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| **UNDP logo** | **Supporting Civil Registry Reform in Tajikistan**  **Draft Project Brief** |
| **Location:** | Tajikistan |
| **Duration:** | 2015 – 2023  Phase I: 2015 – 2019  Phase II: 2019 - 2023 |
| **Budget:** | Overall budget: 12,000,000.00 USD (indicative)  SDC: 8,000,000.00 USD  UNDP Tajikistan: 2,000,000.00 USD  Unfunded budget: 2,000,000.00 USD |
| **Donors:** | Current potential donors: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, UNDP  Other potential donors and funds: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (?) |
| **Programme Background:** | Despite the continuous Judicial and Legal Reforms being implemented by the Government of Tajikistan, rule of law and access to justice issues remain high priority for the country serving as root causes of vulnerability, social exclusion and inequalities. During the last decade the international community, especially the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Tajikistan as well as other partners, including UNDP have been actively supporting rule of law and access to justice related reforms in Tajikistan. The ongoing ‘Access to Justice in Tajikistan’ project funded by SDC and implemented in consortium partnership of UNDP and INGO Helvetas has generated a number of lessons pointing out specifically the current gaps in civil registration system with direct negative implications on ability of vulnerable population segments, especially women and children to access justice and exercise rights and benefit guaranteed by the State.  Civic registration is a prerequisite for being able to enjoy the rights of education and medical care and to later obtain a passport. In addition, registration of marriage is an important element of the protection of the property rights of women and children in the family.Recognizing the challengesof the current civil registration system and their impact on an important number of populations, especially the most vulnerable, especially women and children, the Government of Tajikistan approved in 2014 the ZAGS Development program for 2014-2019. The programme is based on the existing legislation and policy documents (the Law "On state registration of acts of civil status", National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2015 and "Strategies for improving the welfare of the population of Tajikistan for 2013 -2015, Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan "On results of socio-economic development of the Republic of Tajikistan in 2012 and tasks for 2013 ),outlines the main problems in the functioning of the ZAGS system in Tajikistan and proposes certain measures to address the deficiencies. The measures proposed include institution building, introduction of new mechanisms to provide services to clients through one stop shops and electronic submission of documents, regulation of services and development of minimum quality standards for services; simplification of the system by removing requirements for submitting certain unnecessary documents by citizens; commitment to providing additional resources and building new premises for ZAGS structures in the country and commitment to building the staff competency by providing continuous training.  While the Government effort to improve the civil registration system is commendable, the functional review of the notary and civil registration systems in Tajikistan reveals important capacity gaps in the implementation of the programme in general and in service delivery in particular resulting from weak implementation of policies and laws and lack of procedures and mechanisms for evidence based planning and decision making. These problems are especially prominent in remote and hard to access areas of Tajikistan whereas the service provision is complicated by different accessibility factors (distance to district centre, poor capacity of Jamoat officers to provide high quality services, etc) further making the service unavailable and/or unaffordable. |
| **Objective and outcomes:** | **The project objective is to enhance the access of vulnerable population of Tajikistan, especially women, children and persons with disabilities to affordable and accessible civil registration services**  The project has four identified outcomes that together will produce the impact:  **Outcome 1**: **Policy and legal framework, including regulation of services and development of minimum quality standards for services** and simplification of the system, improved;  **Outcome 2**: **Automated Civil Registration System developed and implemented** (software system development);  **Outcome 3**: **Authorities responsible for state registration of civil status acts have better capacity and are equipped with needed equipment** to enable them to provide better services to the population, keep the information and transfer daily information to the state register, **connecting entities to the electronic communication network** **of Electronic Information Bank of Civil Status Acts;** the equipped authorities are the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan and subordinated bodies and all state authorities responsible for registration of civil status acts.  **Outcome 4:Population, especially women and those in remote areas are better aware about the civil registration** services.  The project will work at both ***supply*** (improving legislation and developing institutional capacity) and ***demand*** sides (awareness of the population) of service provision, thus providing support in both development and implementation of the civil registration related laws, policies and procedures for more responsive and quality service provision.  For greater effectiveness and efficiency, the project design will be guided by the outcomes of the baseline survey and validation workshops at the national and regional levels as well as based on comprehensive review of existing studies, research, policy briefs, and etc. The project will substantively build on the existing programmes and initiatives in Tajikistan as well as expertise of UNDP accumulated in the region. Wherever possible, UNDP will ensure complementarities with ongoing programmes and initiatives for greater impact. |
