

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**



**REGIONAL PROJECT DOCUMENT**

**UNDP Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan**

**Project Title:** Phase 2: Supporting the Economic Empowerment of Afghan Women through Education and Training in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan

**Project Number:** 00130011

**Implementing Partner:** UNDP

**Start Date:** November 2021

**End Date:** May 2027

**PAC Meeting date:** September 2021

**Brief Description**

The Action represents an expansion of an ongoing EUR 2 million trilateral cooperation programme between the European Union, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Like the ongoing programme, it aims at building resilience and promoting the academic, economic and social empowerment of women in Afghanistan especially vulnerable women living in challenging conditions by enhancing their capabilities, employability and future prospects through education and training in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and, within the context of this Action, Kyrgyzstan.

Phase 2 of the programme focuses on training of specialists in Agriculture/Agribusiness, Engineering/Construction, Marketing and ICT. Apart from promoting academic, economic and social empowerment of women in Afghanistan, the action will help to strengthen capacity of receiving institutions in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to manage learning mobility programmes in interaction with UNDP and address gender inequalities in higher education and TVET.

The action is intended as a logical continuation of the ongoing project and aims to further facilitate the development of a sustainable system of academic exchange that will allow women from Afghanistan to benefit from higher education opportunities in Central Asia also beyond the project lifetime.

**Contributing Outcome (UNDAF/CPD):**

Outcome 2.2. By 2025, state institutions at all levels effectively design and implement gender-sensitive, human rights and evidence-based public policies and provide quality services in an inclusive, transparent and accountable manner.

*Output 1:*

1.1. *Strengthened capacity of the host higher education and TVET institutions, and relevant stakeholders (GEN3)*

1.2. *Increased awareness among the Afghan women of the existence of the higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programme with a special attention to women with disabilities (GEN3)*

*Output 2:*

2.1. *Increased access of the Afghan women to higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility mechanism in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan (GEN3)*

2.2. *Improved knowledge of potential women applicants for higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes on languages and cultures of the host countries (GEN3)*

2.3. *Strengthened awareness and capacity of women participating in the higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes on gender equality, women's empowerment, leadership, and other soft skills (GEN3)*

*Output 3:*

3.1. *Strengthened capacities of the partner organizations and/or relevant CSOs/NGOs in Afghanistan to support women's employability upon return from outgoing learning mobility programmes (GEN3)*

3.2. *Increased availability of placement opportunities relevant to and compatible with field of studies of the Afghan women participating in outgoing learning mobility programmes (GEN3)*

<b>Total resources required:</b>	4,856,800 USD	
<b>Total resources allocated:</b>	<b>Donor: EU:</b>	4,856,800 USD

Agreed by (signatures):

**Implementing Partner:**

*Yakup Beris*

Yakup Beris, UNDP Resident Representative in Kazakhstan

## I. DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

Afghanistan has been seriously affected by war for over four decades. The fragmented and polarized nature of Afghan society, made up of many different ethnic groups, has contributed to the country's multiple internal struggles. The conflict dates to 1978 with the Saur Revolution which overthrew the government and officially ended in 1989 with the withdrawal of Soviet forces. The Taliban took over Kabul in September 1996, establishing the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. They enforced the most extreme version of Sharia law. The Taliban became notorious internationally for their policies on women, which included a requirement for women to wear a burqa (a full face and body covering garment) and banning them from leaving the home without an accompanying male relative. Women were not permitted to work, or to be schooled after the age of eight. Afghanistan was struggling to rebuild itself amidst ongoing conflict.

During the period of presence of international forces in Afghanistan since 2001, schools and universities opened their doors for women, the country experienced great changes, trade and partnership relations with neighbouring countries were established. With constant tension and ongoing fighting with Taliban in the background, new generation of young Afghans who never lived under Taliban rule has grown up. Despite war fatigue, people had a strong belief and increased yearning for development and prosperity.

On 14 June 2021, the North Atlantic Council confirmed the end of the military operations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Afghanistan. Following the withdrawal of international military forces, Taliban rapidly expanded its territorial control and seized one province after another. On 15 August 2021 Taliban entered Kabul. President Ashraf Ghani left the country. A temporary council was formed to ensure peaceful transfer of power.<sup>1</sup>

According to a recent UNDP study<sup>2</sup>, the current crisis could drive the country to near universal poverty, with numbers falling below the poverty line projected to be over 95% by 2022. The development gains of the last two decades, including advances in the rights of women and girls, are at risk of being reserved.

Afghanistan is one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world<sup>3</sup>. Since takeover of Kabul by Taliban, international donors halted the flow of financial aid for the time being. UN is calling for international community and donors to renew support to maintain the infrastructure, continue to pay salaries to civil servants and basic services to be delivered to the population on time<sup>4</sup>. The new government is striving to preserve the infrastructure in the country, international relations and flow of financial aid. Overall, it can be stated that current Taliban officials are not in position of Afghanistan to be cut out by the global community, which gives a way to the possibility that there might be more tolerant and flexible policies introduction regarding women's basic rights to work and study.

The Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) 2017-2021 sets out the government's economic outlook as well as its development strategy for economic growth and job creation. In terms of vision, the ANPDF states "Afghanistan needs to advance regional integration, improve governance, and transform its productive sectors to effect growth-inducing reforms and investments. We must adopt pro-active policies and support programmes..."

**I.1 Afghanistan's Women, Learning Mobility, and Employment Sector Analysis:** The country was ranked 170 out of 189 countries in the 2019 UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) indicating low progress on human development in the country. On Gender Inequality Index Afghanistan was positioned at 143 out of 162 countries based on high maternal mortality (396 per 100,000 live births),

<sup>1</sup> [https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg\\_report\\_on\\_afghanistan\\_september\\_2021.pdf](https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg_report_on_afghanistan_september_2021.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.undp.org/publications/economic-instability-and-uncertainty-afghanistan-after-august-15>

<sup>3</sup> <https://thediplomat.com/2021/08/taliban-takeover-world-bank-and-imf-halt-aid-us-freezes-afghan-assets/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg\\_report\\_on\\_afghanistan\\_september\\_2021.pdf](https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg_report_on_afghanistan_september_2021.pdf)

low achievement in secondary education (13.2 percent of women compared to 36.9 percent of men with at least some secondary education, 27.4 per cent female seats in the parliament and labor force participation of 48.7 percent for women and 82.1 percent for men).

Although the age of first marriage has increased to a mean of 17.6 years among women aged 20-24 years, overall fertility is still high at 4.4 living children per woman of child-bearing age, which perpetuates high population growth. With 47.7 percent of the population consisting of children under 15 years and 2.7 percent elders over 65 years, the dependency ratio is 101.5. Women are expected to provide care for both the young and old, while men have economic responsibility for all. 35.8% of the Afghan people is living below the national poverty line. Women's economic contribution would not be only desirable as an individual right: it would be essential to alleviate national poverty and accelerate development.

In Afghanistan, until August 15, the highest-ever female net attendance in primary education of 45.5 percent (65.5 percent for boys) dropped markedly at tertiary level to only 4.8 percent (14.9 percent for boys). Society, in general, was not supportive of girls' equal access to university education beyond the home province. Across public universities, there were an estimated 5,090 faculty members of which 774 were women. Overall, Afghanistan had limited capacity at master's level within a limited range of disciplines. The World Bank noted that there were only 210 women holding master's degree. Scholarships abroad provide diversified knowledge, fill in national human capacity gaps, and expose people to a wider world. Afghanistan's localized SDG indicators for SDG 4 (Education) set the ambitious target to increase the number of higher education scholarships in foreign countries (indicator 4.b.2) disaggregated by: Bachelor's scholarships, Masters scholarship, and PhD Scholarships with the targets for 2020: 650, 654, and 173 respectively.

Even before the new regime, in the labor market in Afghanistan female labor was underutilized, jobs are scarce, women earned 30 percent less than men for the same work and held only 4.3 percent of managerial posts in public and private work. Most women were engaged in informal work with rural agricultural activities accounting for a significant share of their labor, most of which was unpaid support to the family. Manufacturing employed only 24 percent of working women. Afghanistan's private sector employs women in banking and insurance, media, communications, and information technology. Higher salaries might have been attractive, but their longer-term value most probably were undermined by low or no social insurance in alignment with International Labor Organization (ILO) standards of decent work. In the formal employment the government was the largest employer in Afghanistan.

The state of gender equality in the Government of Afghanistan before 15 August 2021 is presented as follows: there were 3 women ministers, 25 deputy ministers (including Ministry of Interior as of 2020), 5 ambassadors, head of the Independent Human Rights Commission, and deputy of the High Peace Council. However, in both public and private service, women's share of managerial posts remained at a low 4.3 percent (HDR, UNDP, 2019). With the arrival of Taliban Islamic Movement on 15 August 2021 women except medical field were restricted to stay at home, girls' high schools were closed, women are not allowed to go to school and work at offices, Ministry of Women Affairs was dissolved. In the caretaker cabinet of the new government of Afghanistan announced by the Taliban authorities in September 2021 there is no single woman as minister or deputy minister of Director General position. The Taliban gender and women rights policy is not yet clear. The Taliban authorities state that whenever the security situation of the country allows within the Sharia rules women and girls will be allowed to go to school and work at the public offices. To enhance women's employment within the civil service, the Afghanistan Independent Reform and Civil Service Commission maintained a policy of positive action for female candidates who were allotted a standard number of extra points in recruitment assessments, and whose appointments were favoured over men where candidates were equally eligible. Attainment of targeted 30 percent share of women in civil service employment by 2030 called for more women gaining higher-level qualifications. This is essential also to fulfil Afghanistan's new approach to women's economic empowerment, launched at the Geneva Ministerial Conference on November 2018, which seeks to strengthen their professional status and their entry into less traditional economy sectors.

The international community is about to see what a Taliban-led government will mean for Afghanistan and its people, particularly female half of the population. The World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and NATO have suspended financial assistance. To receive access to international aid future Afghan government should adhere to international obligations. Establishing inclusive and representative government and ensuring respect to fundamental human rights, particularly women, children, and minorities, being the most called upon requirement to new ruling power in the country. Return to darkest times during the previous rule of Taliban is primary concern. UN called upon immediate end to violence and adherence to all international agreements to which Afghanistan is a party. 'It is essential that the hard-won rights of Afghan women and girls are protected' is stated by UN<sup>5</sup>.

A combination of political rifts, weak health care system and extreme social lifestyles led to Afghanistan's failure to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the early stages. Previous government has announced a wide range of measures to contain the virus, mirroring global practices of physical distancing. But the weaknesses of health care infrastructure in a country racked by poverty and four decades of conflict undercut country's resilience to cope with any major crisis. According to the WHO, in 2018 only a total of 3,135 health facilities were functional for nearly 35 million Afghans with 20 percent of the population having no access to medical services. The return of nearly 300,000 Afghan migrant workers since February from Pakistan and Iran, one of the virus' global epicenters, overwhelmed the government's attempts to contain an outbreak.

As of November 2020, there were 43,629 positive cases of COVID-19, with 35,160 recoveries, and 1,638 deaths across all 34 provinces in the country<sup>6</sup>. The real toll of the pandemic on the Afghan population is expected to be much higher and remains under-reported due to limited testing and weak health system. It is likely 10 million Afghans might have been infected with COVID-19 according to survey by a former Ministry of Public Health<sup>7</sup>.

The spread of pandemic had serious implications on the system of education in Afghanistan. The virus outbreak suddenly catapulted Afghanistan into the world of distance and digital learning. Schools, all public and private institutions of higher education were closed from March 23, 2020 until the end of May 2020. Learning via internet, radio and television broadcasting was adopted. In the time, the technological infrastructure, especially the internet, was not at the level that could support distance and digital education nationwide. Poverty and a weak economy prevented students from accessing the limited technology available in Afghanistan. Until now many families don't even have electricity or a television set, let alone a computer, internet and smartphones suitable for education. Personal access to the internet was further affected by gender, geography, age, and education gaps. In pre-August Afghanistan men had more access (44%) to the internet compared to women (13%). There is also a clear disparity between urban (44%) and rural (23%) areas. The availability of electricity made a significant impact on the population's access to television and radio in Afghanistan. According to The Asia Foundation's 2019 report, ownership of television was more common among urbanites (91.1%) than in rural areas (62%)<sup>8</sup>.

Lack of resources to support public services at local levels was acknowledged by previous government. But in the short run food scarcity and insecurity might pose even greater threats to provision of public services. Lack of access to basic healthcare services and food shortages will affect Afghan women and girls disproportionately, especially those who were already disadvantaged on the basis of income, geographic location, disability or health status. Recent political developments following the Taliban forces' entry into Kabul on August 15 may further push Afghanistan into crisis. Scenarios of further development of Afghan society depend upon decisions of new ruling regime.

