. Under the Project, legal assistance and consultations were provided to women and men in all seven oblasts to reach resolutions to their land, property and inheritance disputes. In its own grant program and that in partnership with Kumtor, the Project mobilized rural communities to carry out projects that made measurable impacts on people's lives. The interventions conducted by the Project and its partners helped strengthened the food security and

Milk to Money

The Director of the Umai Ene Public Fund, which supervises the Ak Zhalga Milk Collection Station in Altymysh Village (pop. 1554), in Kemin District, Chui Oblast, proudly shows the dairy storage equipment to her visitors. This ambitious undertaking, which goes beyond economic security to economic development, received a grant from the UN Women Project. Starting up presented many difficulties: buying equipment, renovating physical facilities (itself on the grounds of a vocational school), establishing quality control measures, learning about financing, marketing and management – all the details that go into running a business. The milk collection station has a one-year contract with Bishkek Sut, a large nationally known dairy product company in Bishkek, which sends a truck to the station to collect milk twice a day, every day. Women farmers who provide milk to the station are paid about USD 0.25 per liter. The director has ideas for expansion: cheese production, dairy processing, larger markets. She also realizes that risks lie ahead, and that she and her staff will need continual training and education, as would any other successful business person.

raised the economic livelihood of rural women in all seven oblasts through training and the provision of seeds and other inputs. Importantly, women farmers are thinking about economic sustainability in their activities, and are incorporating organizational methodologies in farming. Particularly effective in this component, as in the grant programs, was the integration of gender equality and women's rights issues in the training and education of beneficiaries. Many projects do not grasp the value of incorporating these issues into activities. Under the Project, rural women, as well as the other members of their communities, saw firsthand how knowledge of these issues could be applied to their hands-on activities. This integration of knowledge and action was acknowledged by rural women informants as an effective way to understand the importance of these issues in their lives. Finally, as part of knowledge management and publicity activities, the Project Team and the Project's implementing partners disseminated the achievements it made with communities, thereby contributing to increase awareness on the part of the public of how gender equality and women's human rights can be operationalized in various activities.

Second, the activities were efficient. As for the previous outcomes, the implementing partners used available and immediate resources. For example, the legal clinics used the services of competent lawyers who were nationals and lived in the areas they served. For the grant programs, the Project provided grants on a competitive basis. Having applicants approach the programs rather than seeking out applicants is efficient and cost-effective. The Project entered into partnerships with other international organizations and together marshaled the available monetary and material resources to initiate economic security activities in all seven oblasts. By pooling resources and coordinating activities with these partners, the Project avoided duplicating efforts. Implementing partners were domestic NGOs that were able to work at the grassroots without the need of outside consultants, translators and interpreters, thus making activities cost-effective and feasible.

Third, the activities were relevant. They responded to the need for women to seek services to resolve disputes in land, property and inheritance rights. For example, legal clinics assisted poor rural people who could not afford private counsel, and who in their interaction with legal professionals raised their knowledge about the rights in question. Activities responded to the needs of communities. In the grant programs, the Project helped communities implement grant activities that the communities themselves had decided as priorities. Activities responded to the need for women to exercise these rights in activities that improve their food security and economic livelihood. In partnership with other international organizations and through its implementing partners, the Project identified and worked with capable and enthusiastic community groups and women groups to initiate activities that were germane to rural communities. In addition, under the grant programs and the food security and economic livelihood programs, the Project integrated gender equality and women's land, property and inheritance rights into training (an action that accorded with UN Women's mandates), thus reinforcing this knowledge so that women apply it in their daily activities.

Finally, the activities are, overall, sustainable. The question remains about the sustainability of the free legal clinics. The completion of the Project inevitably raises concern about the future of these clinics and the services they provide to the more vulnerable and poorer segments of society. In their work in more remote rural areas, the clinics arranged with some local governments for the use of office space by clinic lawyers when they arrived in the field to provide assistance and consultation services. Such arrangements indicate the type of collaboration needed to support these legal services in the future. With partnerships developed with other organizations and implemented by implementing partners, the Project mobilized funds and resources to target rural women. This investment led to sustainability in the activities of rural women. For example, these women are using revenues from farm activities to buy seeds and fertilizer for subsequent planting seasons, contributing part of their profits to set up rural funds, paying out-of-pocket for additional technical training and helping to establish similar organizational arrangements for vulnerable groups in their

communities so that they can embark on similar rewarding economic activities. Participation in these catalytic activities has imbued women farmers with greater confidence, and they look to their future with great optimism.

6.4 Outcome 4: Internal organizational arrangements strengthened to deliver projects outcomes and to provide for external quality

Towards reaching Outcome 4, the Project realized two outputs. Output 4.1 focused on establishing and maintaining an effective financial and administrative support to project management system. Output 4.2 focused on an external evaluation to be conducted. No indicators were developed for these outputs in the logical framework.

Currently, UN Women is working in Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia and other regions with a focus on gender equality, women's rights and issues (Annex, 13). For this Project, UN Women entered into a new professional relation with implementing organizations. Unlike in the past when contractors worked under UN Women, this project was managed by UN Women through its Project Team, and carried out by implementing partners. The new relation entailed that all sides had to participate in a learning process in which each organization actively engaged in the dynamic and continually applied lessons learned to improve their roles, and thereby the Project.

This new professional relation and the activities under it were effective, producing desirable changes. In informant discussions, the implementing partners commented on the difficulty at first of adjusting to their status as implementing partners. They had more autonomy to make decisions. But with this greater degree of freedom came greater responsibilities: formulating a scope of work, designing work plan, developing performance indicators, seeking partner organizations, monitoring project progress, making adjustments to managing activities, writing reports to clients, and producing deliverables. This new relation was effective because it brought about changes in the way implementing partners managed their organizations and activities under the Project. By participating in the project processes, the Project Team and implementing partners raised knowledge and skills, and thereby progressed in their professional and institutional development.

This new professional relation and the activities under it were efficient because the implementing organizations were closer to local communities and had presence at the grassroots level and could work directly and immediately with beneficiaries with cultural, social and linguistic familiarity and ease. They could respond faster with the proper resources to changing circumstances.

This new professional relation and the activities under it were relevant. Development work entails professional development and opportunities for domestic NGOs. These opportunities, as presented by the Project, provide implementing parties the opportunity to take on more responsibilities and raise their professional profile in the country and in the communities.

Finally, the new professional relation and the activities under it are sustainable, and indicate the strengthening trend of NGOs being a constituent part of civil society in Kyrgyzstan. Over the last 15 years, civil society organizations in Kyrgyzstan have grown stronger. They have gained experience and know-how, and understand the real conditions of the country. The implementing partners in this Project proved that they are and will continue to be effective institutions in Kyrgyzstan.

The Project Team made adjustments to the new professional relation, in effect learning about and actually engaging in partnership management. Implementing partners were peers in collaboration and needed to be consulted with rather than only taking orders. Working with three independent implementing partners was not easy, especially when project activities occurred in all seven oblasts, which necessitated regular communication and coordination

with project activity sites. In this new professional relation, the Project Team, which was in charge of overall operations, and provided administrative and financial support to the implementing partners to ensure that the Project make progress, made outstanding efforts to continually incorporate the on-going dynamics into organizational operations.

One element that the Project established to help support its activities was the Steering Committee. Members of the Steering Committee included central government officials and stage agency representatives. Their presence made two contributions. First, having central government officials and stage agency representatives as members of the Steering Committee conveyed to the government and to its representatives that the Project needs, values and respects their opinions and ideas, thus ensuring stakeholdership in the Project's various endeavors. Secondly, as members of the Steering Committees, government representatives engaged in discussion, and the exchange of experience and ideas in a transparent, respectful forum. Together, these elements reinforced the notions of good governance and accountability, as well as re-emphasized their importance in the Project's activities and partnerships.

Output 4.1 called for an external evaluation of the Project. The present document, which reflected an evaluation that had an intensive schedule, covered a wide programmatic range and included field visits in three oblasts of Kyrgyzstan, meets this requirement.

7 ANALYSIS

The Project's mission and activities were based on sound gender analysis and human rights analysis. These analyses and the activities that stemmed from them accorded with the principles, found in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and Millennium Development Goal 3, to enshrine gender equality into domestic legislation, repeal discriminatory provisions in their laws, and enact new provisions to guard against discrimination against women, and to promote gender equality and empower women. The Project's activities were implemented through gender and human rights frameworks, and their results contributed to the improvement and observance of gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights in Kyrgyzstan.

The Project achieved success and showed that it and its activities were effective, efficient, relevant and sustainable. A good portion of this success can be attributed to the contributions of different stakeholders

First, the Project Team performed well in balancing the various elements of the Project. The Project Team oversaw general operations, ensuring that the Project made progress and achievements in administrative and financial oversight, engaged stakeholders in its planning and activities, established partnerships with international organizations, and embarked and nurtured professional relations with implementing partners. The Project Team drew on the experience and incorporated the lessons and successes from UN Women's mission and activities in Kyrgyzstan and in the region. In this regard, the presence of UN Women Eastern Europe and Central Asia Sub-Regional Office in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and the UN Project Team in Bishkek promoted good communications between the involved parties. In particular, the closeness of Almaty to Bishkek contributed to the shared involvement and investment needed to reach success.

Although the geographic closeness could have led to micromanagement, this kind of adverse oversight did not occur in the Project, whose Project Team was given space to take initiative. For example, in its grant program, the Project made the decision to approve a grant for the Ak Zhalga Milk Collection Station. The grant amount, USD 20,000, exceeded the maximum amount of USD 10,000. However, the Project saw the potential beneficial economic impact of the activity, provided training and support, and worked with the community, with the result that the venture is a success.

The Project worked with stakeholders who were government official and state agencies. These individuals participated in trainings, seminars and workshops. A crucial part of their involvement was their membership in the Steering Committee. Being a part of a forum that respected discussion, and the exchange of experience and ideas, and that kept them updated on the Project's progress in Kyrgyzstan contributed to their 'buy-in' to UN Women's mission and the Project's activities. Moreover, their active participation in the Steering Committee gave them the opportunity to be in a setting that promoted good governance and accountability, and to incorporate these elements into their own work.

Other actors that contributed to the success of the Project were the implementing partners. These partners were domestic NGOs that had experience, and demonstrated expertise, enthusiasm and energy to work at the policy, institutional and community levels in Kyrgyzstan. They were familiar with the political, social and economic conditions of the country. In addition, because the NGO personnel were national citizens, no time was wasted on adjusting to new environments, cultural practices or languages. The implementing partners contributed to the Project being effective, efficient and relevant.

The Project made strides to ensure that its activities were sustainable. Although development interventions are never entirely sustainable (activities need stimulus from outside sources), they can ensure that activities continue after projects conclude. The Project worked to imbue sustainability in the post-intervention future. Towards this goal, the Project worked with extant legislation and policies to improve them to promote gender equality and women's land, property and inheritance rights. It did not waste efforts on developing new legislation and policies, which might have engendered opposition from policy-making organs. The Project worked with existing institutions, such as the State Registry, to improve their capacities to provide services to women, rather than to establish parallel institutions that would not continue after funding ceased. Another way that the Project worked towards sustainability was to work with indigenous institutions, such as *aksakal* courts. Collaborating with social institutions that are familiar, and that are valued by and respected in the community improves the prospects of sustainability because communities are invested in the proper functioning of these institutions. Future activities should model community work that draws on cooperation with familiar, indigenous institutions so that efforts are sustainable to promote gender equality and women's human rights in the community.

The Project encountered difficulties in making accomplishments. The major constraint was the political and social turbulence in 2010 in Kyrgyzstan. The abrupt change in governments, with a significant period in which no government administration appeared to exist or was operational, had deleterious effects on the Project, as it had on all of Kyrgyzstan. Senior-level government officials and representatives were abruptly dismissed. The work that the Project had done with these individuals and their office — trainings, seminars, consultations, monitoring — meant that the Project had to begin anew. The previous work at the policy level then saw a huge loss of time, money, and energy, with even larger investment of these resources to restart efforts to work with new government staff on gender-sensitive concerns in policy and the budgeting process.