| **Beneficiaries:** | Entire population of Tajikistan will benefit from the reform and improved civil registration services; vulnerable population segments of Tajikistan living in remote and hard to access areas of Tajikistan, especially women, children and persons with disabilities will specifically benefit from project results. |
| **Partnerships:** | UNDP Tajikistan will implement the project in close partnerships with the Ministry of Justice, its subsidiary institutions, including ZAGS and Notaries, and other state and non-state institutions as well as international development community active in the civil registration area. While implementing the programme, relevant knowledge and expertise of other development partners active in Tajikistan will be utilized. |
| **Why UNDP:** | UNDP is a recognized partner of choice of the Government of Tajikistan in supporting reforms, advancing transformative policies and capacitating institutions to address rule of law and access to justice issues, socio-economic development challenges of the country and provide better services to the population. At the regional level UNDP has demonstrated experience and expertise in supporting implementation of civil registration related reforms and initiatives in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and other countries.  In Tajikistan, at the *national level,* UNDP is currently implementing a comprehensive Rule of Law and Access to Justice Programme funded by SDC, and MFA Finland which enabled UNDP to maintain very close partnerships with government counterparts especially with the Ministry of Justice and its subsidiary institutions, including ZAGS and Notaries, as well as with the Office of Ombudsman. While acting as a lead agency for SDC funded *‘Access to Justice in Tajikistan’* project, UNDP was able to establish consortium partnership with INGO Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation based on comparative advantage of each agency. Using the same principle, UNDP was also able to utilize the expertise of other UN agencies, including OHCHR and UN Women under *‘Strengthening Rule of Law and Human Rights to Empower People in Tajikistan’* project funded by MFA Finland.  At the *policy level*, UNDPs leadership at the Rule of Law and Access to Justice Working Group of the Development Coordination Council and facilitation of state and CSO policy dialogue on rule of law and access coupled with UNDPs support in formulation of country’s long-term (new National Development Strategy for 2016 – 2030) and short term (new phase after completion of the Living Standards Improvement Strategy in 2015) strategies provides sound entry points for UNDP to effectively promote, advocate for and implement civil registration related reforms.  At the *institutional level,* UNDP is working closely with the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan towards effective public administration and local governance efforts of the Government of Tajikistan. While doing so, UNDP will be able to complement its public administration and civil registration initiatives. For instance, under Public Administration Reform and Institutional Strengthening Project, UNDP has supported drafting of the registry of state functions which also includes civil registration functions and has also supported drafting of the Concept of Local Development which includes elements of local governance. This is well linked to civil registration given that Jamoats as self-governing bodies also bear civil registration functions.  At the *regional level*, UNDP implemented a number of large scale projects in support of civil registration reforms:  In ***Georgia*** the project **“**Supporting Civil Registration Reforms in Georgia” assisted the Civil Registry Agency at the Georgian Ministry of Justice to simplify the registration of civil acts, such as birth, marriages, and child adoption, as well as the administration and issue of passports and identity cards. UNDP helped to apply the latest technologies, so that the modernized system is able to operate online and provide citizens with a “one-stop-shop” access to the Agency’s services. The 2.8 million USD project further developed the legal framework for the reformed Civil Registry Agency, digitized the archives and introduce up-to-date Information Technologies. In addition, the project refurbished 14 civil registry offices in the regions to provide quality services to the citizens.  In ***Azerbaijan***, UNDP supported the establishment of the Civil Register of Population. During the project life-cycle, among other milestones, conceptual plan on establishment of the civil registry was developed; Civil Status Acts Automated Registration Information System was introduced; about 90 regional registration offices were equipped with modern computer networks; over 15 million paper-based civil status acts were transferred into electronic format and codified in a database; and a modern archive system for civil status acts was created in compliance with international standards. Also, a fibre-optic communication channel between the Ministry of Justice and its divisions and the Ministry of Interior was created to ensure systematic and continuous real time information exchange, with a backup server. The project budget was 9,010,000.00 USD.  In ***Armenia***, UNDP through its EU Advisory Group support to the Government of Armenia in its reform agenda provided advisory services in the field of development of an efficient statistical system in the area of Justice, including for Notaries, Civil Status Registry, etc. It included the analysis of software, methodology and notification mechanisms used in EU member states.  Building on UNDP comparative advantage in Tajikistan in supporting the Government to implement Rule of Law and Access to Justice reforms through policy dialogue, institutions building and improved access to justice service delivery, considering strong partnership with the Ministry of Justice and its subsidiary institutions responsible for civil registration and using UNDP’s regional experience and expertise in implementation of civil registration related reforms, UNDP Tajikistan is best positioned to be the partner of choice of the Government of Tajikistan and the development partners in supporting the implementation of the civil registration reform in Tajikistan. |
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