<sup>5</sup> [https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg\\_report\\_on\\_afghanistan\\_september\\_2021.pdf](https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg_report_on_afghanistan_september_2021.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.worldometers.info/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/10-million-afghans-likely-infected-and-recovered-covid-19-survey>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ukfiet.org/2020/coronavirus-and-education-in-afghanistan-responses-challenges-and-the-threats-of-educational-divide/>

**National priority sectors for development and economic growth.** For Afghan women, the most favorable employment opportunities could result from gaining qualifications that fill knowledge gaps in sectors with high growth potential. Favorable employment opportunities exist in the formal sector which largely still comprises public service. In pre-August Afghanistan, this sector provided basic social insurance, kindergarten support and, in public perceptions, ranked third of acceptable places for women to work after health and female education services. Policies and procedures against gender harassment within government service used to contribute to a safer work environment for women.

International learning mobility offers an opportunity to fill the national human capital deficit, and support individuals to achieve higher qualifications in new fields of knowledge. Currently Afghanistan's outbound learning mobility totals around 2,500 to 3,000 students per year to around 40 countries, though information on the share of women is not readily accessible. As is usual for international learning mobility, these study opportunities abroad are dependent on the interests of individual students and host countries. As a result, qualifications do not necessarily match sector-specific needs. Exceptions have included Uzbekistan's recent support to training for Uzbek language teachers and railway personnel, and individual requests emanating from sector ministries or donors. Kazakhstan, with its support to around 1,000 students (5 per cent women), Uzbekistan with its initial support to 115 students (11.5 per cent women), and Kyrgyzstan with its various scholarship programmes for Afghan citizens are important contributors to this strategy. All three countries are participating members of the Istanbul Process, and have made specific commitment to achieving regional stability through economic empowerment of Afghan women.

Interest in job creation has never been higher in Afghanistan. It is estimated that 660,000 new workers will join the labor force every year. The youth workforce is generally more literate than their elder cohorts and prefers to engage in nonfarm activities, which tend to be more economically rewarding than farm activities. The lack of opportunities in the nonfarm sector, however, may lead skilled women in rural areas to engage in less economically rewarding agriculture production activities, which can discourage prospective workers from acquiring new skills<sup>9</sup>.

The prosperity of the rural non-agricultural economy largely depends on rural agriculture's performance. Agricultural productivity supports nonfarm job creation in rural areas by increasing demand for goods and services. Available data indicate that rural nonfarm activities were diverse, including agro-processing, commercial/service activities, construction, manufacturing, trading, transportation, etc. This is to say, that increased productivity in agriculture has the potential to generate important positive spillovers to other sectors of the economy<sup>10</sup>. The following are the 4 priority fields of education aimed at boosting agricultural industry itself and the development of interrelated rural industries, namely Engineering / Construction, Marketing, Information and Communications Technology.

The National Science Foundation estimates that just over 4 percent of the population worked directly in science, engineering, and technology<sup>11</sup> before the regime change, and the share of female graduates in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) was lower than 15 percent in most countries<sup>12</sup>. This relatively small group of workers is still critical to economic innovation and productivity. Notably, above-mentioned disciplines are quite in line with the STEM principles. Workers in science and engineering field tend to be well paid and enjoy better job security

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<sup>9</sup> The World Bank (2018). Jobs from Agriculture in Afghanistan: International Development in Focus.

<sup>10</sup> See the [Afghanistan's Jobs Challenge](#) (2013).

<sup>11</sup> National Science Board (2010). Science and engineering indicators 2010 (Volume 1, NSB08-01; Volume 2, NSB 08-01A).

<sup>12</sup> HDR 2019, Dashboard 3: Women's Empowerment

than do other workers<sup>13</sup><sup>14</sup>. Despite the tremendous gains that girls and women have made in education and the workforce during the past 50 years, progress has been uneven, and certain scientific and engineering disciplines remain overwhelmingly male<sup>15</sup>. Current developments in the country may push disbalance even further. Inclusive administration and policies along with promotion of STEM principles among Afghan women can stimulate and accelerate further economic development and poverty reduction in Afghanistan. Various CSOs will play an even more important role in co-raising the awareness of STEM principles in Afghanistan.

In addition, apart from traditional higher education, it is critical to support those willing to strengthen their current skills or oriented for re-skilling from gaining practical and professional development, namely TVET (Technical and Vocational Education Training). Studies generally show that individuals with TVET qualification benefit of higher wages by acquiring broad based technical knowledge and transversal skills in a short period of time. Former National Unity Government was also keen to enhance TVET system by prioritizing it as one of economic reforms within the National Priority Program (NPP) Private Sector Development (2018-2023) in Afghanistan<sup>16</sup>. This clearly signals about unmet market demand of skilled ambitious TVET graduates.

### *Agriculture / Agribusiness*

In Afghanistan, agriculture remains the sector which has the potential to create decent jobs in rural areas and urban peripheries. This sector will also enhance the local economic development space if smallholder farmers and other stakeholders are connected to both available markets and useful information on modern and good agricultural practices<sup>17</sup>.

At the same time, an important factor in development of this sector of the Afghan economy is the price of products sold, including raw materials, semi-finished or finished (processed) products. This category is the basis for the gross value added of the agricultural sector and the resulting profit margins of agricultural producers. Ensuring fair price for agricultural products sold by Afghan farmers both internally and through exports to Central and South Asia will enhance household incomes and support the development of the agricultural sector.

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Given the numerous challenges faced by the sector in the Afghan context, however, agriculture has not yet been able to realize its full potential. According to the Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey, despite shortages of agricultural land in the country, a significant portion remains under-utilized and left fallow during the main growing season mainly due to lack of water and poor soil quality<sup>18</sup>.

Public investments in human capital are another key ingredient to the development of productivity in agriculture<sup>19</sup>. Revitalizing agriculture and creating agriculture jobs is thus a priority sector for

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<sup>13</sup> National Center for Education Statistics (2000). Entry and persistence of Women and Minorities in College Science and Engineering Education

<sup>14</sup> The Urban Institute (2007). Into the Eye of the Storm: Assessing the Evidence on Science and Engineering Education, Quality, and Workforce Demand

<sup>15</sup> American Association of University Women (2010). Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

<sup>16</sup> <http://policymof.gov.af/home/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Private-Sector-Development-NPP.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> International Labour Organization; Japan International Cooperation Agency (2015). Afghan Competitiveness for Job Creation: Agricultural Value Chains, Final report (p.5).

<sup>18</sup> [Afghanistan's Jobs Challenge](#) (2013)

<sup>19</sup> [Afghanistan's Jobs Challenge](#) (2013)

development, as it can play an important role in reducing poverty and sustaining inclusive growth in the country. Women skilled at higher levels could strengthen the entire sector development, with trickle down multiplier effects that would impact rural women<sup>20</sup>.

### *Engineering / Construction*

Investments in physical infrastructure and respective education are crucial complements to increase factor productivity in agriculture. Continuing to invest in the construction of roads, (as well as their rehabilitation and maintenance) will remain crucial to improving market accessibility, bringing down post farm-gate costs, raising competitiveness of Afghan agriculture products, and generating jobs for the non-farm, low skilled rural sector. Investments in storage facilities and other post-harvesting technologies and infrastructure will further contribute to raising incomes and value added in agriculture.

According to the World Bank (2018), about one-third of the rural nonfarm workforce (655,000 workers) is employed in the construction sector<sup>21</sup>. This sector provides a myriad of opportunities for business activity in Afghanistan, with recent Memoranda of Understanding signed by the government with the Indian and Republic of Korea governments for Construction projects seen by Ministers as positive developments in creating jobs for youth<sup>22</sup>.

Here is a serious lack of adequate physical infrastructure, and any existing roads and bridges have been damaged by years of war and civil strife<sup>23</sup>. Any developments in business obviously rely on an underpinning of adequate infrastructure; goods and produce need to be moved to market and access to food, education and health services are essential, so expanding the Engineering / Construction sector is arguably the most important area for development. Active engagement of more women in design/construction contributes to potential development of inclusive and innovative solutions for the complex problems Afghanistan is facing. If this issue is not addressed, then entrepreneurship cannot expand, and young entrepreneurs cannot move up the value chain.

### *Marketing*

Rural enterprises are integral to rural livelihoods and a key source of employment, and their importance as a driver of rural economic growth and poverty reduction is growing in the developing world. Thus, fostering rural enterprises can be key for rural growth and sustainable development in Afghanistan, where expansion can generate more, better, and inclusive jobs for rural women. This process strengthens linkages between producers and traders, and provides access to regional, national, and/or export markets, which contributes to sustainable jobs.

Business Licensing Authority of Afghanistan had registered a total of 44,838 domestic and 3,307 international companies, of which only around 3% were owned by women<sup>24</sup>. In general, women's participation in the economy has been in the form of small and medium enterprises (1-10 employees). From the total 1,144 women-owned businesses, 1,064 have started their businesses from their own savings (self-funded), 47 through loans from relatives, 33 through bank loans, and the rest have used grants from women's economic empowerment projects to start their businesses<sup>25</sup>. Opportunities for youth entrepreneurship are limited by a lack of access to finances, low overall financial literacy and widespread poverty among Afghanistan's youth population. These constraints also force many young women and men to take on whatever work is available to them

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<sup>20</sup> The Asia Foundation (2019). The Survey of the Afghan People.

<sup>21</sup> The World Bank (2018). Jobs from Agriculture in Afghanistan: International Development in Focus.

<sup>22</sup> International Labour Organization (2017). Promoting Rural Youth Employment in Afghanistan through Entrepreneurship Education and Vocational Training: Analytical Study.

<sup>23</sup> International Labour Organization, 2017

<sup>24</sup> USAID, National plan for the women of Afghanistan assessment report, 2007-2017, Progress and challenges after 10 years of implementation.

<sup>25</sup> Afghan Women Chamber of Commerce (2018). Factors Affecting Women Business.

and lead to high levels of vulnerable forms of employment and working poverty. Private sector enterprises of all sizes are looking forward to more investments in education related to greater employment opportunity and economic growth<sup>26</sup>.

Many challenges constrain entrepreneurial activities, particularly in rural areas, including weak marketing infrastructure, low capacities in business service provision, weak agricultural value chains, and lack of access to finance. Marketing has huge potential to promote rural nonfarm activities by scaling up its coverage, and also has potential to connect rural women to markets via academic and training programmes in Marketing, which would include an integrated set of professional skills ranging from needs assessment, activity identification, and credit management to marketing and communication skills, business planning, logistics, e-commerce and product presentation<sup>27</sup>.

### *Information and Communications Technology (ICT)*

Development of agricultural value chains is key to raising productivity and supporting job creation in agriculture. Continued investments in information and communication technology, reliable and affordable access to energy are necessary to enable local producers of crops and horticulture and livestock products to access markets and increase agricultural productivity. Rural infrastructure and improved rural-urban connectivity are crucial for the development of national value chains for agricultural products as well as important in linking farmers to markets. On the other hand, in agriculture, where Afghanistan's demanding terrain limits many farmers' physical access to services, mobile Apps could give information on crop rotation, market prices, meteorological conditions and so forth. According to the International Labour Organization, Afghanistan is by all accounts a promising territory for spurring a flourishing mobile App economy.

The Information and Communications Technology sector in Afghanistan has witnessed remarkable growth, with as many as 12 million mobile phone users. Four private mobile companies and one state-owned company operate in the country; private investments in telecommunications now exceed US\$1.6 billion. A recent survey conducted by USAID noted that around 80 per cent of women in the country have regular or occasional access to a mobile phone.

Prior to 15 August 2021, the government was also adopting ICT to expand to service delivery and good governance and IT private firms have been quick to adopt advanced technologies. In 2011 the Afghan Minister of Communications and IT was presented with the mobile industry's prestigious annual Government Leadership award, recognizing the monumental achievements made by the government in promoting and expanding mobile communications. This is an important achievement as investment in this sector has potential for high returns and could provide employment with a number of far-reaching applications, particularly in the development of mobile Apps.

**1.2 Analysis of the partner country/region:** Central Asian countries and Afghanistan all face common challenges related to their landlocked geographic position and need for greater economic diversification. The region is far from major economic centres and has relatively small populations (except Afghanistan) and market sizes, underdeveloped infrastructure and political and security challenges that pose risks for human development. The region is also characterized by significant divergences in economic and social indicators.