The political and social turmoil also affected the Project's work at the institutional and community levels. Institutions grappled with their indeterminate relations with the central government and with local governments. Their priorities shifted from working to improve and provide services to rural women to the more general work to maintain services to all citizens during a period that provided little guidance from the central government.

The 2010 upheaval also affected the community level. Women farmers did not receive vegetable seeds in time for the planting season and had to contend with rising economic uncertainty that accompanied the political unrest. In southern Kyrgyzstan, dramatic events aggravated the activities of women farmers. For example, women farmers in Manas Village

(Aravan District, Osh Oblast) took in families fleeing from the riots between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in the Osh area, sheltering people regardless of their ethnicity. They had difficulty in that tumultuous period in concentrating on and working at their farming activities, and in helping tend the fields of families who had fled due to the contentious regional events.

At the same time that the 2010 events negatively affected the progress of the Project, they also presented opportunities that required the Project to be flexible. The Project revised its original plans, successfully received approval for a six-month no-cost extension and forged partnerships to implement programs that responded to rural communities reeling from the political and social upheaval. A large part of this success was due to the implementing partners. They knew how to work with governments and institutions, had presence in the rural communities, collaborated with grassroots networks, and responded to the new demands while wasting little time in adjusting to ever-changing circumstances.

The Project had many strong points. The biggest strength was the collaboration between the UN Women Project Team with domestic implementing partners who were experienced with the country's political, social and economic features, and who had the facility to work in the volatile political and social climate. Future development initiatives should build on this experience so that they are agile, flexible and responsive to the needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries. The promotion of gender equality and women's human rights will be more successful if these concerns spring from the context of the country, and if the organizations and personnel that promote gender equality and women's human rights are seen as being a part of the communities in which they serve.

8 CONCLUSION

In many countries, developing, transition and industrialized, gender equality and women's human rights are promoted to ensure that discrimination against women ends and that women have access to the same opportunities as men have. However, this campaign is often conceived and implemented as an abstract movement, and is not linked to activities that make gender equality and women's human rights tangible aspects that have real-world meaning and consequences. As part of its mission and a driving force of its activities, UN Women seeks to make gender equality and women's human rights concrete. In the current project, Enhancing Economic Security of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan, UN Women aims to promote gender equality and women's human rights through enhancing the economic security and livelihood of rural women, and through increasing the capacity of central and local governments to engage in gender-responsive governance. It also works to increase the knowledge and capacity of institutions to provide and improve services to women. It also strives to empower rural women in exercising their rights to access social and economic infrastructure assets, including land and property.

The Project has made achievements in the promotion and the observance of gender equality and women's land, property and inheritance rights in Kyrgyzstan. It has made these accomplishments using approaches, methodologies and elements that are worth learning from and applying to other activities and countries.

First, the Project used a holistic approach to improve and promote gender equality and women's human rights. The Project worked at the policy, institutional and community levels simultaneously because impacts made at one level has consequences on the other levels. Strides in gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights cannot be made at one level at the neglect of progress in another level. For example, improving legislation and policies, such as amendments to the Land on Agricultural Land Management, and the Family and Civil Codes, means that institutions have the legal obligation to implement laws and regulations, and the legal 'arsenal' to enforce their legislation when citizens are treated unfairly. In turn, citizens, regardless of their gender, have access to services and to opportunities.

The use of a holistic approach is obvious. However, many projects, unlike this project, Enhancing Economic Livelihood of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan, do not adopt this approach. Instead, they work in one area without realizing that its activities have effects in other areas that are inter-related to the issue of their focus. A project that seeks to promote, improve and enforce gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights needs a multi-prong approach that sees the individual elements yet grasps the interconnectedness of all parts. The Project used this approach and made accomplishments. Future activities focusing on gender equality and women's equal rights should build upon its knowledge, experience and achievements.

Second, the Project put a priority on engaging stakeholders, especially state actors, in on-going dialog and activities. UN Women recognizes that development work in gender equality and women's human rights needs the participation of state actors and other relevant individuals. Without this support, the work to promote and improve gender equality and women's human rights will likely be stymied. Many projects promote their mission and conduct activities without the input of relevant state actors, and ultimately fail unless these actors have a sense of stakeholdership in project endeavors. This project, Enhancing Economic Livelihood of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan, elicited state actors to serve as member of the Steering Committee and participate in the Grant Committee. This participation allowed state representatives to engage in dialog, to be updated about the Project's direction and progress, and to contribute their experience and ideas to the Project's endeavors. An evaluation informant who was a member of the Steering Committee and a government official commented that the experience was positive, and gave her a good idea of why and how the Project was doing the things it was doing. The additional payoff was that she indicated that she was motivated to apply the same principles of openness, transparency and good governance, which she had learned from and saw firsthand in her tenure on the Steering Committee, to her own work. Future activities focusing on gender equality and women's equal rights should build upon the experience and achievements of the Project and actively engage government stakeholders so that they have a sense of ownership of activities and achievements.

Third, UN Women recognizes that capable implementing partners were critical to the Project and project activities. The Project was successful, and a major reason for this success was that domestic organizations implemented many of the activities. These implementing partners had the experience and the capability to work at the policy, institutional and community levels. They were familiar with the features unique to Kyrgyzstan, spoke the language, adapted to abrupt, changing circumstances with minimal time needed for adjustment, had a track record of achievements in the three activity levels, and recruited national specialists.

The advantages in working with experienced and capable domestic organizations are obvious: improved cost-effectiveness, gained efficiency, higher relevance and better prospects of sustainability. However, many projects do not see these advantages, instead working with consultants (frequently international) who add little value to project endeavors. Future development undertakings should study the present Project and absorb lessons in working with domestic organizations.

Individually, each of these three conclusions has relevance and applicability. Together, these conclusions will contribute to the success of any project that aims to promote and improve gender equality, and work in activities to enhance women's land, property and inheritance rights.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that follow are for possible future activities that seek to assist government officials and policy makers increase their capacity to develop and implement

gender-sensitive issues into planning and budgeting; help institutions increase their knowledge of gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights, and enhance their capacity to provide services to women with these concerns; and aim to improve the food security and economic livelihood of rural women. The recommendations concern activities that are worth continuing or worth considering, build on the success and achievements of the present Project, and emanate from the findings of the evaluation.

The possible future project is a three-year, USD 2 million initiative to promote and improve gender equality and women's land, property and inheritance rights in Kyrgyzstan. It will build on the achievements made by the project, Enhancing Economic Security of Rural Women. The project will use a holistic approach, working at the policy, institutional and community levels in all seven oblasts. The project will be managed by a UN Women Project Team and implemented by implementing partners. These implementing partners, the number of which will depend on activities but will probably be at least two, will be domestic NGOs with wider responsibilities to develop logical frameworks and other project documents, and conduct project activities, such as monitoring and grants administration.

At the policy level, activities will continue with training to incorporate gender perspectives in budgeting and planning, and will target government specialists and senior-level representatives, and will emphasize the participation of stakeholders of the present project to foster an environment for the exchange of experience and ideas. Activities will work to improve extant legislation and policy to promote gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights.

At the institutional level, activities will monitor and assess the implementation of the land and property registration flow charts and *aksakal* court manual, in particular examining how institutions are incorporating these materials into providing services to citizens, especially rural women. The new project will incorporate the findings of these assessments into developing and then conducting training for and education for these institutions. Activities might expand into working with other traditional community institutions, such as religious leaders and their organizations, to raise their knowledge of gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights. The new project will conduct a conference, probably in its second year of operations, in which representatives of traditional community institutions participate to exchange the experience they have in helping women who approach them with land, property and inheritance issues.

At the community, level activities will target rural women and will work with beneficiaries of the previous project to catalyze new communities. Activities will work to expand business training and opportunities for women, and integrate knowledge of gender equality and women's human rights. The new project will continue to work with legal clinics, and commit to expand legal assistance and consultations to remoter rural locations. The new project will seek partnerships with international organizations to implement these activities. The new project will use mobile and internet technology to train beneficiaries and publicize events. New technology will be used to promote wider and faster information access, and its tools adopted by women to improve their food security and further rural economic development.

Grant funding will be available to communities and groups to implement activities to promote gender equality and women's human rights at the policy, institutional and community levels. The grant procedure will incorporate graded criteria, allowing applicants to see how well their application progressing towards reaching minimum thresholds for grant consideration. Grant application will be open and revolving, and communities and organizations will be able to apply more than one time.

Cross visits will be a component of activities. Cross visits can be conducted at the policy, institutional or community levels, and can be made by any group, for example, *aksakal*

courts visiting their compatriots in other communities, or women farmers from northern Kyrgyzstan visiting women farmers in southern Kyrgyzstan.

The Project Team and implementing partners will develop and implement project performance plans and implementation plans that include a monitoring and evaluation plan. In this way, data collection will be efficient, cost-effective, consistent, comprehensive and continuous. A mid-term evaluation will be conducted by a national consultant. A final evaluation will also be conducted, either by a national consultant or an international consultant.

Highlights for some of the recommendations are below.

Continue to work at the policy level

Future activities should continue to work at the legislation and policy level. Working with government officials and state agency representatives at this policy level is slow, and requires a commitment to open dialog and mutual respect. But such work is needed to ensure that gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights are promoted and observed, and that legislation and policies are formulated and implemented to enforce these rights. A future project should have a longer timeline or allot time within its life to assess the impacts that implemented legislation and policies have on citizens. Such monitoring will help management incorporate these impacts into the project management cycle to improve the development and implementation of activities. The project in this evaluation worked on the monitoring of the implementation of two sets of legislation and policies: the Law on Agricultural Land Management and its amendments, and the Family and Civil Codes. A future project should also narrow its focus in its work on legislation and policies to ensure maximum results are achieved with the appropriate level of resources. Work at the policy level should, as in the present Project, continue to be in parallel to work at the institutional and community levels.

Continue to work at the institutional level

Future activities should continue to work at the institutional level. State agencies representatives, such as those of the State Registry, indicated that the Project helped to raise their knowledge of gender equality and women's land, property and inheritance rights, which in turn increased their capacity to provide services to citizens. The Project produced land and property registration flow charts. Future activities could further monitor and assess how the State Registry and local governments integrate these charts to provide services to women and men who land and property registration so that they fully access land, property and inheritance rights.

Future activities should continue to work with informal justice systems. The present Project worked with *aksakal* courts, to train and educate their members. With input from *aksakal* courts, the Project developed a manual to aid *aksakal* court members increase their knowledge of gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights so that they fully account for the needs of women who approach the courts to settle disputes related to these rights. *Aksakal* courts have begun to use this manual. *Aksakal* court members, as exemplified by evaluation informants, are genuine in their desire to solve the problems that citizens have, regardless of their gender. At the same time, they recognize that they require further training to raise the level of their legal knowledge so that they can better serve their constituents. This need provides an opportunity for deeper work with social institutions.

A future project could fully monitor and assess how *aksakal* courts use the manual. Activities could elicit and analyze feedback from *aksakal* courts and the disputing parties, and monitor court cases. Monitoring the implementation of the *aksakal* court manual, as well as the land property registration flow charts, could provide information to integrate into the project management cycle to improve and fine-tune on-going activities. As illustrated by these two examples — the flow charts and the manual — work at the institutional level should, as in

the present Project, continue to continue to be in tandem with work at the policy and community levels.

Future activities might work with the *muftiat* (religious leaders) and their institutions. The present Project had worked with these individuals but not as deeply as with *aksakal* court members. Any activities that work with religious leaders and religious institutions will have to do so in an appropriate manner that acknowledge and incorporate the intensely personal connection that religion has to the individual and the community. Future activities could distill the experience and lessons from how the present Project worked with *aksakal* courts in its approach to religious leaders and institutions. Working with religious institution might entail more activities in southern Kyrgyzstan, where people are, in general, more devout than in northern Kyrgyzstan. Such work will mean collaboration with ethnic groups, for example, Uzbeks, which make up a significant part of the demographic of the area. The wounds are still fresh from the ethnic riots in the Osh area in 2010. Future activities in the south must be vigilant in being neutral in their relations with all ethnic groups.

