

6-month update on Joint Programme implementation

Portfolio on Integrated Policy for LNOB and Social Protection

This monitoring update for Q1 and Q2 (1 Jan – 30 June 2020) should include: a) integration of summarized information already provided in the quarterly check for Q1, b) update on implementation in Q2, and c) changing context and eventual modifications of the overall JP indicating the prospect for JP implementation. It should also address implementation on re-purposing for COVID-19, if the JP had it. Do not include detailed operational information, but focus on main activities, "quick wins", initial results, and the plans for Q3&Q4.

⇒ **Deadline to submit the 6-month update is 15 July 2020.**

○ Please, do not go beyond the indicated limit of no. of pages

⇒ To join the webinar for support and clarifications on 23 June 2020 at 9am New York time, use [this link](#).

⇒ To schedule the follow up Skype/Zoom call (by 10 July) in the period 16-31 July 2020, use [this link](#).

End of period: 30 June 2020

Country: *Turkmenistan*

1. What was done in this period (Q1 & Q2 of 2020)?

- Brief explanation, followed by the list of main activities, "quick wins", initial results.

Max 1 page. Use bullet points when possible.

In the first half of 2020, activities were implemented under all three outputs. A High-level Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Minister of Labor and Social Protection (MoLSP) and UNRC, was established with the participation of Deputy Ministers/Deputy Heads of State entities and Heads of participating UN Agencies. The first meetings of the Steering Committee and Working Group were held on 5 March, where the joint programme (JP) was launched and a detailed Joint work plan endorsed.

The Second Working Group meeting was held on 23 June and chaired by the MoLSP, where the implementation of the JP was discussed and the impact of the COVID-19 situation on the programme assessed. One of the important decisions included granting Civil Society Organizations membership in the Working Group to benefit from their practical experience and new perspective to provision of social services.



Here is a list of specific updates on key elements of the program:

- Recruitment of Social Workers. 159 applications were received to fill in 45 vacancies announced by the MLSP, including through online platforms. The online interviews are scheduled in July-August with contracting planned in September. However, with aggravated Covid-19 situation, this may get further delayed. The MoLSP initiated the process of integrating a selected number of social workers into their organizational structure, with salaries to be potentially funded from the state budget in the coming years.
- Sustainability of new model of social workers and social services. With the support of the Chief Technical Advisory Group (CTAG), a Briefing note on structural issues related to introducing community based social workers and social services in

Turkmenistan was prepared, including information on international practices on structural changes of organizations to improve the efficiency of social services; evidence on the economic case for investing in a new model of effective community based social services; and examples of workload norms for the profession “Social Work Specialist”.

- National educators on social work. Discussions were held with the Ministry of Education to create the National Expert Group for establishment of a national pool of educators in social work, and development of national standards of higher education, curricula and programs.
- Legislative review. The recruitment of consultants to conduct a legislation review is in process.
- Baseline assessment of social services. An inventory of existing social services is being conducted in the form of a questionnaire sent to government ministries and NGOs to prepare baseline information on social services. Data has been received from 4 government departments and several NGOs.
- Glossary. Development of a glossary on social services and social work in English, Russian and Turkmen is in progress.
- Needs assessment. Detailed guidance on needs assessment based on a case management approach has been developed for social workers, pending discussion with PUNO and MLSP.
- Training package for social workers. Terms of reference for development and implementation of training programmes have been developed, and procurement process was launched.

2. What was done differently / how have you facilitated innovation?

- Indicate and briefly explain innovation that you might have introduced or implemented. This might include ways of working differently within the team, partners and/or vulnerable groups; methodological and strategic innovations; learning and sharing; knowledge products / thought-leadership pieces; involving new partners; facilitating dialogue and co-design; etc. This can include what had already been planned as a part of JP implementation and was launched/implemented, or novel approaches.

Max 1 page. Use bullet points when possible.

- To ensure sustainability of the proposed social service model at the outset, it was proposed to include social work specialists in the structure of the MLSP starting from 2021, without waiting for the completion of the JP. This will allow building a foundation for development of the community-based social model and ensuring financing of the model from the state budget.

- To implement the JP activities in a better coordinated manner and ensure complementarity, PUNOs agreed to have working meetings on a weekly basis to exchange information/opinions and discuss potential risks. The MLSP and other stakeholders are also invited on monthly basis to be part of those meetings. This has allowed to improve coherence of the JP activities, and speed up implementation.

- COVID-19 related restrictions urged PUNOs to proactively consider using online platforms to keep the pace of implementation of JP activities, including conducting interviews with candidates for social worker positions, the possibility (yet least desirable) of conducting online trainings for beneficiaries and holding online meetings, including with senior government officials, on JP related activities. In this manner, the JP exemplifies the best practice of doing business differently yet still efficiently in the pandemic situation.

3. What is the impact of changing context and risks?

- Describe in succinct manner the most critical factors and trends (including COVID-19 when relevant), and their expected short- and medium-term impact on JP implementation and results. Provide a brief update on risks and challenges, and mitigation measures.

Max 1 page. Use bullet points when possible.