### **Kazakhstan's support to Afghanistan in the area of education**

Kazakhstan promotes intra-regional cooperation to overcome challenges related to landlockedness, the need for greater economic diversification and stability in the country and in the region. Kazakhstan pursues partnership and prompts integration processes in Central Asia through free-trade zones and preferential agreements on liberalization of trade regime. Kazakhstan has bilateral

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<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Education of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2016). National Education Strategic Plan, 2017 – 2021.

<sup>27</sup> International Labour Organization, 2017



agreements on preferential trade with Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and other Central Asia countries. Kazakhstan provided developmental assistance, military medical personnel, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal units for demining missions to Afghanistan. It also helped to build medical and educational centers, rehabilitate roads and bridges in various provinces in Afghanistan. Since 2015, two countries have worked to improve trade and transit. Main export items to Afghanistan are wheat flours and wheat, refined petroleum, and petroleum gas.

Kazakhstan's substantial technical experience in various strategic areas can be critical in achieving structural economic and gender transformation in Afghanistan. It has done well on urban sanitation, arid land irrigation, sustainable transport management, and in using its natural resources. Furthermore, Kazakhstan has a solid experience in achieving great results in such sectors as poverty reduction through improving economic conditions, leading education provision in the region, civil service reform, and building strong institutions, and openness in sharing this experience with other countries.

Kazakhstan has succeeded in significantly reducing poverty and the level of inequality (Gini index) is one of the lowest in the world (0.28, Gini, World Bank 2017), which only compares with the achievement of very few countries in the world. Such indicator will allow Afghanistan citizens to learn best practices and increase academic awareness on opportunities that could be established in Afghanistan. The project will continue to showcase best practices in mainstreaming the SDGs in national development planning and implementation of SDGs in Afghanistan.

As a country with high educational attainment and skilled workforce Kazakhstan is an attractive destination for Afghan youth for both higher education and TVET pursuits. Since 2010, Kazakhstan has been implementing a state programme with a total budget of \$50 million providing educational grants to Afghan students to study in Kazakhstan. In the framework of this programme from 2010 to 2022, the universities of Kazakhstan have already trained a total of around 960 Afghan students, including around 50 women. During the programme life span 24 higher education institutions across the country received Afghan students specializing in medical sciences, civil engineering, humanitarian sciences, border control and safety, public utilities management and road construction. Kazakhstan has stated interest in replicating this high level of educational support, presenting a \$46 million proposal to the EU for funding. In August 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan (MoFA), UNDP, the Government of Japan and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) launched the project "Promoting Kazakhstan's Official Development Assistance Cooperation with Afghanistan", aimed at expanding economic independence and rights of Afghan women. Through this mechanism, Kazakhstan supported 40 female health workers and civil servants with short-term specialized courses facilitated by UNDP and funded by Japan.

In addition to the core educational inputs, there is a need to maintain the development of extra skills aimed at helping women to get successfully employed after the graduation. There are particular weaknesses in matching the existing labor gaps with the educational opportunities. In such circumstances, the graduates have no full guarantee to get employed after the graduation and have to search for jobs and compete for a limited number of the decent workplaces. Taking this into account and with the purpose to facilitate the job seeking process, the Project further envisages provision of additional training to develop such skills as entrepreneurial, networking and entrepreneurial spirit. The course will also help to increase the self-esteem, learn from successful role-models, and build connections with the future potential Afghan employers. As a result of this activity, the Afghan women-students will enhance the GEWE awareness and potential in employability by using knowledge and skills gained during the courses. Such training will be provided by UNDP with attraction of relevant partners in the format of specialized training activities both in online and offline formats.

### **Uzbekistan's support to Afghanistan in the area of education**

Since 2016, Uzbekistan is undergoing major transformation in the framework of its Actions Strategy for 2017-2021. The reforms are profound and target liberalization of the economy, access to quality healthcare and education, strong rule of law, inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance, as well

as balanced, mutually beneficial and constructive foreign policy with focus on the region of Central Asia.

Bordering on all countries of Central Asia, Uzbekistan is unswervingly interested in the region becoming a zone of stability, sustainable development and good neighborliness. The Government of Uzbekistan seeks to strengthen regional trade and economic cooperation, develop regional transport and transit infrastructure, ensure fair and rational use of shared water resources of transboundary rivers in Central Asia and environmental sustainability in the region, complete the process of the delimitation and demarcation of borders.

As part of its regional foreign policy, Uzbekistan prioritizes support for Afghanistan's security and development process. The two countries cooperate within the framework of the Intergovernmental Commission on Bilateral Cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. There is also a Trilateral Commission between the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on trade and infrastructure projects.

Uzbekistan has been supporting the economy of Afghanistan by offering Afghan goods favorable transit through the Uzbek territory with near twofold reduction in customs tariffs, although the overall volume of trade between two countries is modest. For Uzbekistan, economic significance of Afghanistan shows in some of the smaller towns immediately adjacent to the Afghan border. There, local populations on both sides of the border benefit from more active exchange through informal trade and educational opportunities.

Uzbekistan will further expand its relations with Afghanistan, actively participate in international efforts to peaceful settlement of situation in the country. The Uzbek side is committed to continue to contribute to the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan, the development of its transport, industry, energy and social infrastructure. The Government of Uzbekistan is attempting to mediate between the Afghan government and the Taliban. In December 2017, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani visited Tashkent. Uzbekistan held a peace conference (which the Taliban did not attend) and offered its services to mediate between the Taliban and Kabul once again in June 2018. Additionally, Tashkent appears to be committed to promoting Afghan development. High-profile infrastructure projects get the most attention, like \$1.8 billion project on the construction of 657 km rail line from Mazar-i-Sharif to Herat or 260 km Surkhan-Pul-e-Khumri line to increase electricity exports to Afghanistan by 70 percent.

Uzbekistan has a wide range of universities, institutions and colleges, which provide TVET, bachelor, master, doctorate and post-doctorate programs. This framework could be effectively utilized to meet current and future training and education needs of Afghanistan.

In July 2018, 35 students started studies in railway construction and management with an aim of developing Afghan capacity to extend its planned railway line from Mazar to Herat. Both courses were introduced in response to a specific request from Afghanistan and reflected labor market needs. Later, the training of Afghan specialists in medicine (obstetrician-gynecologist and nursing) and agronomy began. Students undergo practical training and internships directly in industry companies, clinics and farms located in Uzbekistan.

Tashkent State Agrarian University (TSAU) is the oldest and largest agricultural higher educational institution in Central Asia. The University, founded in 1930, trains specialists in the field of agriculture, scientific and pedagogical personnel, and carries out research work. The number of directions of the University for bachelor's degree - 20, master's degree - 23, more than 5.5 thousand students study here. The university employs 502 professors and teachers, of which 46 are Doctors of Science, 207 are candidates of sciences. In 2020, TSAU began training 10 Afghan women under the TVET program in the field of agronomy, selected as part of the first phase of the project.

The Afghan side has already indicated interest to expand the scope of training with focus on technical professions in high demand for the growing Afghan economy. Uzbekistan has a clear advantage in training specialists for the needs of Afghanistan. The country has a developed agriculture and well-established export markets for agricultural products.

### **Kyrgyzstan's support to Afghanistan in the area of education.**

The country has been maintaining its cooperation with Afghanistan during the last decades on a bilateral basis and through the regional organizations, including Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and Organization of Collective Security Treaty. Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan established a joint intergovernmental Kyrgyz-Afghan commission on trade and economic cooperation on April 2019<sup>28</sup>. In February 2020, the leader of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani officially inaugurated CASA-1000 hydro-power project, one of the biggest power projects in the region, which will transfer 300 megawatts of electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan and Pakistan<sup>29</sup>.

Kyrgyzstan also partners with international organizations to address security-related concerns. To this end OSCE has established OSCE Academy in Bishkek as its flagship educational initiative in Central Asia. This initiative aims to empower young people in Central Asia countries and in Afghanistan. The ultimate objective of this project is to foster regional cooperation, conflict prevention and good governance through post-graduate education, professional trainings and intellectual exchange. The Academy provides expert training and education in human rights, conducts demand-driven and practice-oriented research on pertinent topics, supports the cooperation among the Central Asian academic institutions and establishes a regional network of professionals and researchers.

A number of bilateral and multilateral development partners support the higher education sector in Kyrgyzstan. The Aga Khan Development Network is spearheading the establishment of the University of Central Asia (UCA) in Naryn (Kyrgyzstan), Khorog (Tajikistan), and Tekeli (Kazakhstan). Naryn campus opened its doors in 2016 and offers two undergraduate majors in Computer Science (Bsc) and Media and Communications (BA). The campus also offers an opportunity to study at the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE). In addition, Soros Foundation supports scholarships for study abroad, development of standards and curriculum for improved labor market linkages, and research grants for faculty. The Tempus project, supported by the European Union, is a significant driver of reform in the higher education sector, helping align the Kyrgyz higher education sector with Bologna Process requirements and supporting a higher education reform group to develop solutions for the improvement of governance and management of higher education in the country.

### **Theory of change**

Project rests on the overall assumption that creating academic opportunities for women in Afghanistan and strengthening their professional capacity leads to economic empowerment and resilience of women in Afghanistan, reduces disbalance between male and female educated population in the country, positively affects literacy rate overall, and improves chances for women to obtain decent job positions and play visible role in country's economic, political, social and cultural life. **The academic initiative aims to** strengthen human capacity development in Afghanistan by increasing women's access to quality higher education and TVET through cooperation with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Education and re-skilling over the life course are critical for women's and girl's health and wellbeing, as well as their income-generation opportunities and participation in the formal labor market.

<sup>28</sup> <http://en.kabar.kg/news/kyrgyzstan-afghanistan-create-joint-intergovernmental-commission-on-trade-and-economic-cooperation/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://tolonews.com/business/afghanistan-begins-work-casa-1000-power-project>

Increased number of educated women inspire gradual change in the community, encourage favourable transformation, motivate more girls and women to seek education and work opportunities. Consequently, enhanced economic and social status of women contributes to human rights development and gender equality cause in the country and in the region.

Improved gender equality realities and strategies help to address a variety of social and economic challenges in Afghanistan and impact the stability and security in Central Asia region overall. Closing the gap between male and female employment rates may have significant implications for the development outcomes of the country such as economic growth. Women comprise almost half of the population of Afghanistan. Investing in women can provide a great stimulus to economic growth. Women's economic empowerment boosts productivity, increases economic diversification and income equality in addition to other positive development outcomes. Additionally, the project provides solid basis for the development of a sustainable, gender responsive system for international learning mobility, knowledge exchange and good-neighbor cooperation between Central Asian countries.

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Recent developments in Afghanistan pose certain challenges on the pace of project's progress, however they do not undermine programmes' contribution into development and gender equality cause in a long run. In the time of uncertainty, women should not be abandoned, since their contribution into global development and sustainability of their communities is undeniable. Graduates of the programme will play an important role in raising awareness on gender equality, education and professional improvement, leadership and goodwill, and impact knowledge-building and peacebuilding in their communities.

## **II. STRATEGY**

The action rests on the assumption that regional security and stability may improve if more women in Afghanistan will be empowered through better jobs and that the chances to obtain such jobs will improve with improved access to better education. With better qualifications, women are also expected to gain higher-profile private or public sector jobs at decision-making levels.

Even before the regime change women were disproportionately represented in the economy of Afghanistan. Current crisis may significantly affect the achievements and decrease the number of women occupied in various sectors of economy.

In view of the evolving situation, pre-August development programmes most probably will be re-adjusted. However, it is not yet clear which course the newly created government of Afghanistan will embark on regarding women's basic rights to study and work. Dependence on international funding and financial aid that new regime is trying to get access to may pressure Taliban to embrace inclusive approach and uphold human rights.

UN has expressed its readiness to provide support to the population of Afghanistan. Despite the existing uncertainty regarding women and girls in Afghanistan, women should not be spared support and opportunities to be educated. Empowering Afghan women via education will contribute to global development in a long run.

The Project strategy responds indirectly to the UNDP Strategic Plan for 2018-2021. In particular to strengthen collaborative engagement, partnerships and coordination with other development partners. UNDP aligns with the United Nations system and other partners, working collaboratively with the funds and programmes in the priority areas of poverty eradication, gender equality and women's empowerment, building and sustaining peace, climate change and sustainable data. The project goal meets the strategy to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment and South-South and triangular cooperation across operational programming. Concrete improvements in policy, institutional and programming measures and processes for gender equality and the progress in filling the policy gap in South-South cooperation through the adopted strategy and operational approaches will remain central to continued efforts by UNDP to accelerate development progress for all.