Future activities might work with *mahallas*, which are neighborhood and village committees, to help them gain knowledge about gender equality and women's rights. Because *mahallas* are Uzbek (and Tajik) social institutions, future activities might need to devote a higher presence in the southern regions of Kyrgyzstan, where the largest numbers of Uzbeks in live. Future activities could incorporate the approaches that the Project used to work with *aksakal* courts. These activities might attempt to conduct events in which *aksakal* courts, *mahalla* committees and the *muftiat* participate. The engagement of these traditional social institutions in forums of experience and information could yield opportunities to integrate gender equality and women's rights into their interaction with women in their communities. These events and related activities could also contribute to community-building efforts to heal the fresh wounds from the ethnic riots in 2010 in southern Kyrgyzstan.

A future project should capture this success and work further with these institutions. Work at the institutional level should, as in the present Project, continue to be in tandem with work at the policy and community levels.

Continue to work at the community level

Future project activities should continue to work at the community level. The food security and economic livelihood component under the present Project was successful because it had the conjunction of right ingredients: a narrow focus; enthusiastic and energetic community activists, appropriate target groups, and a clear strategy; and observable and measurable results used to sustain future activities. A follow-on project could expand on the achievements of the present Project by having women self-help groups serve as activists in their communities to identify and target needy populations. In many ways, these women self-help groups have already initiated these actions. Activities will probably need to take place in non-farming seasons; otherwise farm work will leave rural women little time for community work. Work at the community level should, as in the present Project, continue to be concurrent with work at the policy and institutional levels.

A future activity might consider expanding work into economic development. Women farmers in the present Project are thinking about ventures that add value to their farming activities. These beneficiaries described plans to branch into activities, such as canning and drying, food processing and dairy products production. At the same time, these women expressed that they needed training to help them become good business women. As economic livelihood activities expand into substantial income-generating ventures, rural women will need business training (accounting, taxes, contracts) to prepare them for a higher degree of participation in the market economy.

Continue to work with legal clinics

Future activities should continue to work with legal clinics that provide services for the poor, especially rural women, who are unable to afford to pay for private counsel. During the evaluation, informants suggested that mobile legal clinics be established to reach distant villages. Future activities project could help these legal clinics expand their presence in remote areas. The question remains about the sustainability of the free legal clinics. Inevitably, but perhaps not in the near future, these clinics will need to introduce service fees. The introduction of a nominal fee, the amount determined by the payer, could help to introduce the concept.

Expand local media production and publicity efforts by beneficiaries

Future activities could help further empower women. Rural women could make their own videos and other media productions about their lives and activities. Rural women could learn about video and production, and acquire technical training to help them produce their own work to disseminate to the public at large. Technology that could enhance the production and dissemination media production includes the internet and mobile telephony. The present Project initiated such efforts, and future activities could deepen this development.

Develop a grants application procedure that self-selects and boosts efficiency

The experience from the grant programs implemented by the UN Women Project showed that domestically-nurtured NGOs could work with prospective applicant communities to take part in a rigorous, transparent process. A good expansion on this experience could be to develop and implement a grant program in which applicants, in many ways, self-selects. The grant procedure would be an open competition in which criteria carry certain points. For example, a criterion could be the presence of an *aksakal* court in the community that has received training on gender equality and women's rights (thus building on the accomplishments of the present project), or, if infrastructure rehabilitation is involved, receipt of all construction permits has been obtained. The competition would have no application deadline, and applicant communities would be able to see where they fall short and make amendments to re-apply as many times as they can and want to. Through this process, a community that self-selects would contribute to the likelihood that capable, prepared and enthusiastic communities win funding. In addition, this self-selection could contribute to greater programmatic efficiency because management would devote fewer resources to seek out grant applicants. The criteria for the grant application procedure could be developed in such a way to provide input into a profile on villages and households, and could complement the efforts to develop baseline data for other activities.

Use mobile telephone technology

Mobile telephone technology in human activities is a surging trend. Worldwide, mobile telephony makes public services more accessible, efficient and cost-effective, democratizes knowledge acquisition and widens information sharing. For example, in many parts of Latin America and Africa, cash payments and cash transfers are made through mobile telephones, and rural extension services in these places are providing information on commodity prices to farmers. In Brazil, the Bolsa Familia program and the Oportunidades program in Mexico, government agencies use mobile technology to send social protection funds to recipients. In Kazakhstan, the British Council is delivering English language lessons through text messaging services (or Short Message Service, SMS). In Tajikistan, UNICEF is helping the government develop a public education activity to provide lessons on disaster prevention through SMS.

In Kyrgyzstan, mobile phone technology could be applied to project activities to raise knowledge about gender equality and women's rights. Mobile phone technology is ubiquitous in the country. In 2008, multiple mobile cellular service providers with growing coverage provided services to nearly 3.4 million users, which exceeded 60 per 100 individuals. Mobile telephony is more common in urban areas than in rural areas. However, affordable services, growing coverage and cheaper cell phones are stimulating a rise among

rural populations. The critical mass of mobile phone users, the inevitable increase in the number of users and the advances in mobile telephony (e.g., smart phones, mobile applications) combine to provide opportunities for future activities to use this technology to make impacts on beneficiaries.

Continue to work with implementing partners

A major reason for the success of the present Project was that it worked with domestic organizations. These implementing partners were capable and experienced, and had good track record in working with government officials, local governments and communities. The partners understood the real conditions of the country, and, as citizens of Kyrgyzstan, were familiar with the culture and the languages. The partners responded well to the changing circumstances and were adept in modifying their management and activities to meet the needs of colleagues, stakeholders and beneficiaries. Their work was cost-effective, relying on their expertise and those of specialists, also citizens. The professional relationship with UN Women was new, to it and to UN Women, but they adapted to the dynamic and learned from their challenges. Future activities should work closely with implementing partners and invest in deepening this relation. For example, implementing partners could have greater responsibilities in implementing grant programs. Future activities will need to work with the partners on developing and honing tools, such as management matrixes to help them manage the administration of grants and to conduct on-going monitoring of activities. The achievements that the implementing partners made in the present Project bode well for a similar role for them in future activities that work on gender equality and women's human rights.

Develop a clear logical framework and a performance management plan

A clear logical framework and performance monitoring/management documents helps to underpin program activities and measure overall performance, with levels of knowledge, levels of activity, and levels of linkage and collaboration to be achieved. Having and following a robust logical framework helps clarify program strategy and implementation, and allows an evaluation to look at the numbers and then quickly beyond them to an analysis of a project.

10 LESSONS LEARNED

The project, Enhancing Economic Security of Rural Woman in Kyrgyzstan, brought improvements to the lives of the target beneficiaries. The circumstances, processes and results provide lessons learned for future activities in Kyrgyzstan and other countries.

Flexibility and ability to adapt to changing political circumstances are paramount

The Project responded to the political and social turmoil in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, which affected all aspects of society. Key government personnel were changed, meaning that the Project had to restart its work at the policy level. The upheaval in the central government produced uncertainty in the local governments and led to personnel changes. At the community level, women farmers sheltered refugee families, and could not tend to their fields. Seeds and inputs were delayed, pushing the planting season later into the year. In such circumstances, the Project demonstrated that it was flexible in planning and implementation, and was able to respond to new conditions and the resulting needs of beneficiaries in the new environment. Any project that works to promote and improve gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights will need to learn from the success of this Project to ensure that activities remain on course in spite of the obstacles put up by unforeseen political events.

Sufficient time, funds and resources are important to assess impacts

The political and social turmoil in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 impeded the Project Team and its implementing partners from implementing some of its activities as originally planned. The Project Team and implementing partners responded well to keep activities on course

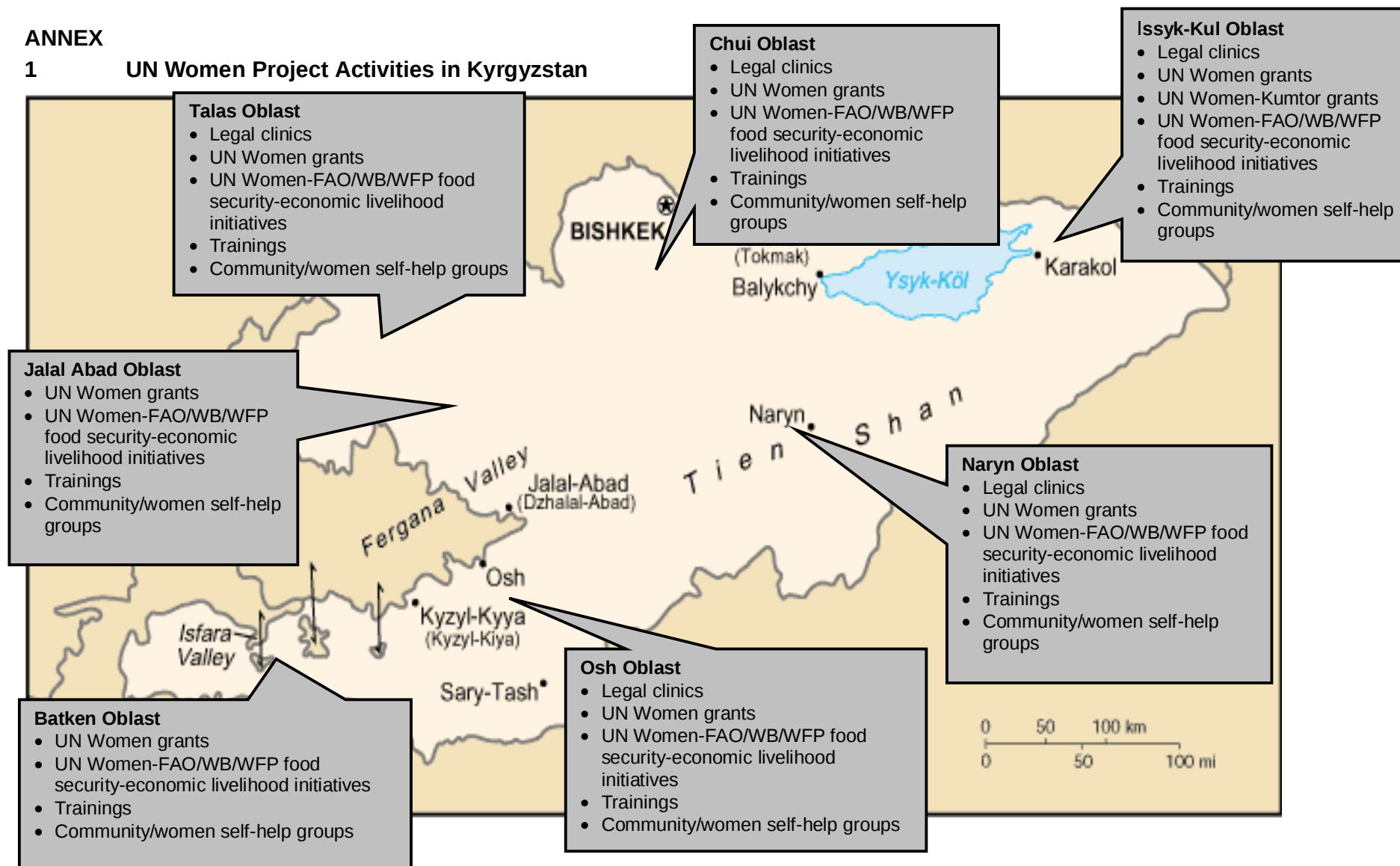
although there was a loss of time. A longer project timeline might have obviated the need for a no-cost extension (which required time and resources to write, justify and be approved), and would have given the Project more time to fully monitor how some of its products (e.g., land and property registration flow charts, and the *aksakal* court manual) were used by institutions and incorporated into their operations. Good development work, as exhibited by this Project, requires time. Working at the policy level benefits from an assessment of the impacts that legislation and policies have on citizens. Working at the institutional level benefits from incorporating project products into current training. Working at the community level gains from an assessment on how beneficiaries absorb and apply their experience in the near future, and how they cooperate with other individuals and communities. Any project that promotes and improves gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights will need to apply the experience of this present Project to ensure that it uses its time, funds and resources well to assess impacts during its life.