Due to travel restrictions caused by COVID-19, the implementation of many planned activities has been delayed, including:

- Training programmes for social workers, social service providers from state organizations and NGOs, allied workforces, social work managers to be conducted by an international company recruited within JP. Trainings were originally planned in June, and have been postponed to September-October subject to opening of air connection again. The option of online trainings is now also being considered.
- recruitment of social workers was also postponed for 4 months, as well as recruitment and training of national educators, which is now planned in September.
- information sessions in the regions and meetings with partners had to be also postponed twice and, at the government request, rescheduled to September.

4. What is expected in the next 6 months (Q3 & Q4 of 2020)?

- Provide a very brief explanation, followed by the list of activities and results. Indicate any major workplan changes (including related to COVID-19). Indicate if you plan, or are already preparing, modifications/revisions/updates of the broader JP document. Indicate if you might require a major budget revision in Q3/Q4. Indicate in the text the expected financial delivery rate for 2020.

Max 1 page. Use bullet points when possible.

As mentioned in point 3, due to the travel restrictions, some of the activities which were planned for implementation in Q1 and Q2, were postponed to Q3 and Q4, including:

- Support MoLSP in recruiting and budgeting of 45 social work specialists;
- Finalization of baseline information on social services based on inventory results;
- Implementation of information events;
- Finalization of needs assessment based on case management approach, and guidance for social workers;
- Implementation of the training programme;
- Implementation of legislative review and analysis;
- Finalization of recruitment of international experts to support legislative review by working group;
- Establishment of the National Expert Group and the National Educator pool;
- Support to the Ministry of Education in identifying Higher Education Institutions that will potentially develop curriculum and teach social work professional qualification, by releasing teaching staff to participate in the national educator's group);
- Conduct donors' meeting
- Convening the Second Steering Committee meeting to discuss modifications/revisions/updates to the JP, including budget revisions.

The expected financial delivery rate for 2020 is 75% as of now, and if no further delays occur.

5. Human interest story/ies and communication content

- Indicate if you prepared one or more Human Interest stories for Q2 and/or have relevant videos, photos, and promotional/visibility material. If you do have those, and you have not provided them so far, send the text/links to Liz, elizabeth.paturzo@un.org

- Human Interest Story of a potential beneficiary was developed and posted on the PUNOs and UN Turkmenistan websites;
- Expert Working Group meeting held on 23 June 2020, was covered by press release on UN Turkmenistan website;
- A Project Brief in Russian and Turkmen was developed, designed and published in 1000 copies. The aim of this communication product was to inform national stakeholders, such as ministries and local administrators related to provision of social services and social protection, governmental and non-governmental social service providers about project objectives and planned activities;
- Key JP messages were developed and approved by the CTAG and shared with PUNOs;
- In addition, JP staff worked with local newspapers and online news agencies to inform broader audience about the JP objectives and activities. So far, there were 4 articles published on local news media;
- The procurement of visibility materials is in process.

6. List of relevant strategic documents

- Provide the list of relevant strategic documents produced by end of June 2020. If you have the opportunity, upload some or all of them (with a clear title; you can also create a sub-folder for your JP) into [this folder](#)

The following documents were arranged in three subfolders for your consideration:

1. Strategic Documents:

- Manual:

a) Guidance on social work assessment and case management: CHAPTER 1 CONCEPTS AND THEORIES (draft);

b) Assessment Guide for Planning Assistance for Adults, Children, and Families in Difficult Life (in Russian) - draft;

- Brief to Ministry of Labour and Social Protection on financing of social workers in 2021

- Briefing note on structural issues related to introducing community based social workers and social services in Turkmenistan (in Turkmen, Russian and English)

- Glossary (draft)

- Inventory of social services (in Turkmen and Russian)

- Assessment Guide for Planning Assistance for Adults, Children, and Families in Difficult Life Situation (in Russian) – draft

2. Important implementation documents:

- Job description, person specification and recruitment/assessment criteria for community based social workers

- High level Steering Committee TOR

- Expert Working Group TOR

- Legislative Review Working Group TOR

-ToR of Legislative Review National Consultants

- ToR of Training components

- ToR of National Educators pool

3. Communications related documents:

- Project Brief (in Turkmen and Russian)

- Video - Joint Programme introduction in English (transcript in Turkmen and Russian)

7. Survey

- Answer to each with "Yes" or "No". Provide brief explanation only if essential.

a) We had a launch event (physical or virtual)

Answer:

Yes

b) We had a partners/donor event (physical or virtual) - refers to a meeting that includes representative of global donors of the Joint SDG Fund and other partners

Answer:

No. Postponed to Q3

c) There are signs that JP implementation contributes to broader UNCT collaboration and cohesion

Answer:

Yes.

d) Despite COVID-19, we still expect to implement most activities planned for 2020

Answer:

Yes.

e) The JP remains strategic, relevant and catalytic

Answer:

Yes.

f) The JP is still on course on accelerate the progress on the SDGs by Jan 2022

Answer:

Broadly speaking, yes.

g) We have engaged a full-time JP manager

Answer:

Yes.