The strategy responds to the national goal of Kazakhstan to strive to be open to the rest of the world and ready to work with its neighbors to contribute to the solution of the global challenges. In this regard, the Government, supported by the UN and other national and international partners, promotes achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region, and leads in promotion and implementation of the United Nations principles, standards and conventions. The

Project aligns with the Country Programme Document of UNDP in Kazakhstan, in which UNDP commits to support the Government of Kazakhstan in its priorities to maintain regional and international development initiatives. UNDP supports the positioning of Kazakhstan as an upper middle-income country and its emerging leadership role at the regional level.

Phase 2 contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of SDGs 4 and 5, while also contributing to SDGs 8, 10, and 16.

The Action directly contributes to the achievement of the international development agenda, including SDG 4 on inclusive, equitable and quality vocational and higher education and SDG 5 on empowering women and girls by contributing to women's participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. Moreover, the project contributes to the SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, and SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. The interlinkages between SDGs will be addressed in partnership between the EU, UNDP Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Interlinkages are reflected in the Logframe matrix of the Action.

## **II.1 Strategy of the project implementation**

In a context of a regional and international development initiatives, and in line with the strategy of the ongoing action, phase 2 of the project aims at supporting the economic empowerment of Afghan women through education and training in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The programme is designed to create opportunities for women to obtain higher education and become professionals in the areas that are in a high demand in Afghanistan. The priority fields of study, such as Agriculture, Engineering / Construction, Marketing, Information and Communications Technology are expected to contribute to the development of high-growth sectors in Afghanistan as well as women's empowerment. Qualifications will include Master's, Bachelor's degrees and TVET qualifications.

Improved gender equality realities and strategies can help address a variety of social and economic challenges in Afghanistan and impact the stability and security in Central Asia region overall. Closing the gap between male and female employment rates may have significant implications for the development outcomes of the country such as economic growth. Women comprise almost half of the population of Afghanistan. Investing in women can provide a great stimulus to economic growth. Education and re-skilling over the life course are critical for women's and girl's health and wellbeing, as well as their income-generation opportunities and participation in the formal labor market. Women's economic empowerment boosts productivity, increases economic diversification and income equality in addition to other positive development outcomes. The project's aspiration is to provide solid basis for the development of a sustainable, gender responsive system for international learning mobility from Afghanistan to the three Central Asian host countries.

With better qualifications, women are expected to gain higher-profile private or public sector jobs. The benefits will include enhanced economic and social status for women, as well as important role models of women's unique contributions to sector development and to gender equality. The project expects 105 women to study and graduate from universities with degrees and qualifications in Agriculture/Agrobusiness, Engineering / Construction, Marketing, and Information and Communications Technology in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The scholarship includes a foundation year with English Language courses (Uzbek language for Uzbekistan) prior their discipline-specific studies.

*Study categories available within Phase 2 are following:*

*Language course:* to obtain language certificate, Afghan women in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan will be assigned to one academic year programme that consists of two semesters. The goal of the Foundation English language programme is to improve English Language skills of students to qualify for a degree course. In addition, the Foundation year will consist of cultural adaptation studies to help students adapt quickly to new environment. Language academic programme is mandatory for all project participants.

Afghan women in Uzbekistan will learn Uzbek and English languages to continue their further studies. The curriculum of Uzbek language learning process will be formed in a way that it will prepare women for an academic programme, serving as an alternative for foundation programme.

*Bachelor's degree:* Project participants will obtain bachelor's degree upon completion of a course of study lasting 4 years in host higher education institution. The curriculum will consist of compulsory and elective modules. Each year is comprised of two semesters. The bachelor students are required to prepare thesis work by the end of their studies. Bachelor students get guidance to the thesis work from the faculty's teaching staff. The final stage is the defense of their thesis work. Upon successful completion of the requirements of undergraduate programme the student will be awarded with BA degree in certain field. The requirements for enrolment and completion of the programme may vary in various universities and faculties. Courses may consist of internships and practical work; others may be based purely on theoretical learning.

*Master's degree:* Project participants will obtain master's degree upon completion of a course of study lasting 1 year in host higher education institution. The curriculum will consist of compulsory and elective modules. The master students in Kazakhstan are required to prepare thesis work by the end of their studies. Master students get guidance to the thesis work from the faculty's teaching staff. The final stage is the defense of their thesis work. Upon successful completion of the requirements of postgraduate programme the student will be awarded with MA degree in certain field. The requirements for enrolment and completion of the programme may vary in various universities and faculties.

*TVET* stands for *Technical and Vocational Education and Training* for re-skilling or continuing professional development. It is an umbrella term encompassing education and training activities in a shorter period of time than academic degree. TVET yields tremendous economic benefits. It helps to minimize youth unemployment by providing opportunities to gain skills in a short period of time and embark on successful career.

To obtain a TVET certificate, women will be assigned to one-year training programme (two years in Uzbekistan). TVET academic programme consists of two terms. The first term is theory based; within the second term women will gain practical work experience. Host institutions will place women in partner companies to gain work experience in the industry. Upon completion of the training students will be awarded with TVET certificate in their fields of study.

TVET training programmes can vary in each host country and will be maintained according to the standards of TVET programmes of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. In Uzbekistan, by default, the training program will be aimed at preparing the scholars for studying in Uzbekistan's higher education institutions. Which means, that the Uzbek language courses will be accompanied with the basic subjects, as Mathematics, English, History, Biology, Chemistry, Physics.

*Short term (summer/extra curriculum) courses:* one- or two-week professional courses aim at further developing skills of the students to increase their chances of integration in labor market in Afghanistan. Professional courses are designed as extra-curriculum activity and are provided on top of the major educational programme by the assigned universities. The courses will be held twice within the project period to ensure participation of all students from Afghanistan. The programme of the course seeks to prepare the students for future employment. Listeners will improve or obtain new set of skills such as job hunting, effective communication, project management, networking, gender equality, entrepreneurial and leadership skills. Students based in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan will be also assigned to these courses. Upon completion of the course, each participant will be granted with the corresponding certificate of attendance.

## **II.2 Host institutions in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan**

*Almaty Management University (AlmaU).* Since its establishment in 1988 AlmaU took the path of bringing innovative programs and projects to the market and developing an entrepreneurial spirit and a sense of social responsibility among students, faculty and impacted communities. In its

operations AlmaU incorporates the UN SDGs, through following the UN Academic Impact and UN Principles for Responsible Management (PRME) initiatives. University holds strong connections with over 150 partner institutions and more than 20 associations worldwide. Main directions of cooperation are faculty and student exchange, double degree programs, joint international projects and research. AlmaU is the only higher educational institution in the Commonwealth of Independent States included in QS Global MBA Rankings (top 200) and QS Global MBA Ranking in Asia (top 20).

Language Center of AlmaU (LC) was established in 2017 and offers Kazakh, Russian, English, French, Spanish, and Chinese language programmes from beginner to advanced levels. The language curriculum is designed based on the State Regulations in General Language courses as well as the world best practices in language education. The language programmes are combined with additional language and cultural development opportunities such as Mock Interview Day, Performing Arts Festival, the International Day, English Speaking Club, and many other events.

The LC also provides a range of testing services, including the AlmaU Language Placement Test (ALPT), the English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) for students to be enrolled to the language courses, various international academic mobility programmes or for employability purposes. The tests are designed in accordance with the international standards like the IELTS (The International English Language Testing System), KazTest (Kazakh Language Knowledge Level Assessment system), and the Russian Language Testing System.

The Language Center houses 20 full-time language faculty and three professional staff. Teaching staff has major professional education like Teaching English for Second Language Learners (TESOL), linguistics, journalism and pedagogical sciences and are continuously trained as the IELTS Trainers (British Council), TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test), CELTA and other professional qualifications.

*Kazakh National Agrarian University.* In 1996 a new institution – Kazakh State University of Agriculture was founded on the basis of two oldest higher education institutions of Kazakhstan – Almaty Zoo-Veterinary Institute (1929) and Kazakh Institute of Agriculture (1930). In 2001 the University of Agriculture was given a special status and became Kazakh National Agrarian University. It prides itself with over 135 000 graduates. According to QS Emerging Europe and Central Asia 2020 ranking, Kazakh National Agrarian University holds 97<sup>th</sup> position<sup>30</sup>. It is the leading higher educational establishment in agrarian science in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

The University realizes educational programs in 41 Bachelor's specialties, 39 Master's programs and 16 doctoral programs. There are 14 academic-laboratory buildings, 6 scientific research institutes, 17 research laboratories, Kazakh-Japan Innovation Center etc. In recent years, about 150 young scientists educated in overseas universities joined the university faculty. 97 professors were awarded the state grant "The Best University Lecturer" of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.<sup>31</sup>

Currently the University is successfully integrating into the world scientific space, cooperating with leading foreign universities and scientific centers, realizing international programs on such global issues of humanity as climate change, environment protection, food safety, deficiency of drinking water and others.<sup>32</sup>

*Kazakh-British Technical University.* The Kazakh-British Technical University was established by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2001 in accordance with the MoU signed between the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the British Council. According to QS Emerging Europe and Central Asia 2020 ranking, KBTU holds 94<sup>th</sup> position<sup>33</sup>. Best Technical University in Kazakhstan for 9 consecutive years according to the Independent Kazakh Quality Assurance Agency for Education (IQQA)<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> QS World University Rankings (available at <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/eeca-rankings/2020>)

<sup>31</sup> Kazakh National Agrarian University, [Official website](#)

<sup>32</sup> Kazakh National Agrarian University, [Official website](#)

<sup>33</sup> QS World University Rankings (available at [www.topuniversities.com/universities/kazakh-british-technical-university#921615](http://www.topuniversities.com/universities/kazakh-british-technical-university#921615))

<sup>34</sup> Kazakh-British Technical University, [Official website](#)

Currently over 3000 students are studying at the University, more 100 of them are international students. The University realizes educational programs in Bachelor's specialties, Master's programs and doctoral programs. Language of education is English. The programmes vary across all fields of economics, business, natural sciences and technology. KBTU has exchange agreements with more than 80 international partner universities.

*Kazakh Leading Academy of Architecture and Civil Engineering.* The University was established in 1980. KazGASA is a multi-profile Institution and comprises all stages of the educational process – secondary school, Undergraduate, Graduate, Postgraduate and Doctor's Degrees. For 40 year the University prepared highly qualified specialists in the fields of Civil Engineering, Architecture, Design, Construction Technologies and Management. The institution also contains complex of Colleges, which train highly qualified specialists according to secondary vocational education programmes. For those who wish to improve their qualification or get another Degree, KazGASA provides such programmes in the Institute for Continuous Education (ICE) and Republican Centre for Improvement of Professional Qualification of the specialists in the field of Architecture and Civil Engineering.

In 2007 KazGASA was the first one among architectural schools in the world that achieved international accreditation UNESCO-MCA for specialty Architecture (Bachelor's program) and it was confirmed again in 2011.

From 29 of June to 02 July 2011 KazGASA was attended by the Committee of Accreditation Board of UNESCO – International Union of Architects – Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)<sup>35</sup>.

*Tashkent State Agrarian University (TSAU)*<sup>36</sup>. TSAU is the oldest and largest agricultural higher educational institution in Central Asia. The University, founded in 1930, trains specialists in the field of agriculture, scientific and pedagogical personnel, and carries out research work. The number of directions of the University for bachelor's degree - 20, master's degree - 23, more than 5.5 thousand students study here. The university employs 502 professors and teachers, of which 46 are Doctors of Science, 207 are candidates of sciences.

TSAU has a long-term stable partnership with many foreign universities in the field of agronomy, agribusiness, ecology and the environment, agro-innovation, plant growing and horticulture, animal husbandry, bioeconomics, etc. In particular, mutually beneficial cooperation has been established with the University of Mississippi (USA), Chungnam University (Korea), Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology and Hirosaki University (Japan), Leibniz and Weinstefan Triesdorf Universities (Germany), Latvian University of Agriculture (Latvia), Xinjian University (China). Last year, 7 doctoral students and 30 undergraduates of the University improved their qualifications and conducted research in these universities.

TSAU is located in the suburb of Tashkent, in the Kibray region, the total area is 28.8 hectares. The university has a total of 11 educational buildings, 5 student dormitories, 1 Information Resource Center, student household infrastructure, and 3 branches (Nukus, from 2003, Termez, 2017, Andijan, 2018), 1 Academic Lyceum, 4 Centers, 6 faculties and 30 departments operate. In 2020, TSAU began training 10 Afghan women under the TVET program in the field of agronomy, selected as part of the first phase of the project. Currently, TSAU has developed a TVET educational program in the field of agronomy.