Domestic partners are critical to project success

Under the present Project, UN Women entered into new professional relations with implementing partners. The Project Team (itself comprised of national citizens) worked with domestic organizations that were qualified and enthusiastic, knew the real conditions, spoke the national language, adapted to changing circumstances to respond to the needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries, and produced quality products. Future activities that work in the development sector, and in particular to promote and improve gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights, will have brighter prospects by applying the lesson learned in this Project: prospects for being effective and efficient, relevant and bringing sustainable impacts to constituents and beneficiaries are greatly improved if partner organizations come from the communities in which they serve.

ANNEX

1 UN Women Project Activities in Kyrgyzstan



2 Sample Questions

1. What impacts did the Project bring?
2. What impacts did the small grants bring?
3. Was being an implementing partner different from being a contractor?
4. How was the working relationship in the steering committee?
5. How long have you been on the steering committee?
6. What areas in the project could have been improved?
7. How did political instability affect your work?
8. What lessons did you learn from participating in workshops/seminars?
9. Based on the Project's outcomes, what would you recommend for possible follow-on activities?
10. To what extent did the Project reach the planned results?
11. How did the political context influence the final result?
12. What part of the Project was not fully achieved?
13. Could the Project be sustainable without external funding?
14. What is necessary to ensure follow up from the Government/donors/civil society organizations?
15. How was the Project responsive to the emerging priority/strategic needs of the Government and Donors in the field of gender equality and women's human rights?
16. To what extent were capacity development efforts effective for state authorities at various levels to integrate gender aspects in related strategies/policies/programs?
17. To what extent were capacity development efforts effective for formal partners, CDA, STA, WESA and informal partner institutions to promote and protect rights of rural women to property and inheritance?
18. To what extent were capacity development efforts effective for civil society organizations to support and promote meaningful participation of women and women/s organizations in policy-making process?
19. Did the Project create/strengthen any local/regional networks and partnerships to implement and sustain the Project or UN Women's activities?
20. What were the key approaches and strategies the Project used in achieving its outcomes? What worked and what did not work? What can be taken further for new program and partners' follow-up activities?
21. Were effective information sharing and dissemination activities set up to increase the visibility of the Project among the stakeholders?
22. Which features of the Project were good practices and lessons learned at country level?

3 Documents, Records and Instruments Used for Source Data

1. Original project proposal and application from UN Women to the Government of Norway;
2. Logical framework, original and revised of the Project;
3. Implementation plans of project implementing partners;
4. Project document, 2009
5. Progress and other periodic reports submitted by project implementing partners to UN Women Project Team;
6. Progress reports to the Government of Norway
7. Final reports of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, World Bank, World Food Program on its partnership with UN Women in food security and economic livelihood activities in Kyrgyzstan;
8. Terms of Reference of evaluation assignment;
9. Terms of Reference of evaluators;
10. Materials developed for Project;
11. Legal consultation services data;
12. Analysis of Department of Cadastre and Registration of Real Estate in regard to local government services in the sphere of land, property and inheritance rights of rural women;
13. Flow charts of land ownership/registration developed from Analysis of Department of Cadastre and Registration of Real Estate in regard to local government services in the sphere of land, property and inheritance rights of rural women;
14. Brief Manual on Examination of the Treatment of Women concerning Land, Property and Inheritance Issues: Developed for *Aksakal* Courts in the Kyrgyz Republic;
15. Minutes of Steering Committee;
16. Project organizational charts;
17. Instructional and informational material developed by UN Women for the Project;
18. Print and electronic media material publicizing the Project;
19. Kyrgyz Republic Country Report, 2010;
20. Project budget;
21. Minutes, administrative and financial records of community/ women self-groups (examined during field visits);
22. Data of trainings conducted under the Project;
23. Questionnaires of training participants to assess training/seminar/workshop sessions.

4 Evaluation Field Visit Itinerary

Monday 2 May	Tuesday 3 May	Wednesday 4 May	Thursday 5 May	Friday 6 May	Saturday 7 May	Sunday 8 May
Osh Oblast <u>Kara-Suu District</u> Kyzyl Kyshtak Village Bolshevik Village Toloikon Village <u>Osh City</u>	Osh Oblast <u>Aravan District</u> Manas Village <u>Kara-Suu District</u> Kaarman Village Zymyryk Village	Chui Oblast <u>Kemin District</u> Altymysh Village	Issyk-Kul Oblast <u>Jeti-Oguz District</u> Baltabay Village Orgochor Village Boz-Beshik Village	Issyk-Kul Oblast <u>Ak-Suu District</u> Boru-Bash Village <u>Jeti-Oguz District</u> Keregetash Village Jele-Dobo Village	Issyk-Kul Oblast <u>Ton District</u> Kok Sai Village	Chui Oblast <u>Issyk-Ata District</u> Toktonaliev Village <u>Chui District</u> Kairma Village

5 Evaluation Matrix

Relevant outcome	Question	Indicators, data	Data source and methodology	Sampling	Comments
All outcomes	Did the project reach the planned results?	Number of achieved indicators	Logical framework, work plan	At least two documents from each implementing partner	During the evaluation, Evaluation Team may determine that sampling number be larger if more data is necessary
All outcomes	What were results not achieved?	Number of unreached indicators	Logical framework, work plan	At least two documents from each appropriate implementing partner	Same as above
All outcomes	What were unplanned results (good and bad)?	Number of such results	Logical framework, work plan	At least two documents from each appropriate implementing partner	Same as above
Outcome 1	Did state officials integrate gender aspects in policy? How effective were mechanisms for dialog between officials and women?	Number of legislation and normative documents having gender equality elements; number of civil society organizations that participated in monitoring; number of women trained in budgeting process	Document records; legislation records; interviews	At least three documents from each appropriate implementing partner	Same as above
Outcome 2	How effective was information sharing and dissemination to increase the visibility of project?	Number of publications; Number of media events	Document records; interviews	At least ten, from various media	Same as above
Outcome 2	How effective were trainings/ workshops?	Number of trainings/ workshops in area, number of participants; number of women who accessed services of State Registry; number of women who acquired land, inheritance rights	Document records; interviews	At least one document from each implementing partner to show number and location of trainings, their contents	Same as above
Outcome 3	Did arbitration/elders courts	Number of representatives of elderly courts trained	Document records, legislation records; interviews	At least one document from each	Same as above

Relevant outcome	Question	Indicators, data	Data source and methodology	Sampling	Comments
	learn/incorporate gender equality elements?	in gender equality issues; Number of publications covering rural women rights protection by informal justice system		implementing partner to show number and location of trainings, their contents	
Outcome 3	Did community-level initiatives eliminate gender inequality	Number of civil society organizations and local officials trained in advocacy for women's inheritance rights, land ownership rights	Document records; legislation records; interviews	At least one document from each implementing partner to show number and location of trainings, their contents	Same as above
Outcome 3	Did women participants solve legal problems?	Number of women who received legal consultation; number of women who solved legal problems	Document records; court records; interviews	At least one document from each implementing partner to show number and location of trainings, their contents	Same as above
Outcome 3	What were initiatives and mechanisms for women redress inequality	Number of grants that focused on relevant initiatives; number of beneficiaries and partners in grants	Document records, interviews	At least one document from each implementing partner to show number and location of trainings, their contents	Same as above
Outcome 3	Did the program create/strengthen local/regional networks and partnerships to implement and sustain the program?	Number of such networks and partnerships	Document records, interviews	At least one document from each implementing partner to show number and location of trainings, their content	Same as above

6 Evaluation Work Plan

Product/Activity	Approximate dates	Number of working days
Stage 1 Key product – preliminary desk reviews, discussions with partners and inception report		
Inception report of the evaluation team, which includes the evaluation methodology and the timing of activities and deliverables	Within one week upon signing contract; not later than 21 April 2011	
Stage 2 Key Product – Evaluation Report		
Data collection (including field work)	From 25 April 2011	7
Progress Report of the Field work to UN Women EECA Sub-regional office and key internal and external stakeholders	7 May 2011	4
Outline and a Power Point presentation on preliminary findings, lessons learned, and recommendations	11 May 2011	
Draft full report highlighting key evaluation findings and conclusions, lessons and recommendations Virtual consultations by the evaluators with the key programme partners and stakeholders shall take place to validate the key findings of the report and collect feedback and recommendations to inform the final evaluation report		10
Final evaluation report and five-page executive summary	9 June 2011	4
Total number of working days		25

7 Meetings with Individuals and Organizations

Date, 2011	Location	Individual/Organization
27 April	Bishkek, UN Women Projects Office	UN Women staff and Project Team members
27 April	Bishkek, STA Office	Implementing partner representative
27 April	Bishkek, STA Office	Implementing partner representative
28 April	Bishkek, CDA Office	Implementing partner representative
28 April	Bishkek, Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration representative
28 April	Bishkek, UN Women Projects Office	Ministry of Social Provision representative
28 April	Bishkek, UN Women Projects Office	Legal expert
28 April	Bishkek, UN Women Projects Office	Legal expert
28 April	Bishkek, FAO Office	UN FAO Representative; Agronomist
29 April	Bishkek, Department of Cadastre and Registration of Real Estate, State Registry Service	Land Cadastre and Management representative
29 April	Bishkek, State Registry Service	Division of Land Cadastre and Management representative
29 April	Bishkek, NGO Office	Member of Steering Committee
29 April	Bishkek, Ministry of Agriculture	Agricultural Projects Implementation Unit representative
29 April	Bishkek, Ministry of Agriculture	Ministry of Agriculture representative and member of the Steering Committee
29 April	Bishkek, Kumtor Operating Company Office	Community Relations Manager
2 May	Kyzyl Kyshtak Village, Kara-Suu District, Osh Oblast	Village Administration representative
2 May	Bolshevik Village, Kara-Suu District, Osh Oblast	Beneficiaries (12 women, 16 men), 'Water is the Source of Life' irrigation project; NGO Director; Rural Administration representative
2 May	Toloikon Village Administration Office, Osh City	Village Administration representative; Lawyer; Department of Social Provision representative
2 May	WESA Legal Clinic, Osh City	Lawyer
3 May	Home of woman farmer, Manas Village, Aravan District, Osh Oblast	Beneficiaries (6 women), Aid Program for Vulnerable Groups in Rural Areas; CDA Coordinator; Accountant of Rural Administration
3 May	Home of woman farmer, Kaarman Village, Kara-Suu District, Osh Oblast	Beneficiaries (13 women), Agricultural Assistance to Vulnerable, Food-insecure Female-headed Households; CDA Coordinator, Osh Oblast; Agronomist, Village Administration
3 May	Home of woman farmer, Zymyryk Village, Kara-Suu District, Osh Oblast	Beneficiaries (17 women), Agricultural Assistance to Vulnerable, Food-insecure Female-headed Households; CDA Coordinator; Agronomist, Village Administration
4 May	Ak Zhalga Milk Collection Station, Altymysh Village, Kemin District, Chui Oblast	NGO Director and staff of grant project, Ak Zhalga; Village Administration representative, members of monitoring committee

5 May	Baltabay Village, Jeti-Oguz District, Issyk-Kul Oblast.	Beneficiaries (13 women), Aid program for Vulnerable Groups in Rural Areas; Social Specialist of Rural Administration; CDA Coordinator
5 May	Home of woman farmer, Orgochor Village, Jeti-Oguz District, Issyk-Kul Oblast	Beneficiaries (6 women), Aid program for Vulnerable Groups in Rural Areas; CDA Coordinator
5 May	NGO office, Boz-Beshik Village, Jeti-Oguz District, Issyk-Kul Oblast	Head of NGO; Animal Husbandry Specialist; Farmer and Agro- Processing Specialist
6 May	WESA Legal Clinic, Kara-Kol city, Issyk-Kul Oblast	Cadastre Department representative, Aksui State Registry
6 May	WESA Legal Clinic, Kara-Kol city, Issyk-Kul Oblast	Lawyer
6 May	Aksaka/ Court Office, Boru-Bash Village, Ak-Sui District, Issyk-Kul Oblast	Member of <i>aksaka/</i> court; Rural Administration representative
6 May	Home of woman farmer, Keregetash Village, Ak Sui District, Issyk-Kul Oblast	Beneficiaries (7 women), Agricultural Assistance to Vulnerable, Food-insecure Female-headed Households; Social Specialist, Village Administration; CDA Coordinator
6 May	Home of <i>Aksaka/</i> Court member, Jele-Dobo Village, Jeti-Oguz District, Issyk-Kul Oblast	Member of <i>aksaka/</i> court
7 May	Field of woman farmer, Kok Sai Village, Ton District, Issyk-Kul Oblast	Beneficiaries of grant project (6 women), <i>Creation of Potato Seed</i> ; Deputy Head of Rural Administration
8 May	Epkin Center, Toktonaliev Village, Issyk-Ata District, Chui Oblast	Beneficiaries (17 women, 4 men), Agricultural Extension of Service House for Farmers; CDA Coordinator
8 May	Home of women farmer, Kairma Village, Chui District, Chui Oblast	Beneficiaries (36 women), Aid program for Vulnerable Women Groups in Rural Area; CDA Coordinator

8 UN Women Project Budget and Partner Contributions

UN Women Partner	Contribution, \$, or equivalent \$ value	Program Title	Source/Comment
World Food Program	231 844	Food Assistance to Households Belonging to Vulnerable Categories in the Program to Grow Vegetables	Final Project Report 2010; Value calculated using retail prices of total amount of oil and flour
World Bank	41 900	Aid Program for Vulnerable Groups in Rural Areas under Agricultural Investments and Services Project	UNIFEM Report 2010
UN Food and Agriculture Organization	269 407	Agricultural Assistance to Vulnerable Food-Insecure Female-Headed Households	Annual Program Narrative Progress Report, Reporting Period: 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2010
Kumtor Operating Company	86 800	Enhancement of Efficiency of Village Development Programs Aimed at Improvement of Lives of Rural Habitants of Ton District, Issyk-Kul Oblast	UN Women grant documents
Total	629 951		

9 Project Logical Framework

Note: The logical framework below is adapted from the revised project logical framework.