*University of Central Asia (UCA)*<sup>37</sup>. The University of Central Asia (UCA) was founded in 2000 as a private, not for profit, secular university. UCA consists of three schools including the School of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School of Development and the School of Professional and Continuing Education. Naryn campus opened its doors in 2016 and offers two undergraduate majors in Computer Science (Bsc) and Media and Communications (BA). Naryn UCA also offers an opportunity to study at the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE).

SPCE's Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme promotes employment opportunities. Programmes and courses on business and entrepreneurship allow graduates to

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<sup>35</sup> Kazakh Leading Academy of Architecture and Civil Engineering, [Official website](#)

<sup>36</sup> [Tashkent State Agrarian University, Official website](#)



create a source of income and launch their own enterprise. Along with language courses, business education, financial literacy, Naryn Campus offers computer science classes. The campus has two computer laboratories.

81% of enrolled UCA students are from Central Asian Countries, while many students joining UCA come from urban centers, 70% are from secondary cities and small villages. To date 143 000 students have been trained by School of Professional and Continuing Education across 12 locations in Central Asia and Afghanistan. 50% of them are women.

An independent evaluation by the Canadian Bureau for International Education, the College of the Rockies in Canada, and the Institute of Education at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, reported a high degree of satisfaction with the School's programmes.

### Project participants allocation among countries and universities

105 Afghan women will be allocated in three countries participating in the action. 50 students will be based in Kazakhstan, 30 women in Uzbekistan and 25 in Kyrgyzstan. All 50 students in Kazakhstan will undertake English Language course at AlmaU. Upon graduation from language school 15 women will study MA and 10 will study BA in Marketing at KBTU. In addition, 10 women will be enrolled for BA in Agriculture / Agribusiness at KazNAU and another 15 will study MA in Engineering/Construction at KazGASA. 30 women based in Uzbekistan will obtain TVET certificates in Agriculture / Agribusiness after completion of mandatory language courses. Both language courses and TVET education will be held at the Tashkent State Agrarian University. 20 women in Kyrgyzstan will undergo language courses prior professional education at UCA in Bishkek. Upon graduation of language courses, 20 women will be allocated for TVET in ICT. In addition, 5 women will study BA in ICT with a year-long undergraduate preparatory course in Naryn.

The table below (Table 1.) illustrates names, location, cost of programme, application period, degree type, requirements and number of women who will be based in host institutions in Kazakhstan. The Tables 2 and 3 below provide the same picture for Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

*Table 1. Breakdown of educational programmes by universities, major and costs per 1 student in Kazakhstan*

Language Courses							
No	University	City	Cost	Application period	Degrees	English Requirements	No of women to be placed
1	Almaty Management University	Almaty	Language Courses 638 638 KZT per student	Annual	Language Certificate	No, enrollment	50
Marketing							
1	Kazakh-British Technical University	Almaty	Master's – 6 500 USD TVET – 5 000 USD Bachelor's – 5 940 USD	Till July 20th	MA diploma, TVET certificate, Undergraduate	IELTS at least 4.5 (KELET at least 3)	Master's-15 Bachelor's - 10
Agriculture / Agribusiness							
No	University	City	Cost	Application period	Degrees	English Requirements	No of women to be placed
1	Kazakh National Agrarian University	Almaty	Bachelor's – 1 500 000 KZT	from April 20, to August 3	Undergraduate	Language test certificate	Bachelor's - 10
Engineering/Construction							
No	University	City	Cost	Application period	Degrees	English Requirements	No of women to be placed

1	Kazakh Leading Academy of Architecture and Civil Engineering	Almaty	Master's – 950 000 KZT	From July 10, to August 25	MA diploma	Language test certificate + Entrance exams (depending on the programme)	Master's-15
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*Table 2. Breakdown of educational programmes by universities, major and costs per 1 student in Uzbekistan*

Language Courses							
No	University	City	Cost	Application period	Degrees	Uzbek language requirements	No of students to be placed
1	Tashkent State Agrarian University	Kibray, Tashkent	Language Courses (with basic preparatory course) – 6 000 USD-	Annual	Language Certificate	No, enrollment	30
Agriculture / Agribusiness							
No	University	City	Cost	Application period	Degrees	Uzbek language requirements	No of students to be placed
1	Tashkent State Agrarian University	Kibray, Tashkent	TVET – 5 000 USD	Annual	TVET certificate	Fluent speaking, reading, writing in Uzbek latinic alphabet	TVET - 30

*Table 3. Breakdown of educational programmes by universities, major and costs per 1 student in Kyrgyzstan*

Language Courses							
No	University	City	Cost	Application period	Degrees	English language requirements	No of students to be placed
1	University of Central Asia	Bishkek	Language Courses – 8,744 USD	Annual	Language Certificate	No, enrollment	20
Information and Communications Technology							
No	University	City	Cost	Application period	Degrees	English language requirements	No of students to be placed
1	University of Central Asia	Bishkek	TVET – 11,500 USD	Annual	Undergraduate, TVET certificate	SAT test certificate	TVET - 20
2	University of Central Asia	Naryn	Bachelor's – 8,000 USD	Annual	Undergraduate	Language test + Entrance exams	Bachelor's -5

The project implementation strategy will have a set of important milestones. Below is the description of the stages. The set of activities within those stages will geographically be implemented in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

### Stage 1. Selection of candidates

Step 1. Advertising campaign: UNDP COs in the respective host countries will develop a landing page with the information and details about scholarship, degree qualifications, applicant selection

criteria, list of required documents, deadline for submission of application and documents, selection stages and official email address to apply for the scholarship. Upon development of the informative webpage, a digital banner (teaser) for webpage promotion will be designed and advertised via Facebook social media advertising tools to raise awareness among population in Afghanistan about the scholarship opportunity for Afghan women. Conduct of such an adaptive advertising campaign aims at a wider and more targeted territorial coverage with an emphasis on remote and rural areas and to women and girls with disabilities.

UNDP COs in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan will also prepare a press-release to be distributed in Afghanistan to reach the audience via local media channels. UNDP CO in Afghanistan will place the digital banner on their website and social media and address their local partners to help spread the information.

Step 2. Collection of documents: Upon announcement of the application admission process, all candidates willing to apply for the scholarship will be able to read the information at the website, prepare their documents according to the list of required documents and apply via official email address. Questions and queries may be addressed via official email address. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Step 3. Processing documents: Submitted documents of applicants are analyzed and applicants with correct set of documents are longlisted for the next stage of the selection process. Applicants not eligible for the selection criteria (incomplete set of documents, counterfeit documents, etc.) are excluded from the general list of applicants.

Applicants with disabilities are prioritized. Each applicant with any form/s of disability will be considered individually. All cases will be discussed with the host institution in order to ensure that all minimum conditions for a normal and full-fledged learning process are in place.

Step 4 (optional). English Written Test: The aim of the test is to evaluate candidate's proficiency in English Language. UNDP in Afghanistan confirms the date and the venue of the Test with the relevant stakeholders. Upon receipt of all clearances and date/venue confirmation, a letter of notification is sent to the longlisted candidates with details of the next stage and the rules of conduct during the Test. After the test, the candidates are shortlisted for the Interview stage.

Special assistance will be offered to the applicants with disabilities.

Step 5. Interview (optional): Upon receipt of all clearances and date/venue confirmation, a letter of notification is sent to the shortlisted candidates with details of the next stage. The Commission Board will be established to take part in the Interviews with the applicants and will consist of representatives of UNDP, Embassies of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan in Kabul, UNDP Afghanistan, The European Union Delegations (EUD) in participating countries will be invited as observers. Members of the Commission Board based in other countries will have an option to attend the Interview meeting online. The Interview with applicants will be conducted to determine the motivation of applicants to participate in the programme.

Host university in Kyrgyzstan may conduct additional examinations for candidates.

Special assistance will be offered to the applicants with disabilities.

Step 6. The Commission Board will determine the final list of scholarship recipients. A reserve list of candidates will be formed additionally. Scholarship recipients will be notified about the results of the Selection process. Finalists will sign a "Study Contract" agreement with host institution.

Candidates with any forms of disabilities and from rural areas will be prioritized while determining the final list of scholarship winners. Scholarship quota of 20% will ensure the minimum number of women with disabilities (10%) and from rural areas (10%) in the total number of scholarship awards:

- In the absence of applicants with disabilities and from rural areas, the quota will not apply;
- If the number of women with disabilities and from rural areas exceeds the threshold of 20%, Interview results will be taken into account.

## **Stage 2. Visa and itinerary**

Step 1. Applying for study visas: With the support of host institution, finalists collect full package of documents to obtain a study visa. Host institution processes all visa fees. Upon her arrival in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, or Kyrgyzstan, the foreign student shall obtain a temporary residence registration in the Department of Migration Police during her studies at host institution.

After the expiration of the visa, each student must undergo an extension / renewal procedure in the Immigration Service authorities or in the Consular Section of the MoFA in the respective host country.

Step 2. Itinerary: Upon issuance of study visa, the curator of the host university will obtain one-way air-ticket from Kabul to Almaty (for Kazakhstan), Tashkent (for Uzbekistan), and Bishkek/Naryn (for Kyrgyzstan). The curator will send an electronic air ticket to scholarship recipient's email.

## **Stage 3. Language courses placement**

Step 1. Language courses placement: All scholarship recipients will be assigned to one-year language courses to improve English Language skills to qualify for a degree course. The Foundation year will also consist of cultural adaptation studies to help students adapt quickly to new environment.

Students based in Uzbekistan will undergo Uzbek and English language courses.

Step 2. Invitation from the host university: Upon placement, curator of host university will send an invitation letter from host university to each student with summary of their studies.

Step 3. Accommodation in a female section of a dormitory (language course period).

Step 4. Final test. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the language test will be conducted to determine the level of English Proficiency. Upon successful completion of the course, Certificate of language courses will be granted to a student. After successful completion of the courses, the scholar will be placed for further academic studies.

For students based in Uzbekistan the final Uzbek and English language tests will be conducted as common assessment of languages knowledge. The entrance examinations will be conducted in Uzbek and/or English languages. Scholars successfully passed the entrance examinations will be considered as qualified for further education.

In case of failure of language test, an issue will be raised at the Advisory Board meeting to make a decision on student's further participation in the project.

## **Stage 4. Academic placement**

### **Academic placement in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan will go as follows:**

Step 1. Enrolment to University: a student with the support of the curator of the host university will collect all the necessary documents and submit them to the academic institution. Additional language and/or subject entrance examinations can also take place as mandatory admission criteria.

Step 2: Offer from university: Each student will receive an offer from university with details on the start and end of the study programme and summary of the degree course.

Step 3. Placement. Academic study will be maintained in the Higher Education Institutions in Almaty. Bachelor's degree will last 4 academic years, Master's degree will last 1 academic year, and TVET-1 academic year.

### **For Uzbekistan, the following steps will apply:**

Step 1. Entrance examination. Each student expected to study in Uzbekistan should pass entrance examinations (the date and venue are defined by the MoHSSE of Uzbekistan).

Step 2. Enrollment to University: a student with the support of the curator of the host university will collect all the necessary documents and submit them to the academic institution.

Step 3. Offer from university: Each student will receive an offer from university with details on the start and end of the study programme and summary of the degree course.

Step 4. Placement. The placement will depend on the results of entrance examinations. Bachelor's degree will last 4 academic years, Master's degree will last 1 academic year, and TVET - 2 academic years.

### **Stage 5. Arrival procedures**

Step 1. Airport pick-up: Host university curator will meet the students and accompany to the assigned Students' House.

Step 2. Welcome package: Students will receive a welcome package from host university upon arrival or shortly after arrival.

Step 3. Bank Account: Students with support of host university will open a bank account. Monthly stipend in the amount of 150,000 KZT for Kazakhstan, 200 USD for Uzbekistan, and 120 USD for Kyrgyzstan will be transferred to the bank account of each student within 15 days from the beginning of each month. Students with disabilities can be eligible for an increased stipend equal to doubled amount of regular stipend. Corresponding decision to be made at the Advisory Board meeting.

Step 4. Medical insurance: Host university will help students to apply for medical insurance. Students will be provided with medical insurance from host university within designated period of study.

### **Stage 6. Academic study**

Step 1. Induction week: Before the start of an academic year a host university organizes an induction week for Afghan women. A variety of events are held to orient and welcome new students during this period. It is a good occasion for students and university staff to get to know each other, have a tour around the campus and university premises, get familiar with learning and social environment of the university. The orientation programs also aim at creating student's familiarity with the institution's regulations and academic standards, creating an environment to acquaint the students with their classmates. Safety rules and policies of university and the country will also be presented and explained during orientation week.

Step 2. Individual curriculum: Each student will be assisted in organizing an individual study plan, which will include credits and modules required to complete the programme. Each student will study according to the modules and credits elected.

Step 3. Academic performance: A curator checks the academic performance and attendance of the students on a regular basis. Students should attend classes and show constant progress in learning, ensure to obtain no less than minimal allowable score or percentage noted in the agreement signed between the student and the host university. In case of unsatisfactory performance, an issue will be escalated to the Advisory Board meeting to make a decision on student's further participation in the project

Step 4. Supervision/monitoring visits. UNDP in Kazakhstan consistently observes the progress of project implementation in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan by field visits. It implies an ongoing systematic review (each semester) of the activities and meeting with project participants as part of a structured process of feedback and institutional learning.

### **Stage 7. Return to Afghanistan**

Step 1. Questionnaire: At the end of the study programme students will be asked to complete a survey aimed in evaluation of academic programme, facilities and services, life in the host country.

Step 2. Graduation ceremony.

Step 3. Return flight to Afghanistan: Host university purchases one-way ticket to Kabul, Afghanistan and sends an electronic version of the ticket to the student.

Step 4. Students return to Afghanistan.

## **Employment**

With better qualifications, women are expected to gain higher-profile private or public sector jobs. The benefits will include enhanced economic and social status for women, as well as important role models of women's unique contributions to sector development and to gender equality that will eventually help accelerate the development process, which currently witness nominal women participation. The project expects 105 women taught in Agriculture/Agribusiness, Engineering/Construction, Marketing and ICT in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to be able to get employed in public and private companies as well as in the civil society and international organizations involved in development and humanitarian aid in Afghanistan.

To ensure the graduates get employed upon completion/return, an understanding with their current employers let it be public or private sector, will be essential to reach. However, candidates will be required to prepare and submit to their respective employers a detailed study plans and that what value they will add once re-employed. Those students who are not employed and newly graduates, will be introduced to the Ministry of Higher Education and through them to the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, for employment purposes, not to mention reaching direct understanding with respective ministries that potential can absorb the graduates.

An integrated reporting mechanism whereby update on the progress made by students and the bottlenecks/challenges faced provided to respective employers, will keep the linkage between the students and their employers boosted and will ensure the employment for these students.

## **II.3. Experience and lessons learnt**

The proposed Action has taken into account valuable lessons learnt from the ongoing project. The high levels of competence, ownership and capacity in all host countries to deliver higher education and TVET learning mobility set high standards for the programme. Support for learning mobility is gradually shifting away from ad-hoc individual interests toward learning opportunities that reflect specific needs for human capital development in Afghanistan.

Key lessons learned:

- Experience of the on-going project shows unstable participation trend of project participants. Three Afghan women, Bachelor's, Master's, and TVET students, left Kazakhstan in 2019 for personal reasons and failed to meet attendance requirements of educational establishment. In December 2019 all three students have been withdrawn from the language preparation course as well as from further participation in the project. New candidates from the reserve list accepted the respective scholarships and arrived in Kazakhstan to study;
- Probability of unexpected terminations of existing agreements between UNDP country offices and strategic partners nominated to take part in project implementation. By the initiative of a new senior management of the JSC "Center for International Programs" (Bolashak), the Responsible Party Agreement was terminated in November 2019. As the result project Steering Committee approved the designation of public and/or private universities as project partners on the basis of the collaborative advantage given the unique expertise and experience in educational services with international students.
- The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in the end of 2019 affected the project's implementation by postponing some activities and introducing unforeseen project expenses. To contain the spread of

the coronavirus, countries in Central Asia followed the WHO recommendations and limited physical movement of people across and within national borders. Also, the participating countries had to adjust project budget to account for the costs of quarantine measures upon arrival of Afghan women to the places of study, as well as to create conditions for their distant learning.

- After selecting the winners of the competition for training under the TVET programme in Uzbekistan, for 2 months, the border between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan remained closed. This influenced the decision of the winners. Three successful contestants have decided to quit the program citing newly emerged personal circumstances. Based on the selection rules, the vacant spots have been filled by three candidates from the reserve list of winners. As a result, a group of Afghan women arrived in Uzbekistan 20 days later than planned.

- All selected 10 Afghan students underwent the necessary procedures at the TVET Administration of Afghanistan, passed the COVID-19 test in Kabul, and after passing the quarantine measures for COVID-19 in Tashkent, on December 14, 2020, the students were transferred to ECTAC. On December 15, 2020, an introductory meeting of the TVET Program participants from Afghanistan with the organizers and partners of the project in Uzbekistan took place. During the meeting, the participants raised the issue of changing the place of study under the Program. Later, a meeting with the Afghan students was held to discuss their concerns and expectations in more detail. The participants expressed serious concerns regarding psychological atmosphere in ECTAC and voiced arguments on inadmissibility of their education among the representatives of the Afghan communities studying at this Center.

As a result of the meeting, it was decided to urgently return them to Tashkent, where organizational issues of their further participation in the Program were resolved.

After consultation between EU Delegation in Uzbekistan, UNDP and MoHSSE, Ministry has approved the training of Afghan students under the TVET program at TSAU. This circumstance required additional financial resources and working time to complete the necessary documents in accordance with the legislation of Uzbekistan.

- The pilot action has shown certain constraints related to return of the project graduates to Afghanistan upon completion of the programme. Given the highly unstable and deteriorating security environment in Afghanistan, students make various efforts to stay further in the host country. Namely, while some of project participants apply for study programs, others seek for job opportunities to receive valid visas. At the same time, several times graduates have addressed the issue of visa extension to UNDP.

### **III. RESULTS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **III.1 Expected results**

The overall objective is to enhance human capacity development of women in Afghanistan.

##### **The Specific Objectives are:**

SO1: Improved higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility system for women in Afghanistan.

SO2: Improved involvement of Afghan women, including a quota of women with disabilities and from remote rural areas, in higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes.

SO3: Enhanced employability of women participating in the higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programme.

##### **The expected outputs are:**

1.1. Strengthened capacity of the host higher education and TVET institutions, and relevant stakeholders.

1.2. Increased awareness among the Afghan women of the existence of the higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programme with a special attention to women with disabilities.

2.1. Increased access of the Afghan women to higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility mechanism in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

2.2. Improved knowledge of potential women applicants for higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes on languages and cultures of the host countries.

2.3. Strengthened awareness and capacity of women participating in the higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes on gender equality, women's empowerment, leadership, and other soft skills.

3.1. Strengthened capacities of the partner organizations and/or relevant CSOs/NGOs in Afghanistan to support women's employability upon return from outgoing learning mobility programmes.

3.2. Increased availability of placement opportunities relevant to and compatible with field of studies of the Afghan women participating in outgoing learning mobility programmes.

#### **Output 1.1. and 1.2.:**

As a result of the proposed action, 105 Afghan women will get engaged in the international learning mobility with an emphasis on women from remote and rural areas and women and girls with disabilities. The action will facilitate the exchange of experience between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan in terms of learning the best practice in outgoing learning mechanisms. The activities in the outputs build upon the most recent models of learning mobility to the Central Asian countries which have included focused study programmes linked to the labor market needs.

The following results will be achieved:

1.1.1. Exchange best practices with Kazakhtan on higher education and TVET.

1.2.1. Communication and awareness-raising campaign are designed to respond to cultural and social resistance regarding women's higher education in Afghanistan, especially in non-traditional fields of studies, and with targeted campaign for girls and women with disabilities.

#### **Output 2.1., 2.2 and 2.3.:**

At least 25 BA, 30 MA diplomas and 50 TVET certificates are awarded under the project. To achieve these outputs, at least 50 women will be placed into the programmes in Kazakhstan institutions based on 7-steps procedure. The UNDP CO in Uzbekistan will ensure that additional 30 women will be placed in TVET programmes in Kibray, Tashkent. 25 women will be placed in TVET and Bachelor's programmes in Naryn and Bishkek. The foundation courses will facilitate the learning of the languages and culture of the host countries.

Since Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women is a principal objective of the Project, it will be ensured that women participants, including those with disabilities, will build capacities and gain new knowledge and skills in the field of gender equality, women's empowerment, leadership, securing job opportunities through career development skills, networking and continuous personal and professional development in order to utilize those skills upon the return to Afghanistan. To ensure the employability of Afghan women, the training will also include practical activities to support women's job applications and recruitment. The short-term summer school (1-2 weeks per year) will be conducted during the mid-term or summer breaks for 50 Afghan women in Kazakhstan and 55 women in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in 2022 and 2023. The following results will be achieved:

2.1.1. Selection committee with transparent protocols of selection and evaluation is created to govern and steer the process of students' selection. An independent mechanism will be assigned for complains on the selection and evaluation process.

2.1.2. Scholarships to study in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan are awarded to Afghan women for the selected areas in academic institutions; Quota are foreseen for women in remote rural areas and for women with disabilities.

2.1.3. Contracts with the selected academic institutions are signed and close working relationship are established. Contracts will include requirements related to anti-sexual harassment policy on the campus and due diligence related to safety of women's students on the campus.

2.1.4. An effective system is in place to monitor academic successes of the students.

2.1.5. Specific application measures are put in place to respond to the needs of women with disabilities.

2.2.1. Selected students are placed for pre-academic foundation training for improvement of English language and learning languages and cultures of the host countries.

2.3.1. Extra-curriculum summer schools, extracurricular activities and workshops are organized by UNDP (with attraction of relevant partners) to enhance employment skills development; Specific measures will be put in place to respond to the needs of women with disabilities.

#### **Output 3.1. and 3.2.:**



The Project graduates are employed, with 50% of them in a position of relevance to their field of study and level of qualification. For bachelor's and master's degree programmes women are expected to complete mandatory internship credits. For bachelor's degree internship is mandatory in semester 7 or 8, for Master's degree students expected to be placed for internship in semester 2. Within the second term of TVET Afghan female students will gain practical work experience. Host institutions will place women in partner companies to fulfill internship part of the programme.

UNDP in Afghanistan will contact the partner organizations and relevant CSOs working for women rights to receive list of internship opportunities from state and private institutions in designated study areas on annual basis.

Upon graduates' return to Afghanistan UNDP, with support of the relevant CSOs and NGOs, will assist in finding relevant job opportunities according to the degree/qualification and skillsets obtained in the host countries. Engagement of Afghan national authorities will be considered. Focus will be placed on the established state policy on women's rights and their role in Afghan society.

The following results will be achieved:

3.1.1. Partner organizations and/or relevant CSOs/NGOs working for women rights are supported in enhancing women's employability upon their return;

3.1.2. Study tour for the partner organizations and/or CSOs, and NGOs to Kazakhstan to learn about the established national system of learning mobility mechanism and employability is organized (e.g., Bolashak International Scholarship in Kazakhstan and similar establishments in two other participating countries).

3.2.1. Practical activities to support women's job applications and recruitment by public and private sector employers conducted; Specific and targeted support will be provided to women with disabilities.

### **III.2 Partnerships:**

UNDP will work with the partner organizations and relevant CSOs to get them familiarized with the design of a national system for providing secured job opportunities for the graduates participating in the international learning mobility schemes. However, in view of the evolving situation in Afghanistan the future of NGOs and CSOs in Afghanistan is not clear.

Despite the fact that socio-economic and humanitarian crisis will increase the demand for social workers and NGOs, the organizations that remain will face a challenging route to securing acceptance. Only certain types of programming are to some extent likely to be accepted in Taliban-controlled territories. Organizations focused on delivering medical aid, shelter and non-food items, presumably, will be in high demand. On the other hand, education and work on gender-based violence will probably be considered controversial<sup>38</sup>.

Due to lack of stability and absence of clear policies regarding civil society and non-government organisations', partnerships are yet to be defined. In perspective the project plans to cooperate with relevant NGOs in Afghanistan. The successful implementation of the project assumes that strong women will be interested in participating in these learning opportunities and, where relevant, cooperate with the employers and proposing agencies. It is also based on the overall assumption that security conditions do not deteriorate further and impinge upon elements of the action's implementation and commitment of all parties to regional cooperation and human capacity development of Afghanistan's women will be maintained.

In refer to applicants' future employment opportunities there were several organizations in pre-August Afghanistan that were able to provide expertise on economic empowerment of women. Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AWCCI) works to meaningfully represent, advance, and secure Afghan women's economic interests, nationally and internationally. The non-profit organization has vast experience at advocacy on women's political, social, and cultural participation and rights. Among other potential partners for cooperation at supporting scholarship graduates upon possible return to Afghanistan are The Afghan Women's Network (AWN) and Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA). AWN is a non-governmental

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<sup>38</sup> <https://thediplomat.com/2021/08/can-ngos-continue-to-provide-aid-in-afghanistan/>

organization that was created in 1996 and works towards empowering women and ensuring their equal participation in Afghan society. All the organizations work to create a better environment for working women in Afghanistan and have deep knowledge as well as solid networking basis in the region.