Outputs	Indicators	Activities	Outcome 1
Output 1.1 Effective mechanisms for dialog between government actors and gender equality advocates on how to develop and enforce legal frameworks and processes that promote and protect women's human rights in the areas of land, property and inheritance rights exist in Kyrgyzstan	2009 -Guide/manual for civil society on monitoring with consideration of gender equality of men and women is developed 2010 - Instructions of State Registry ensuring implementation of the amended articles within the Law on Agricultural Land Management - Relevant articles in Family and Civil Codes aligned to adhere to women's human rights to property and inheritance - No less than 200 representatives from civil society organizations participated in public hearings on changes to be introduced in Family and Civil Codes - New gender indicators are discussed with pilot ministries and the National Statistical Committee for further promotion -Representatives from civil society of no less than 8 target villages participated in the process of monitoring of local developments plans	1.1.1a Conduct monitoring of practical implementation of the Law On Agricultural Land Management 1.1.1b Lobbying the instruction of State Registry on bringing existing normative acts and procedures into compliance with amended Law on agricultural land management 1.1.2 Conduct gender expertise of Family and Civil Codes and support consultation process to discuss required changes and alignment in the legislation related to women's property and inheritance rights 1.1.3 Conduct public hearings to lobby changes to Family and Civil Codes 1.1.4 dialogs with state bodies on expanding number of gender indicators in the field of activity of partner ministries 1.1.5 a Develop a Guide/manual for civil society on monitoring with consideration of gender equality of men and women 1.1.5 b Conduct a series of training/ workshops on monitoring women's rights	<u>Outcome 1</u> Legislations and policies that promote and protect women's property and inheritance rights formulated and implemented

Outputs	Indicators	Activities	Outcome 2
Output 2.1 Enhanced capacities of key policy and service delivery institutions in the sector of land and agricultural development to mainstream gender equality and women's human rights into their operations Kyrgyzstan	2009 -No less than 10 specialists of State Registry are involved in legal clinic and they consulted no less than 150 women -No less than 10 employees of pilot ministries trained in introduction of gender approach into sectoral policies and strategies 2010 - No less than 15 specialists of State Registry are involved in legal clinic and they consulted no less than 300 women - Enhanced capacity of no than 70 employees of State Registry and its district-level divisions for practical observation of women's property and inheritance rights -Recommendations on improving access of rural women to services of state bodies in the area of property and inheritance rights are accepted by the State Registry for improving its legal basis -Agency-level plans on introduction of gender approach into sectoral policies of ministries are developed and implemented -No less than 40 employees of pilot ministries are trained in introduction of gender approach into sectoral policies and strategies	2.1.2 a. Review of authorities of state bodies on provision of services in the area of property and inheritance rights of rural women 2.1.2.b Conduct trainings for State Registry staff on women's property, inheritance economic rights and their practical observance at national and local levels 2.1.3 a Develop Guide on introduction of gender approach into sectoral strategy of pilot ministries and revise training programs 2.1.3 b Conduct series of trainings for employees of pilot ministries on introduction of gender approach into sectoral policies, strategies and programs	<u>Outcome 2</u> Institutions demonstrate commitment, capacity and accountability in ensuring economic security of the rural population during the food and energy crisis, and observance of women's property and inheritance rights
Output 2.2 A relevant body of knowledge on how to interact with informal (elderly and arbitrary courts) justice systems to protect women's rights in the areas of access to property, inheritance rights is developed and accessible in Kyrgyzstan	2009 -No less than 50 trained representatives of elderly courts and religious leaders on women's human rights issues - no less than 10 representatives of elderly courts and religious leaders participated in in-door field legal consultations 2010	2.2.2 Organize and conduct trainings/seminars for members of elderly courts and religious leaders on GE and on women's inheritance and property rights 2.2.3a Plan involvement of elderly courts and religious leaders into consultations for rural women; ensure active participation of members of elderly court and religious leaders in the process	

	-No less than 60 trained representatives of elderly courts and religious leaders on women's human rights issues - No less than 10 representatives of elderly courts and religious leaders participated in in-door field legal consultations -Elderly courts of all regions are provided with a Guide on investigation of women's appeals on inheritance and property disputes	- of in-door and field legal clinics 2.2.3b. Analysis of elderly court authorities on property and inheritance rights. Preparation of Guide for Elderly courts on consideration of disputes on the protection of women's inheritance and property	
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Outputs	Indicators	Activities	Outcome 3
Output 3.1 Women who are subject to exclusion and/or discrimination have enhanced capacities to participate in and influence the development of policies in the areas of land, agriculture, energy/food crisis prevention in Kyrgyzstan	2009 - Legal clinics are operational in 5 provinces -No less than 800 rural women received consultation and legal aid - 80% of rural women who received legal consultations solved their social and economic problems - # of cases of women rights protection at the level of official courts 2010 - Legal clinics are operational in 5 provinces; - No less than 800 rural women received Received consultation and legal aid - 80% of rural women who received legal consultations solved their social and economic problems - # of cases of women rights protection at the level of official courts -No less than 30 women groups (250 women) have access to economic resources due to expand partnerships with third-party organizations	3.1.1 Advance legal knowledge of rural women on property and inheritance rights and ensure access to legal support 3.1.2 a Undertaking rural women's needs assessment in the area of access to economic resources 3.1.2.b Enhancement of economic capabilities and potential of rural people to undertake economic decisions 3.1.3 Continue and expand partnerships with third-party organizations (including agricultural support services, irrigation system controllers, crisis response organizations, etc.) For organizing and conducting training and consultation, focusing on the needs of rural women in responding to emerging deficiencies of the food/energy crisis 3.1.4 Update a directory of credit organizations and agricultural service providers, so beneficiaries have an access to informational resources 3.1.5 Support in strengthening the practice of legal clinics in all five provinces of Kyrgyzstan, through continuous improvement of the system of legal consultation, responsive to emerging needs	<u>Outcome 3</u> Duty-bearers and rights holders working in partnership to ensure timely and effective response to the energy/food crisis and to observance of and respect for women's property and inheritance rights at community/local level

	- No less than 250 rural women received training for effective agro-activities	and local situation 3.1.6 Continue and improve the system of distance and field consultations, ensuring wider coverage of rural women and men. 3.1.8 Support follow up actions for specific cases of violation of women's property and inheritance rights that require legal advisory backup	
Output 3.2 Enhanced number and quality of community level initiatives that are geared to advance women's human rights and eliminate gender inequality in the areas of rural poverty reduction, energy/food crisis prevention and in promoting practical observance of women's property and inheritance rights in Kyrgyzstan	2009 -No less than 20 trained civil society organizations and local governments lobby and support initiatives on observance of women's property and inheritance rights 2010 - No less than 8 joint initiatives of women groups and local governments are successfully implemented through small grant schemes	3.2.1 Conduct training for civil society and local self-governance bodies on assessment and analysis of needs related to the food/energy crisis, women's property and inheritance rights and economic security at local level 3.2.2. Support, coach NGOs and local self-governance bodies in development of joint initiatives in integrating gender issues and women's needs into local development planning and budgeting processes. 3.23 Evaluation of joint implemented initiatives 3.2.4 Organize and manage a small grant scheme as a tool for realizing joint collaborative initiatives between women's groups and local government, addressing practical gender needs as defined by the communities themselves	
Output 3.3 Gender equality experts, advocates and their organizations have strengthened their capacities to advocate for gender equality in the areas energy/food crisis prevention, in promoting practical observance of women's property and inheritance rights in Kyrgyzstan	- # of publications in local and central media - # of cases on observance of womens' human rights documented through mass media; Rubric in local newspapers - Project products are available at homepages of WESA and Alliance of Women Legislative Initiatives - # of radio rubrics - Minimum of 2 trained teams in one field are able to use participatory video approaches to document rural women stories - 4 video-stories are made by participatory video approach	3.3.1 Organize a media campaign to promote women's property and inheritance rights (posters, advertising/information leaflets, radio and other activities). 3.3.2 Support regular input to United Nations Development Program website informing of the latest developments within project activities 3.3.3 Conduct media missions to rural areas jointly with UN agencies 3.3.4 Coordinate and integrate project's efforts with other those of partners aimed at supporting advocacy of gender-sensitized millennium development goals and Country Development	

		Strategy, by providing regular information (through press-releases, information bulletins). 3.3.5 Document cases of violation of women's property and inheritance rights which are brought before the courts, including cases in the courts initiated and defended by project experts and lawyers. 3.3.6 Update electronic data base on legal consultations. Radio rubrics, electronic consultations on WESA site; 3.3.7 Continue a Q&A rubric in local newspapers for regular response to questions posed by public on issues related to women's property and inheritance rights and access to land and other economic resources 3.3.8 Facilitate introduction of participatory video approach	
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Outputs	Indicators	Activities	Outcome 4
Output 4.1 Effective financial and administrative support to project management system in place		4.1.1 Local support staff; 4.1.2 Adequate space and equipment provision	Outcome 4: Internal Organizational arrangements strengthened to deliver projects outcomes and to provide for external quality evaluation
Output 4.2 External Evaluation conducted		4.2.1 External evaluation	

10 Project Trainings, Seminars, Workshops and Consultations

	Training date	Training location	Training/seminar	No. of participants	Women	Men	Responsible implementing partner
1	22 Apr 2009	Kara-Oi Village, Issyk-Kul Oblast	Law and religion in defense of real estate and inheritance rights of women	36	10	26	WESA
2	7 Aug 2009	Jalal Abad City	Role and participation of state registry specialists of Jalal Abad Oblast in observance and defense of women's land rights	28	3	25	WESA
3	15 Aug 2009	Naryn City	Seminar for regional leaders and <i>aksakal</i> courts: Law and religion in defense of real estate and inheritance rights of women	23	5	18	WESA
4	17-19 Aug 2009	Chong Jargylak Village, Jeti-Oguz District, Issyk-Kul Oblast	Orientation training for potential grant applicants	38	14	24	CDA
5	19 Aug 2009	Teplo-klyuchenka Village, Ak-Suu District, Osh Oblast	Role of <i>aksakal</i> courts in defense of women's land rights	30	12	18	WESA
6	21-24 Aug 2009	Osh City	Orientation training for potential grant applicants	23	8	15	CDA
7	23 Sept 2009	Bokonbaev Village, Ton District, Issyk-Kul Oblast	Role of social institutions in defense of economic, inheritance and real estate rights of women	23	5	18	WESA
8	24 Sept 2009	Naryn City	Seminar for women committees in Naryn Oblast: Role of social institutions in defense of women's land rights	18	18	0	WESA
	30 Sept to 3 Nov 2009	Bishkek	Training for grant applicants	32	17	15	CDA