Since takeover of Kabul by Taliban forces, CSO and NGO map in Afghanistan has endured severe changes. Some NGOs left the country due to security issues; others continue their operations. Since current government's attitude towards gender equality and women empowerment organisations and activities is yet to be shaped, NGOs involved in these particular areas are most probably keeping low profile, waiting for the conflict to settle.

### **III.3 Resources Required to Achieve the Expected Results**

A detailed budget detailing all resources and their respective costs required to implement the Project activities is presented in Annex III.

The Authorization Letter (AL) template will be used by the UNDP CO in Kazakhstan to formalize the spending authority of the COs in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan. AL will allow COs to implement in-country activities as per agreed workplans, conduct management oversight and support, and contribute to the financial and operational closure and final reporting.

The key resources that will be required by the Project to achieve its expected results are listed here below.

#### **Human resources – Project offices**

Project staff: This will include staff responsible for providing technical assistance and carrying out administrative and management tasks. The human resources required for the implementation of the action comprise project personnel in 4 locations as follows:

Kazakhstan:

1. Project Manager (SB4): full time level Project Manager for the duration of 4.5 years who will be responsible for the overall management of the project activities, developing and implementing a results-based work plan for the project. He/she shall be responsible for all substantive, managerial and financial reporting for the project. He/she will provide overall supervision of all project staff in the project management unit in CO, as well as in field offices. She/he will be guiding and supervising all policy-based relations between the project, EU and the Government of Kazakhstan.
2. Project Specialist (SB3): full time Project Specialist for the duration of 4.5 years who will be supporting Project Manager in carrying out the administration of the Project, supporting procurement and financial management.
3. Communications Specialist (SB3): Full time Communication Specialist for the duration of 4.5 years who will be supporting participating Country Offices in maintaining visibility and communication activities under this project.
4. International Consultant for UNDP HACT quality check: full time position to conduct independent quality check of the project implementation (HACT assurance activities) in line with UNDP HACT framework.
5. Programme Officer (NOC): part time involvement on a timesheet basis to conduct the strategic oversight of the project implementation throughout the project cycle.
6. Resources Management Associate (G7); part time involvement on a timesheet basis to conduct the quality assurance of project management and Responsible Partner related processes (assessments, contracting, spot checks, audits, report verification, etc.) in line with UNDP procedures throughout the project cycle
7. Procurement Specialist (SB3): part time involvement on a timesheet basis to conduct project related procurements.
8. Finance Associate (G6): part time involvement on a timesheet basis for processing payments and other finance related requests including cash management and vendor update/creation throughout the project cycle.
9. HR Associate (G6): part time involvement on a timesheet basis for conducting recruitment of the project personnel and maintenance of their contracts throughout the project cycle.

**Uzbekistan:**

1. Task Manager (SB4): full time level Task Manager for the duration of 2 years, who will be responsible for overall coordination of the activities within the territory of Uzbekistan. The duties will include, but not limited to, selection process arrangements, maintaining of the meetings/agreements with national partners, and private/public entities for further employment opportunities. He/she will report to Project Manager in Kazakhstan on progress and outcomes.
2. HR Associate (ICS-6): part time position on a timesheet basis responsible for recruitment of the project personnel and maintenance of their contracts.
3. Finance Associate (ICS-8): part time position on a timesheet basis responsible for payment processing, issuance of the bank cards.
4. Administrative and Finance Assistant (SB3): part time position on a timesheet basis responsible for operational support in organizational and logistics tasks, procurement and financial operations.

**Kyrgyzstan:**

1. Project Specialist (SC7): full time level Project Specialist will be hired for the duration of 5 years who will be responsible for overall coordination of the activities within the territory of Kyrgyzstan. The duties will include, but not limited to, selection process arrangements, maintaining of the meetings/agreements with national partners, and private/public entities for further employment opportunities. He/she will report to Project Manager in Kazakhstan on progress and outcomes.
2. HR Associate (GS6): part time position on a timesheet basis responsible for recruitment of the project personnel and maintenance of their contracts.
3. Finance Associate (GS6): part time position on a timesheet basis responsible for payment processing, issuance of the bank cards.
4. Project Officer (NOB): part time involvement on a timesheet basis to conduct the strategic oversight of the project implementation.
5. Programme Associate (GS6): part time position on a timesheet basis responsible for project oversight support and quality assurance, control of project delivery reports, approval for payments of project products.
6. Administrative and Finance Assistant (SC5): part time position responsible for operational support in organizational and logistics tasks, procurement and financial operations.

**Afghanistan:**

1. Project Associate (SB3): full time Project Associate for the duration of 4 years and will be responsible for overall coordination of the activities within the territory of Afghanistan. The duties will include, but not limited to, selection process arrangements, maintaining of the meetings/agreements with national partners, and private/public entities for further employment opportunities. He/she will report to Project Manager in Kazakhstan on progress and outcomes. The project specialist in Afghanistan will be conducting research on Afghanistan's labor market needs assessment that would help to identify the knowledge and skills requirements for women to get decent job upon their return. The research result is required to increase the effectiveness and impact of the educational and training assistance being delivered by international community. Understanding of the needs of the Afghanistan economy at macro, or industrial, or regional levels will enable the international community to provide focused educational and training support preparing not only workers and entrepreneurs, but the managers of local and central public administrations.

**Equipment and supplies**

In implementing this project, there are several categories of costs that are envisaged for the functioning of the project management unit, including:

**Office Expenses:** Office running costs to deliver project activities, including expenses related to the operations of the office staff security, communications and internet, stationary and other office supplies, and office equipment maintenance.

**Materials Expenses:** Costs to deliver activities related to community mobilization, public awareness and outreach including printing program materials and brochures about the project.

**Implementing Phase 2 will require the following categories of costs:**

**Office Expenses:** Office running costs to deliver project activities, including expenses related to utilities, maintenance, premises management, security, and office communication costs, other Common Premises related expenses.

**Audio-visual equipment:** Costs related to procurement of laptops for project beneficiaries as well as for the project staff to ensure smooth implementation of the project.

**Travel:** To secure a smooth implementation of the activities, the project foresees travel costs – including DSA, terminals, travel fares, etc.

**Transportation and Vehicle-Related Expenses (in Kazakhstan and Afghanistan):** The project foresees UNDP vehicle charges as well as other transportation related expenses.

**Equipment and Furniture for Office Space (in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan):** Costs to purchase necessary office equipment and supplies to be maintained during the implementation period.

**Communications Expenses (in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan):** Costs to cover mobile phone, Internet, email accounts, Zoom/DocuSign licenses, postage, conference rooms, etc.

**Office stationery:** Expenses related to stationary supplies for staff in all four country offices.

**Communication and Visibility events:** Costs related to deliver activities of the communication and visibility plan related to public awareness, media outreach including printing one-pagers, handouts, reports and other materials as well organization of photo-video shootings and production of promo-materials in all four countries.

**Translation Costs (in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan):** Expenses related to both oral and writing interpretation and proofreading services.

**Workshops (in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan):** Costs related to the logistics of activities such as introductory meeting for new students, field outreach seminars, extracurricular thematic lectures, UNDP & EU management offline meetings, and other activities in host institutions.

**Project Management Costs (Afghanistan):** Expenses related to the project staff, logistics, security, transport and communication

### III.4 Risks and Assumptions

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
Change of political power in Afghanistan could result in new vision of regional cooperation and its focus, hence – overall potential negative impact on security situation in Afghanistan	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Close monitoring of the political context and regular consultations with UNDP Afghanistan.</li> <li>•Flexibility on start dates and adjustment of project implementation.</li> </ul>
Afghan authorities ban on study abroad opportunities for women in Afghanistan	M to H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Negotiations between UNDP Afghanistan and relevant national partners of Afghanistan aimed at ensuring opportunities for Afghan women to study abroad, in particular in Central Asia.</li> </ul>
Mandatory presence of Mahrams, adult male relatives, to accompany Afghan women during their study travel	M to H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Negotiations between UNDP Afghanistan and relevant national partners of Afghanistan aimed at ensuring the rights of Afghan women to travel abroad without Mahrams.</li> <li>•Possible adjustment of travel arrangements, including an introduction of visa support and round-trip costs for Mahrams.</li> <li>•Shift to distance learning at the beginning of the academic year followed by possible arrival of project participants with or without Mahrams.</li> </ul>
Resistance of the project graduates to return to Afghanistan due to continuing unstable geopolitical situation in Afghanistan.	M to H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Prioritization of the applicants with strong motivation and commitment to return to Afghanistan upon graduation.</li> <li>•Concept development and corresponding implementation adjustments toward later return period for project graduates.</li> </ul>

Cultural constraints of Afghan women and the risks of sexual and gender-based violence.	M to H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The implementing agency (UNDP in Afghanistan) is engaged in the selection process and will guide the female applicants at the selection stage.</li> <li>•Sustained efforts to preserve anonymity of individuals at all stages (candidate testing, visa applications, logistics, etc.).</li> <li>•Ensure all delegations include women who can provide advice to candidates. All curators in Kazakhstan will be females and they will have an induction session on Afghanistan and its culture.</li> <li>•Awareness-raising and information to families and communities on the benefit of these scholarships and the guarantee that the student will be protected (safe school protocols with the hosted university will be developed). This can be developed through a communication plan.</li> </ul>
Lack of an active participation of women in vulnerable situations (women from remote and rural areas of Afghanistan, women with disabilities).	M to H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction of affirmative action measures (scholarship quotas) aimed at ensuring the minimum number of women from remote regions and women with disabilities in the total number of scholarship awards.</li> <li>• Conduct an adaptive advertising campaign aimed at a wider and more targeted territorial coverage with an emphasis on remote and rural areas and to women and girls with disabilities.</li> </ul>
Kyrgyzstan's 2020 political crises could result in new leadership with a different vision of regional cooperation and its focus. Political rifts and instability may also instigate insecurity impacting the programme progress.	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure written agreements (MoUs, exchange of letters) or other forms of confirmation of interest by the authorities in charge exist so that change in power does not affect the project implementation</li> <li>• Close monitoring of the political context and regular consultations with Kyrgyz authorities and UNDP Kyrgyzstan;</li> <li>• Flexibility on start dates and adjustment of project implementation</li> </ul>
As enunciated in the Multi-Annual Indicative Regional Programme for Central Asia 2014-2020: <i>'in the absence of a regional counterpart organization, regional programmes are highly dependent on the degree of commitment and interest of individual member countries, which varies considerably from one programme to another.'</i> Major risks include insufficient ownership and inappropriate modalities for implementation	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devise entire work strategy through government-approved partners.</li> <li>• Link to policy dialogue agenda in CA.</li> <li>• Make key government agencies part of the central Steering Committee, and part of the country-specific program design and monitoring bodies.</li> <li>• Promote ownership of the project by the Government of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan by positioning the project activities as part of their national development assistance agenda.</li> </ul>
Lack of commitments from the women in Afghanistan to	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Closely liaise with the UNDP AF, ILO AF and involve their established networks in Afghanistan to be able to choose proper target audience.</li> </ul>

participate in the proposed trainings and implement the received knowledge and skills in their future work and life.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote participation of CSOs, especially those representing rights and interests of women and girls in vulnerable situations.</li> <li>• Coaching and mentoring of women students.</li> </ul>
Lack of commitments from the beneficiaries in Afghanistan to employ the graduates who return in Afghanistan	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closely liaise with the UNDP AF and involve their established networks in Afghanistan to develop a sustainable employment scheme.</li> <li>• Share Kazakhstan's experience of building international mobility programme.</li> <li>• Involve professional and/or sectoral networks, especially women's professional networks.</li> </ul>
Further increase of coronavirus spread (COVID-19). Prohibition of admission of foreign students in host countries.	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close monitoring of the situation of coronavirus spread worldwide.</li> <li>• Flexibility on start dates of academic year and adjustment of project implementation, including the possible shift to distance learning at the beginning of the academic year with possible involvement of CSOs in provision of learning facilities.</li> <li>• Compliance with quarantine procedures established in the host country.</li> <li>• Providing project participants with all necessary protective equipment (masks, anti-sanitizers, self-isolation conditions, testing for the virus, etc.)</li> </ul>
Resistance to gain best practices in development of international learning mobility programmes from host countries. Lack of transparency in selection procedures.	L to M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing of information, lessons and best practices on learning mobility in similar contexts particularly for women that have demonstrated positive impact and results.</li> <li>• Provision of constant institutional support on ensuring transparency and accountability measures such as selection and evaluation grids accessible to all (including remote areas and people with disabilities), publication of results in main institutional and official communication channels, process to present enquiry/claims related to selection process.</li> </ul>
Due to high-level political interests that initiated regional learning mobility, poor performance by the Action could impact relations with the EU.	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage UNDP Afghanistan in project implementation, including through participation in Project Boards and organization of regular site visits.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assumptions</b></p> <p>The primary underlying assumption is that all regional actors will maintain their commitment to Afghan women's empowerment through learning mobility which will translate into comprehensive cooperation on facilitating permissions, collaboration on education, delivery on all obligations, and working together to resolve any problems that may arise during the course of the programme.</p> <p>Additionally, it is assumed that Afghan women will be able to live away from home and be highly interested to take up this opportunity. The probability of this is heightened when they are nominated by their current employers or academic faculties. It is assumed that women will be able to successfully graduate at employed upon return.</p>		

### **III.5 Stakeholder Engagement**

This Project places Afghan women, as its immediate direct beneficiaries and 'rights holders'. Various national and international institutions served as stakeholders at the inception phase of the project. Due to the high political interest, both historically and presently, the involvement of initial

stakeholders may be continued, and new stakeholders of various institutions will be engaged. The level of participation is determined by their relevance and potential impact on the Project.