9	14-15 Oct 2009	Bishkek	Gender-sensitive planning and budgeting instruments	18	15	3	STA
10	24 Oct 2009	Talas City	Seminar for rural women; local government officials and women committee meeting in Talas Oblast: Defense of economic, property and inheritance rights of women	20	18	2	WESA
11	24 Oct 2009	Talas City	Seminar for leaders and specialists of State Registry and OMSU of Talas Oblast: Roles and meanings of local government organs in defense of real estate and inheritance rights of women	20	0	20	WESA
12	4-5 Dec 2009	Bishkek	Orientation seminar: Provision of quality vegetable seeds to rural women	26	18	8	WESA
13	18 Dec 2009	Bishkek	Introduction of gender approaches in policy and programs in Kyrgyz Republic	13	12	1	STA
14	22 Jun 2010	Kyzyl-Suu Town	Role and participation of <i>aksakal</i> courts in defense of real estate and inheritance rights of rural women	33	5	28	WESA
15	27 Jun 2010	Bishkek	Law and religion in defense of ownership rights and inheritance rights of women	21	1	20	WESA
16	28 Jun 2010	Bishkek	Law and religion in defense of ownership rights and inheritance rights of women	21	0	21	WESA
17	18 Aug 2010	Batken City	Factors, prevention and resolution of rural women's property and inheritance issues	27	27	0	WESA
18	20 Aug 2010	Bishkek	Role of local state registry in defense of real estate and inheritance rights of women	23	12	11	WESA

19	23-24 Sept 2010	Bishkek	Gender-sensitive evaluation for monitoring committee	26	14	12	CDA
20	23-26 Sept 2010	Sary-Oi Village, Issyk-Kul Oblast	Gender-sensitive planning and budgeting in pilot activities of ministries and agencies	22	19	3	STA
21	23-27 Sept 2010	Bishkek	Foundations of collective video	14	7	7	CDA
22	28 Sept 2010	Bishkek	Role of local state registry in defense of ownership and inheritance rights, and in enhancing economic security of rural women	18	13	5	WESA
23	16-17 Dec 2010	Bishkek	Integration of gender aspects in policies of national plans and programs	13	11	2	STA
24	7-10 Feb 2011	Bishkek	Gender-sensitive budgets	27	8	19	CDA
25	19 May 2011	Bishkek	Planning on regional public hearings on amendments in Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic	7	7	0	STA
Total				600	279	321	

11 Legal Clinic Consultation Services

Legal Consultation Services, 2009

	Issyk-Kul Oblast	Naryn Oblast	Osh Oblast	Chui Oblast	Talas Oblast	Total
Total number of individuals receiving legal services	382	284	191	93	164	1114
Women	198	177	94	67	93	629
Men	184	107	97	26	71	485
Number of individuals receiving legal services at clinic	43	76	14	5	28	166
Women	24	60	12	4	17	117
Men	19	16	2	1	11	49
Number of individuals receiving legal services in the field	339	208	177	88	136	948
Women	172	109	75	80	69	505
Men	167	99	102	8	67	443

Legal Consultation Services, 2010

	Issyk-Kul Oblast	Naryn Oblast	Osh Oblast	Chui Oblast	Talas Oblast	Total
Total number of individuals receiving legal services	468	292	349	167	89	1365
Women	216	206	297	114	48	881
Men	252	86	52	53	41	484
Number of individuals receiving legal services at clinic	85	54	59	14	12	224
Women	42	44	53	11	11	161
Men	43	10	6	3	1	63
Number of individuals receiving legal services in the field	383	238	290	153	77	1141
Women	174	162	244	103	37	720
Men	209	76	46	50	40	421

Legal Consultation Services, 2011 (January-February)

	Issyk-Kul Oblast	Naryn Oblast	Osh Oblast	Chui Oblast	Total
Total number of individuals receiving legal services	10	0	73	5	88
Women	5	0	58	3	66
Men	5	0	15	2	22
Number of individuals receiving legal services at clinic	10	0	32	5	47
Women	5	0	28	3	36
Men	5	0	4	2	11
Number of individuals receiving legal services in the field	0	0	41	0	41
Women	0	0	30	0	30
Men	0	0	11	0	11

Legal Consultation Services, 2009–2011

	Issyk-Kul Oblast	Naryn Oblast	Osh Oblast	Chui Oblast	Talas Oblast	Total
Total number of individuals receiving legal services	860	576	613	265	253	2567
Women	419	383	449	184	141	1576
Men	441	193	164	81	112	991
Number of individuals receiving legal services at clinic	138	130	105	24	40	437
Women	71	104	93	18	28	314
Men	67	26	12	6	12	123
Number of individuals receiving legal services in the field	722	446	508	241	213	2130
Women	346	271	349	183	106	1255
Men	376	175	159	58	107	875

12 Informational and Training Material, and Publicity

Title/media	Period/date first published
Guidelines on selecting a specific part of a separate unit or division of land (land share): monitoring report on implementation of changes to the rules of the Law on Land Management	January 2011
Table of proposals for amending the Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic	December 2009
Recommendations on amending and updating legislation on property and inheritance rights of women (Family and Civil Codes)	April 2011
Comparative analytical report on the experience of foreign countries in ensuring maternity leave	May 2009
Review of policies and indicators for maternity leave, benefits, personal injury, nursing homes and boarding schools (in manual on gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies, strategies and programs in the Kyrgyz Republic)	September 2009
Guide for civil society monitoring equal rights for women and men	November 2010-February 2011
Gender analysis of local policies in Chui Oblast	October 2010
Manual for gender mainstreaming in budgeting	November 2010-February 2011
Manual for gender mainstreaming in local planning	November 2010-February 2011
A global agenda for development: tools of gender-sensitive planning and implementation	October 2009
Analysis of draft of the Model Regulations on the Center for adaptation and rehabilitation of juvenile Ministry of Labor and Social Development	November 2009
Gender expertise in the medium-term budget forecast period of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2010-2012.	October 2009
Work plan of the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration to promote the top priorities for the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming	March 2010
Plan of action to implement the recommendations of the functional analysis of national institutional mechanism for implementing the gender policy in the Kyrgyz Republic	March 2010
Proposals for strengthening the National Council of Women, Family and Gender Development under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic	March 2010
Proposals on gender roles in the draft regulations for the Division of the Coordination of Youth, Children and Gender, Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration	March 2010
Proposals on gender roles in the draft regulations on the Office of Administrative-Staffing, Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration	March 2010
Action plans on gender mainstreaming in JI-AP, GRS, MTZM, NSC activities	December 2010
Recommendations for the integration of gender perspectives in the regulations of pilot ministries, departments of the central apparatus	December 2010
Recommendations for the integration of gender perspectives in the regulations of pilot ministries, departments of the central apparatus	December 2010
Posters, brochures, training manuals on women's land rights	2009
Textbook information brochures, posters, Women's land rights to land; package of material on legislation on gender	August-September 2010

Guidance on gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies, strategies and programs in the Kyrgyz Republic	September 2009
Guidelines for training cycle on gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies, strategies and programs (in pilot ministries and agencies) of the Kyrgyz Republic	February 2011
Textbook information brochures, posters, Women's land rights	April 2009
Table comparing sharia law and civil and family law in the Kyrgyz Republic	April 2009
Textbook information brochures, poster on women's land rights	September 2009
Manual: Women's Land Rights (Guide for trainers, gender experts, and lawyers)	July 2010
Information booklet Women – Salt of the Earth	July 2010
Table comparing sharia law and civil and family law in the Kyrgyz Republic	July 2010
Textbook information brochures, posters on women's land rights	July 2010
Textbook information brochures, poster on women's land rights	2010
Information Brochure: Ways of solving conflict issues on the ground: questions and Answers	2009
Brochure: Informational guide for credit resources"	2009
Information, brochure, posters on women's land rights	2009
Reports, press releases, announcements, monitoring notes	2009
Information directory of organizations providing services in rural areas	2009
Training material to use citizen participation in local planning, the basics of gender analysis	July 2010
Project evaluation report	2009
Poster: Women – Salt of the Earth	September 2009
8 radio broadcasts of 'Man and Earth'	2009
Poster: 30 years of on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination	2010
Brochure Women's rights in Kyrgyzstan: an explanation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol	September 2010
Booklet: Women – Salt of the Earth: UNIFEM program women's land rights	September 2010
Pamphlet: Women – Salt of the Earth: Support women's land rights	December 2010
Legal cases on WESA's website	2010
Case studies, reports, events, press releases, announcements, news, photos	2010
Training on collective video production, video clips	September-October 2010
Principles of empowering women	2010-2011
On the collaboration of independent states with UN Women	2010-2011
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women moves toward equality (CD)	2010-2011
Brochure: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Kyrgyzstan moves toward equality justice	2010-2011
Booklet: Special Report of the UN. Women for Peace in Central Asia	2010-2011
Brochure: Women's rights for all	2009-2011

Support for women's land rights (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan)	2010-2011
The woman's movement in Kyrgyzstan (photos)	2009-2011
Posters: Unite to End Violence Against Women	2010-2011
Posters: Women's land rights	2009-2011
Women – Salt of the Earth	2009-2011
Brochure: Women – Salt of the Earth; Women's land rights	2009-2011

13 Current UN Women Programs and Projects in Kyrgyzstan

	Program/Project Name	Donor Organization	Partner/ Contractor	Major Sectors	Project Dateline	Budget, USD	Geographic Target
1	Enhancing Economic Security of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan	Government of Norway, UN Women	WESA, CDA, STA	Helping farmers access better quality inputs; supporting processing, packaging, warehousing, transport, and marketing of agricultural products for local and regional markets	1/2009 – 6/2011	1 240 917	All seven oblasts
2	Empowering Women and Vulnerable Communities to Contribute to Peace Building and Reconciliation in Kyrgyzstan	UN Women, Peace Building Fund	WESA, Public Foundation for Tolerance International, Association of Women Leaders of Jalal Abad, Rural Development Fund	Support efforts and strengthen capacities of women and vulnerable communities, and civil society and government partners to advance gender equality and women's human rights in Kyrgyzstan, in context of ethnic and social conflict.	1/2011 – 11/2011	455 852	Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken Oblasts
3	Central Asia Regional Migration Program	Government of United Kingdom	International Organization on Migration, UN Women, World Bank	Providing support to governments to assess actual scope of labor migration for adequate formulation, adoption and implementation evidence-based policies for managing migration that fosters regularized migration and contributes to protection of migrants' rights and promotion of gender equality	2010 – 2013	518 000	All seven oblasts
4	UN Women/DPA Initiative	UN Women	UN Women, Academy of Management under the President, OSCE Academy, Foundation for Tolerance International	Training Program on the Gender Dimensions of Mediation: Gender Equality in Peace Processes	2011	141 902	Regional coverage (Central Asia and South Caucasus)

14 Terms of Reference of Evaluation



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

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Terms of Reference

For the Final Evaluation of the UN Women Programme
ENHANCING ECONOMIC SECURITY OF RURAL WOMEN IN KYRGYZSTAN
January 2009 - June 2011

1. Background, purpose and use of the evaluation

In accordance with its core priority to advance women's economic security and rights worldwide the UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, the UN Women (former UNIFEM), has worked extensively in Kyrgyzstan to foster women's rights to land and property, promoting efforts to ensure that new policies and laws related to land reform empower women and widen their economic opportunities. Particular focus lies on raising the awareness and capacity of rural women as well as local governments through tailored project interventions.

In December 2008, with generous financial support from the Government of Norway, UN Women launched the programme, Enhancing the Economic Security of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan, as a follow-on phase to its related programming implemented in Kyrgyzstan in 2004-2007. The proposed programme directly meets Norway's priorities in the areas of women's economic and political participation, as identified in the 8 March 2007 launch of the Norwegian Government's Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation. Of particular resonance with this programme is Norway's commitment as outlined in the following paragraph: "The most important agents for change are women who organize and mobilize resources to challenge and overcome discriminatory attitudes and structures in their societies. Norway wants to support such agents of change. At the same time, it will support the efforts of its development partners at government level to meet national development targets on women's rights and gender equality. Awareness of women's rights and gender equality is to be incorporated comprehensively into Norway's development cooperation efforts".

UN Women Sub-Regional office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (UN Women EECA SRO) is planning to commission a final evaluation of the programme.

The project implementation was expected to be completed by the end-December of 2010, but given the emergency situation in the country, the donor agreed to extend the project duration for 6 months period – till June 2011.

This is an independent external evaluation. Besides being an obligatory process, the evaluation is a strong requirement by the donor. It is thought to be a powerful tool to prove the correlation between the aid effectiveness and gender responsiveness at large, in line with UN Women commitment to the ideas of the advancing aid effectiveness and initiatives to achieve it (Accra HLF, 2009; Paris Declaration, 2005). It seeks to be a forward looking and learning exercise, rather than a pure assessment of UN Women programme in Kyrgyzstan. The evaluation is fully aligned with CEDAW, MDG 3 and contributes directly to UN Women EECA Management for Results Framework (MRF) outputs 1.1–1.5.

In accordance with the UN Women Strategic Plan, the project has been implemented based on the holistic approach, which means tackling the issues at all levels: policy, institutional and community.

Therefore the evaluation objectives will reflect on tracking of progress on gender equality (GE) and women's human rights (WHR) observance in Country Development Strategy(CDS)/sectoral and local programmes; on the effectiveness of the legal enforcement of the legislation essential for observance of women's rights to economic resources, property and inheritance and social protection services; on the joint local government, community and women's capacities to establish and maintain alternative energy resources and energy saving technologies, women's capacities to manage land and other economic resources.

The specific objectives of the Evaluation are:

1. Assess the extent of progress towards ensuring that the Gender Equality (GE) commitments are translated into relevant sectoral programmes and local development plans from the results of the mainstream actions undertaken by the programme.
2. Assess the changes made from the results undertaken by the programme towards livelihood in Kyrgyzstan with focus on women's access to economic resources, including land, irrigation, and agricultural extension services.
3. Assess the partnership established between duty bearers and rights holders to ensure timely and effective response to the energy/food crisis and to observance of and respect for women's property and inheritance rights at community/local levels.
4. Assess the role and results of the initiatives on community level that are geared to advance WHRs and at practices of promoting women's property and inheritance rights, resulted due to project activities in Kyrgyzstan. Review the capacities of the communities to articulate their needs and partner with NGOs and local governments to jointly address development priorities.
5. Provide analysis of efficiency of project management and provision of recommendations for management of future programmes.

It is expected that the results of the evaluation will be used as significant inputs for the following:

- To replicate the expertise and knowledge generated by the project for the implementing of similar projects in the region embraced by UN Women EECA SRO activities. This transfer of knowledge and expertise will be continued with particular focus on law enforcement practices, supporting local economic initiatives through small grants, technical assistance in the EECA region-wide interventions.
- Drawing out the lessons learnt, to sustain capacities and skills of the UN Women EECA SRO partner organizations: the Women Entrepreneurs Support Association, the Agency for Social Technologies, and the Community Development Alliance
- The lessons learned and recommendations to be provided to the members of the Steering Committee of the Project comprised by the relevant state agencies, academia and NGOs for sustaining the strong coordination and linkages among the central level and regional level authorities obtained through project results.
- The use of participatory tools and instruments during the evaluation is expected to be a strong asset to contribute to the strengthening of the ownership feeling over the project results among the beneficiaries and the stakeholders.

2. Social, economic and political context

Kyrgyzstan, with a population of 5.3 million people, is one of the poorest countries in the CIS region. The period 2000-2008 was characterized by a sustainable trend in poverty reduction¹, however, progress in alleviating poverty has considerably slowed down and have begun to reverse due to the global economic crisis, with real GDP growth drop from 8.5% in 2007 to 2.3% in 2009², and the followed political crisis.

Due to deep instability throughout 2010, the economy is expected to shrink by 3.5 percent; thus, economic growth remains uncertain – dependent largely on political stability and the maintenance of security and law and order. The high food insecurity, especially impacting the extremely poor, and people living in very remote areas, the persisting energy crisis have increased poverty level, increasing the food and energy rates. International media observers are predicting that a nascent food

¹The Second Periodic Report on Millennium Development Goals, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 2010

² ibid

crisis will erupt into a full famine. The UN's World Food Programme also declared the food situation one of emergency shortage, in both cities and rural areas of the region.

Given that over 66 % of the population lives in rural areas and about one third of the total population depends on agriculture for its livelihood, the land reform process in Kyrgyzstan initiated by government has aimed at addressing the problems of a dramatic decrease in agricultural productivity and food shortages in Kyrgyzstan in the early 1990-s. In 2001, the government adopted the Law on Land Management.

In response to the CEDAW Committee's recommendation (2004) 'to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women with respect to ownership, transfer and inheritance of land', the UN Women supported the initiatives of national partners to review the land legislation, which resulted in the adoption of the amendments to the Law on Agricultural Land management (LALM), all of which are critical for the observance of rural women's rights in terms of land management processes. In 2006 these amendments were approved by government and signed into national law, thus contributing to the expansion of rural women's economic opportunities. In 2007-2008, UN Women-supported work built a solid basis for conducting monitoring of the enforcement of the amended land legislation.

While de jure women have equal rights to land ownership, de facto, however, rural women's opportunities for demanding or protecting their rights to land are still restricted by the traditional law of "adat". The status of the religious women, especially in rural areas, is the worst; they represent a specific vulnerable group, their inheritance and property rights being among the lead issues of discrimination and violation of their human rights. In many cases, the poor administrative performance of local governments in observing legal acts, compiling lists of eligible villagers, and providing legal information and procedural support in obtaining land, often result in unequal opportunities to accessing land. Furthermore, many villagers, and women in particular, are unaware of either their rights or the processes needed to exercise those rights.

The poor governance environment, the incapacity of the State to rule by law and to respond to citizens' rights for both men and women ended up with a political crisis. It started early April 2010 with protest demonstrations, which culminated in the dissolution of Government and Parliament and the resignation of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic in the same month. In June 2010, initiated by the provisional government a new constitution was adopted. The new constitution envisages strengthening the power of parliament; this measure aims at addressing the need for improvements in governance, strengthening of the rule of law, better public accountability.

A new wave of violence in June 2010 in two Southern provinces of the country affected close to 1.1 million people, putting new tremendous challenges to Government's efforts to reach stability. A rapid in-depth Needs Assessment in the South of Kyrgyzstan commissioned by UN Women following the Women Movement in Kyrgyzstan appeal to the Government and the donor community revealed the persistence of fear among women and men of resumption of interethnic conflict, the possibility of threats and intimidation, and human rights violations.

Given the specific context of Kyrgyzstan, where agriculture is the major sector of economy, and provided reducing the energy, water and food crisis depend rigorously on the stabilization of the political situation, economic security of rural population becomes a top national priority. This requires a number of structural, economic and social measures and actions with a strong focus strengthening the capacities of local governments in rights-based gender-responsive governance.

3. Project objectives and implementation

UN Women's specific emphasis on applying CEDAW as a tool for mobilizing government and civil society to track country progress on gender aspects of development is continued in the current project.

The project started January 2009, the implementation was expected to be completed by the end-December of 2010, but given the emergency situation in the country, the donor agreed to extend the project duration for 6 months period – till June 2011.

The project implementation country is Kyrgyzstan.

The current project is built to achieve the four expected outcomes with specific outputs harmonized with UN Women Global Development Results Framework (DRF) and Managing for Results Framework (MRF):

Project Outcome 1: Legislations and policies that promote and protect women's property and inheritance rights formulated and implemented;

Output 1.1 Effective mechanisms for dialogue between government actors and Gender Equality advocates on how to develop and enforce legal frameworks and processes that promote and protect women's human rights in the areas of land, property and inheritance rights exist in Kyrgyzstan;

Output 1.2 Effective mechanisms for dialogue between government budget actors and Gender Equality advocates on how to include gender equality into budgeting processes.

Project Outcome 2: Institutions demonstrate commitment, capacity and accountability in ensuring economic security of the rural population during the food and energy crisis, and observance of women's property and inheritance rights.

Output 2.1 Enhanced capacities of key policy and service delivery institutions in the sector of land and agricultural development to mainstream GE and WHRs into their operations in Kyrgyzstan;

Output 2.2 A relevant body of knowledge on how to interact with informal (elderly and arbitrary courts) justice systems to protect women's rights in the areas of access to property, inheritance rights is developed and accessible in Kyrgyzstan;

Project Outcome 3: Duty-bearers and rights holders working in partnership to ensure timely and effective response to the energy/food crisis and to observance of and respect for women's property and inheritance rights at community/local levels

Output 3.1 Women who are subject to exclusion and/or discrimination have enhanced capacities to participate in and influence the development of policies in the areas of land, agriculture, energy/food crisis prevention in Kyrgyzstan;

Output 3.2 Enhanced number and quality of community level initiatives that are geared to advance WHRs and eliminate gender inequality in the areas of rural poverty reduction, energy/food crisis prevention and in promoting practical observance of women's property and inheritance rights in Kyrgyzstan;

Output 3.3 Gender Equality experts, advocates and their organizations have strengthened their capacities to advocate for GE in the areas energy/food crisis prevention, in promoting practical observance of women's property and inheritance rights in Kyrgyzstan.

Outcome 4: Internal Organisational Arrangements strengthened to deliver projects outcomes and to provide for external quality evaluation.

Output 4.1 Effective financial and administrative support to project management system in place;

Output 4.2 External Evaluation conducted.

Project Management: The project is implemented by the UN Women through a Project Team (PT), which works under the guidance of UN Women EECA Regional Programme Director at regional level, and in close collaboration and coordination of UN Women Gender Advisor at country level.

The PT will be based in Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek) and operate in accordance with standard rules and procedures; the work of the PT will be technically supported by the UN Women EE CA SRO based in Kazakhstan (Almaty). The technical assistance and expertise to the PT includes support development of the documentation, knowledge building and reporting and coordination with and implementation of the regional and international components of the project in close collaboration with national and international partners.

The project invests substantially in capacity building of national partners and the transfer of expertise, which along with the participatory approach employed is to assure ownership and continuity of the project by the national stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The project's main national partners in implementation are:

- The Kyrgyzstan NGO Women Entrepreneurs Support Association (WESA), which will be in charge of the legal and economic components of the programme. WESA has extensive in providing legal services to rural women on land and property rights, as well as in supporting the economic initiatives of women in rural and urban areas;
- The Agency for Social Technologies (AST), which specializes in the promotion of local community participation in development and democratic governance processes, and has successful experience in the development and testing of training manuals on gender mainstreaming in local planning and budgeting processes;
- The Community Development Alliance (CDA), which unites community development activists representing all seven provinces of the country. CDA possesses a solid expertise on gender-responsive participatory community development.

Other partners include:

Key line ministries and national committees; the National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development; local governments at province, district and village levels; the State Registry; the National Statistical Committee; the Ministry of Religious Affairs; the Rural Advisory Development Services; the Kyrgyz Parliamentary Committees on Agro-Industrial Complex and Ecology; the National Broadcasting Corporation and national newspapers; UN agencies, and other CSOs working in the field.

A Program Board is formed to support the implementation of the program. It is represented by the donor, UN Women, major programme partners and stakeholders and carries out functions, such as:

- Providing policy guidelines and central support for the implementation of this program,
- Ensuring strong coordination and linkages among the central level and regional level authorities in implementation of the program,
- Up streaming the local level initiatives into the policies of the government,
- Monitoring, reviewing and assessing the implementation and its impact,
- Provide policy guidelines for the development of strategy for the program documentation and replication.

4. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation of the programme is planned to be completed between March 18, 2011 – May 15, 2011.

The geographic area of the evaluation activity is the city of Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Republic, with travel to the regions as defined by the evaluation needs.

5. Evaluation questions:

The evaluation will address the criteria of Programme Efficiency, Effectiveness, Relevance and Sustainability. More specifically, the evaluation will address the following issues:

1. To what extent did the project reach the planned results and how the context influenced the final result/sustainability? What was not achieved in full and what can be recommended for the future to inform UN WOMEN programming, and ensure necessary follow up from the Government, Donors and CSOs.
2. What are the unexpected results? What was achieved by the program beyond the planned results? How the program was responsive to the emerging priority/strategic needs of the Government and Donors in the field of Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights?
3. To assess, to what extent capacity development efforts were effective for:

- a. State authorities at various levels to integrate gender aspects in related strategies/policies/programmes;
 - b. Formal partners, WESA, AST, CDA and informal partner institutions to promote and protect rights of rural women to property and inheritance;
 - c. CSOs to support and promote meaningful participation of women and women's organizations in policy-making process
4. Did the project create/strengthen any local/regional networks and partnerships to implement and sustain the project/or UN WOMEN at large activities?
5. What were the key approaches and strategies the project used in achieving its outcomes? What worked and what did not and why? What can be taken further for the new programme and partners' follow-up activities?
6. How effective information sharing and dissemination activities were set up to increase the visibility of the project among stakeholders?
7. Through in-depth assessment, to present and highlight features to be considered as good practices and lessons learned at country level.

6. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation will be based on a proposed methodology and validated by UN Women SRO EE CA in consultation with the UN Women Evaluation Unit.

By a broad use of the participatory evaluation technique, the final evaluation will ensure that key stakeholders, as well as PT and beneficiaries will be engaged throughout the entire evaluation process. The participatory approach is thought to serve for facilitating the linkages and collaboration among various stakeholders: directly and indirectly affected by the project results, thus making the process itself responsive and relevant to the stakeholders.

The evaluation will be results-oriented and provide evidence of achievement of expected outputs through the use of quantitative and qualitative methods. The methodology for the final evaluation shall include the following:

- a. Preliminary desk reviews of all relevant documents on the programme, the programme document, LogFrame, implementation plan, monitoring reports, donor reports (inception report, progress reports), Program Final Report; existing national and international reports on gender equality status, etc
- b. This will be done prior to any field visit, focus group discussion, or individual interviews. Preliminary discussions with the programme staff from UN Women EE CA SRO and Kyrgyzstan project unit will also take place within this period.
- c. Field visits at different stages of the process.
- d. Individual and group discussions, in-depth interviews with key partners: a series of semi-structured interviews and focus groups with the programme management staff, national partners, counterparts, beneficiaries are envisaged to be conducted under this stage. This can include survey among participants of various capacity building trainings and events undertaken by the programme since its start. It can include participants of major trainings organized by the programme in the areas of gender and gender mainstreaming, gender statistics, gender responsible budgeting, etc.

The consultative element of the evaluation is crucial for building up a consensus about the programme's overall rationale and desired outcomes. Data from different research sources will be triangulated to increase its validity. Field visits will be organized to facilitate the process of evaluation. This stage of the project is aiming for an overall understanding of UN Women's programme contribution to the engendering the decision making in Kyrgyzstan to ensure and promote the women's economic rights, and draw out key good practices that deserve replication and up scaling that will provisionally contribute to other future activities of the UN Women in EE CA.

The proposed approach and methodology has to be considered as flexible guidelines rather than final standards; and the evaluators will have an opportunity to make their inputs and propose changes in the evaluation design. It is expected that the Evaluation Team will further refine the approach and methodology and submit their detailed description in the proposal and Inception Report. In addition, the refined approach and methodology by the Evaluation Team should incorporate Human Rights and Gender Equality perspectives.

7. Expected Results and Timeframe

As a logical result of the completion of the desk review it is expected that the Evaluation Team will submit an inception report, which contains evaluation objectives and scope, description of evaluation methodology/methodological approach, data collection tools, data analysis methods, key informants/agencies, evaluation questions, performance criteria, issues to be studied, work plan and reporting requirements.

As a result of the completion of the field visits and surveys and interviews with the partners, it is envisaged that several key products will be submitted, namely: Progress Report of the Field work to the UN Women Sub-Regional office and key internal and external stakeholders, Power Point presentation and an outline on preliminary findings, lessons learned, and recommendations, Draft full report highlighting key evaluation findings and conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations (shall be done in a specific format). The draft report will be discussed with the national partners to ensure participation and involvement of the national stakeholders.

Afterwards a Final evaluation report and five-page executive summary are expected to be submitted to the UN Women Sub-Regional office incorporating all comments and feedback collected from all partners involved.

“Quality Criteria for UN Women evaluation reports” should be followed (see Annexes to the present ToR for detailed information). These quality criteria are intended to serve as a guide for preparing meaningful, useful and credible evaluation reports. It does not prescribe a definite format that all evaluation reports should follow but rather indicates the contents that need to be included in quality reports.

Format of the final evaluation report shall include the following chapters: Executive Summary (maximum five pages), Programme description, Evaluation purpose, Evaluation methodology, Findings, Lessons learnt, Recommendations and Annexes (including interview list, data collection instruments, key documents consulted, Terms of Reference).

The return travel to Kyrgyzstan, accommodation, daily subsistence, will be paid for the period of Evaluator's work in Kyrgyzstan. Translation/interpretation, secretarial assistance will be provided to the international evaluation consultant during his/her stay in Kyrgyzstan.

Language of all deliverables: English.

The timeframe allocated for the completion of the above indicated products: March 18, 2011-May 15, 2011

Product / Activity		Estimated number of working days
Stage 1 Key product – preliminary desk reviews, discussions with partners and inception report		
Inception report of the evaluation team, which includes the evaluation methodology and the timing of activities and deliverables	Within one week upon signing the contract, but not later than March 18, 2011	
Stage 2 Key Product – Evaluation Report		
Data collection (including field work)	From March 21	7
Progress Report of the Field work to UN Women EECA Sub-regional office and key internal and external stakeholders	April 5	4
Outline and a Power Point presentation on preliminary findings, lessons learned, and recommendations	April 11-April 28	10
Draft full report highlighting key evaluation findings and		

conclusions, lessons and recommendations. Virtual consultations by the evaluator with the key programme partners and stakeholders shall take place to validate the key findings of the report and collect feedback and recommendations to inform the final evaluation report.		
Final evaluation report and five-page executive summary	May 11	4
TOTAL number of working days:		25

8. Composition, Skills and Experience of the Evaluation Team

A team of external international evaluator and national consultant will undertake the evaluation, having experience linked to evaluation, gender equality and economic policy with specific knowledge of gender responsive planning, budgeting and monitoring.

Here are key requirements to the International Evaluator only. National consultant will have a separate Terms of Reference with specific tasks to support overall work of the International Evaluator. It's important to note that the national consultant shall also possess an expertise in conducting gender-sensitive and rights-based evaluations so to be also able to contribute to the substance not only be in supporting role.

Competencies

Technical/Functional:

- Extensive knowledge and experience in evaluation and application of quantitative and qualitative methods.
- A strong record in designing and leading evaluations.
- Experience in gender analysis and human rights.
- Familiarity with the political, economic and social situation in the Kyrgyz Republic and the neighboring countries of the Central Asia region.
- Experience in working with multi-stakeholders essential: governments, civil society, community based organizations, and the UN/multilateral/bilateral institutions.
- Experience in participatory approach is a must as well as facilitation skills and ability to manage diversity of views in different cultural contexts.
- Experience in capacity development essential.
- Ability to produce well written reports demonstrating analytical ability and communication skill. Proven ability to undertake self-directed research.
- Ability to work with the organization commissioning the evaluation and with other evaluation stakeholders to ensure that a high quality product is delivered on a timely basis.
- Excellent writing skills, ability to write in a structured, lucid and concise manner, without losing the depth of the substance

Corporate Competencies:

- Demonstrates integrity by modeling the UN's values and ethical standards.
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.

Required Skills and Experience

- At least a master's degree; in social science and/or related areas
- 10 years of working experience in evaluation, and at least 5 in evaluation of development programmes
- Experience in evaluation of programs with budget over USD 1million.
- 5 years of experience and background on gender equality and economic policy with understanding of gender responsive planning, budgeting and monitoring.
- Fluent in English, knowledge of Russian or Kyrgyz would be an asset.

9. Management of the evaluation

The UN Women EECA Sub-Regional Office will manage the final evaluation under overall supervision of the UN Women EECA Sub-Regional Programme Director and guidance from Programme

Specialist. During the evaluation process, the SRO office will consult with UN Women Evaluation Unit, as may be necessary. Coordination in the field including logistical support will be the responsibility of the Kyrgyzstan Programme office.

This is a consultative/participatory final evaluation with a strong learning component. The management of the evaluation will ensure that key stakeholders will be consulted.

After the completion of the final evaluation, a final stage of the process will take place, including the dissemination strategy for sharing the lessons learnt, and the management response of the final evaluation results. These activities will be managed by the UN Women EECA Sub-Regional Office.

10. Ethical code of conduct for the evaluation

The following documents are appended to the present TOR for the evaluator's attention and review:

- UN Women (former UNIFEM) Quality Criteria for Selection of Proposals (link 1)
- UN Evaluation Group norms and standards for evaluation (link 2)
- Programme document (link 3)
- UN Women RBM manual (link 4)

11. Application Process

To apply, the prospective applicants should visit <http://jobs.undp.org>, Women's Empowerment area. Only online applications will be considered.

All online applications must include (as an attachment) the completed UN Women Personal History form (P-11) which can be downloaded from http://www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/P_11_form_UNwomen.doc).

Kindly note that the system will only allow one attachment. Applications without the completed UN Women P-11 form will be treated as incomplete and will not be considered for further assessment.

Financial proposals (with detailed breakdown of expected honorarium, economy class travel and per diem for in-country stay, etc.) should be sent to natalia.galat@unwomen.org indicating the subject "International Evaluator Kyrgyzstan Financial Proposal".

Deadline for application: February 27, 2011

15 Evaluation Team Personnel

The Evaluation Team was responsible for all document review, interviews and observations. The Team consisted of: Cheng-Un Stephen Lam, International Evaluator who was responsible for overall in-country leadership and report preparation and writing; Zina Aliyeva, National Consultant, who provided technical and substantive support during all phases of the evaluation assignment, and significant input for key deliverables. Baktygul Chokchonova and Elena Mironova provided interpretation and translating services, and Tursunbek uluu Erbol and Ilhom Askarov provided transportation services.

Brief Professional Biographies

Cheng-Un Stephen Lam has worked in the Central Asian region for ten years. His long-term assignments include being Regional Director, ISAR-CA, which worked in the education and environmental sectors; and Resident Advisor/Deputy Chief of Party of USAID's Local Governance and Citizen Participation Project in Tajikistan. His evaluation experience includes assignments to assess the EC's Kunduz Integrated Water Initiative in Afghanistan; USAID's Water Users Association Support Program in Tajikistan; and USAID's Community Action Investment Program in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. He has conducted a poverty and social impact assessment on water and public services in Tajikistan for the Office of the Senior Economist, UNDP Regional Bureau and made a related presentation at the 3rd meeting of the Central Asia Region Risk Assessment event in Almaty, Kazakhstan. He has a Ph.D. in geography, with a focus on crossborder economics, natural resource management and community networks in the Ferghana Valley. He brings his background and experience to the present evaluation.

Zinaida Alieva has solid experience in development area, knowledge and understanding of specific country conditions and the needs of targeted groups, a proven record of conducting evaluations of the projects involving community-level work. For the last 15 years she has been closely involved in projects focusing on rural development; education; women's rights to land, property, inheritance; agricultural extension services in Kyrgyzstan. She also has vast experience in research activities in the aforementioned spheres. Her previous positions included working as Director of the Rural Development Fund, an NGO conducting research, developing policy recommendations for and implementing projects in rural development; Director of Transformation of Humanities Program of the Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan; Research Assistant for the Legal Rights Advocacy Project: Empowering Local Community Leaders, Local Institutions and their Impact on Women's Rights to Land, Women's Rights to Land in the Kyrgyz Republic research projects. She brings her experience, enthusiasm and deep knowledge of Kyrgyzstan and the Central Asian region to the present evaluation.

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PUT IN OUTCOME 3: Finally, under the Project, monitoring committees were established in 10 villages that received grants from the Project's grant programs (detailed in the section on Outcome 3). These committees were trained in grant project monitoring, which included not only the technical aspects of monitoring but also knowledge about gender equality, and women's land, property and inheritance rights, key aspects in the grants themselves.