Engagement of Afghan national authorities in Phase 2 will be considered upon international recognition of the government of Afghanistan established in August 2021. Focus will be centred on the state policy on women's rights and their role in Afghan society.

The stakeholders are responsible to smooth the way for student mobility (formal permission for travel and residence), facilitate diplomatic and technical exchange visits, maintain national interest in the beneficiaries including for home country briefings, support and placement of students upon the return to Afghanistan, and resolve any occurred issues at the diplomatic level.

Core stakeholders include:

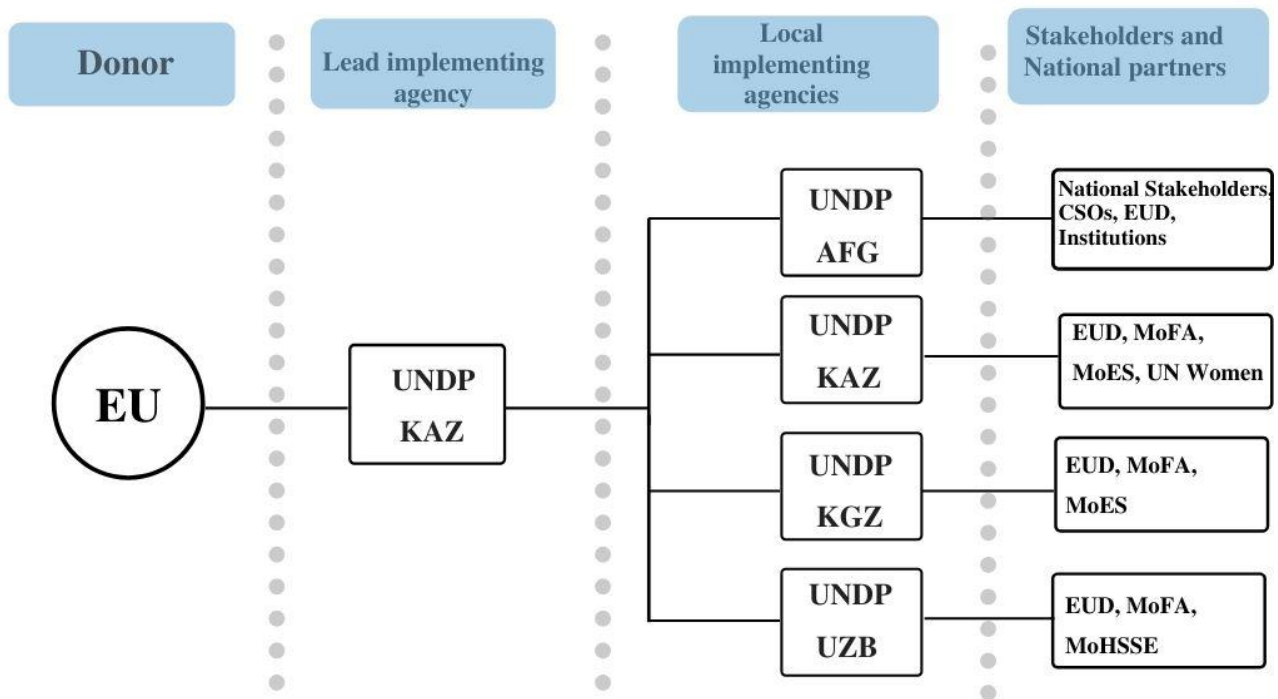


Figure 1-Chart of main stakeholders and facilitating partner

#### National level (Kazakhstan):

EU Delegation in Kazakhstan, MoES of the Republic of Kazakhstan, MoFA of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Embassy of Afghanistan.

#### Regional level:

Embassies of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and relevant national organizations/stakeholders in higher education and TVET in participating countries.

Serving both as partners and stakeholders, following institutions will be engaged:

In Kazakhstan: Almaty Management University, Kazakh-British Technical University, Satbaev University, Kazakh National Agricultural University, Kazakh Leading Academy of Architecture and Civil Engineering;

In Uzbekistan: Tashkent State Agrarian University and its branches, Tashkent State Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers, the Samarkand Institute of Veterinary Medicine; Association of Businesswomen of Uzbekistan; and Chamber of Commerce of Uzbekistan;

In Kyrgyzstan: University of Central Asia, School of Professional and Continuing Education, (Aga Khan Development Network);

In Afghanistan: Afghan Women's Chamber of Commerce; Afghan Women's Network, other relevant CSO's in Afghanistan and host countries.

#### Knowledge

The Knowledge management will be ensured by information dissemination and experience sharing. The Project will ensure a regular dissemination of up to date information to its target group and will facilitate experience sharing through newsletters, case studies and success stories, as well as exchange visits throughout Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

### **Sustainability and Scaling Up**

National ownership of the results will be ensured by the continuous and direct involvement of the beneficiary organisations in the process of obtaining the expected results. Critical to sustainability of the expected results will be the willingness of the implementing partner and beneficiaries to implement the recommendations that will be eventually provided. In addition, political will of the new Afghan Government and the respective state policy toward women's empowerment will play a key role in obtaining the learning mobility best practices and thus sustaining and scaling up the programme results. Compliance of the project objectives with the country's long-term socio-economic development priorities may further result in maintaining the positive effect of the programme.

## **IV. PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

The cost effectiveness and expected outputs of this Project is based on best practices and lessons learnt of previous UNDP projects that were previously implemented in the areas of development assistance and women empowerment. Also, the cost effectiveness of the Project will be ensured by the observance of standard rules and procedures applied in the UNDP system.

In its implementation the project will widely use new programme and project management methods, mechanisms and financial instruments to ensure cost efficiency and effectiveness throughout the project implementation.

UNDP Kazakhstan shall be the Lead Country Office and UNDP Uzbekistan, UNDP Kyrgyzstan and UNDP Afghanistan are participating countries offices. The project offices will be located in all 4 country countries: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan.

UNDP Uzbekistan, UNDP Kyrgyzstan and UNDP Afghanistan shall be responsible for the implementation of the specific project outputs and delivering the results as set out in the project document Results Framework.

UNDP Kazakhstan will be responsible for the overall project implementation and assuring of the project objectives and targets. UNDP Kazakhstan will be solely accountable to the donor on the project results as well as the implementation of the financial resources allocated by the donor.



## V. RESULTS FRAMEWORK

<p><b>Intended Outcome as stated in the UNDAF/ the Country Programme Results and Resource Framework:</b></p> <p>Kazakhstan: Outcome 2.2. By 2025, state institutions at all levels effectively design and implement gender-sensitive, human rights and evidence-based public policies and provide quality services in an inclusive, transparent and accountable manner.</p> <p>Afghanistan: Outcome 4: Social equity of women, youth and minorities and vulnerable populations is increased through improved and consistent application by Government of principles of inclusion in implementing existing and creating new policies and legislation</p> <p>Kyrgyz Republic: Outcome 1: By 2022, inclusive and sustainable economic growth is increased through agricultural, industrial and rural development, decent work, improved livelihoods, food security and nutrition</p> <p>Uzbekistan: Outcome 3: By 2025, youth, women and vulnerable groups benefit from improved access to livelihoods, decent work and expanded opportunities generated by inclusive and equitable economic growth</p>											
<p><b>Outcome indicators as stated in the Country Programme Results and Resources Framework, including baseline and targets:</b></p> <p>Kazakhstan: Indicator 2.4.1: Number of Kazakhstan-led international and regional cooperation initiatives supported by UNDP. Baseline: 1 (of which focused on gender equality: 1) (2020) Target: 10 (of which focused on gender equality: 5) (2025)</p> <p>Afghanistan: Indicator 3.1: Ranking on the Gender Inequality Index. Baseline (2012): 0.712 (147 out of 148). Target: Modest improvement / no regression</p> <p>Kyrgyz Republic: Indicator 1.3.1. Number of full-time equivalent jobs created for women and men aged 15 or over. Baseline: 2,094, including 973 women, 628 youth. Target: 3,000, including 1,200 women, 900 youth</p> <p>Uzbekistan: Indicator 3.1.1: Number of decent jobs created with UNDP support, including share of those occupied by women and youth. Baseline (2020): Total – 160 (40% women, 50% youth). Target (2025): Total – 5,000 (50% women, 50% youth)</p>											
<p><b>Applicable Output(s) from the UNDP Strategic Plan:</b></p> <p>Kazakhstan: Output 2.4: Triangular development initiatives are in place to support the positioning of Kazakhstan, with a focus on empowerment of women</p> <p>Afghanistan: Output 9. Government enabled to implement national and international commitments impacting women</p> <p>Kyrgyz Republic: Output.1.3. Women, youth and people from regions with high poverty rates benefit from improved services and infra-structure, better skills, access to resources, sustainable jobs and livelihoods. (8, 11)</p> <p>Uzbekistan: Output 3.1: Women, youth and people from remote rural areas benefit from better skills, sustainable jobs and strengthened livelihoods</p>											
<p><b>Project title and Atlas Project Number:</b> Phase 2: Supporting the Economic Empowerment of Afghan Women through Education and Training in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, 00130011</p>											
Outputs	Output Indicators	Data Source	Baselines		Targets						Data Collection Methods and Risks
			Value	Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	
<p><b>Output 1:</b></p> <p>1.1. Strengthened capacity of the host higher education and TVET institutions, and relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>1.2. Increased awareness among the Afghan women of the existence of the higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programme with a special attention to women with disabilities.</p>	<p>1.1.1. Number of exchange sessions (distance or in person) between the relevant stakeholders of participating countries organised with support of the intervention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting minutes</li> <li>• Social media analytic tools/social dashboards</li> <li>• Outgoing learning programme database of applications received and completed with the required documents.</li> </ul>		2021	x	1	1	x	x	1	<p>Meeting minutes upon exchange sessions with civil servants from Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan in charge of supporting women's employability upon return from outgoing learning mobility programme. Media visibility. Risk of further increase of Covid-19 spread; geopolitical instability in Afghanistan</p>
	<p>1.2.1. Number of potential students informed about the</p>		Number of potential students informed about the learning mobility programme	2021	2 000 000	x	x	x	x	x	<p>Use of social media analytic tools/social dashboards, coverage report.</p>

	learning mobility programme (disaggregated by sex)		(disaggregated by sex): none								Lack of electricity and unstable internet among Afghan population
	1.2.2 Number of received applications for higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes which include all required documentation (disaggregated by sex)		Number of received applications for higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes which include all required documentation (disaggregated by sex): none	2021	800	x	x	x	x	x	Outgoing learning programme database of applications received and completed with the required documents. Lack of commitments from the women in Afghanistan to participate in the proposed trainings and implement the received knowledge and skills in their future work and life.
<b>Output 2:</b> 2.1. Increased access of the Afghan women to higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility mechanism in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan 2.2. Improved knowledge of potential women applicants for higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes on languages and cultures of the host countries. 2.3. Strengthened awareness and capacity of women participating in the higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes on gender equality, women's empowerment, leadership, and other soft skills.	2.1.1. Number of Afghan women, enrolled in higher education outgoing learning mobility programmes, awarded with a scholarship with support of the intervention (disaggregated by country, higher education institutions, if relevant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of the women candidates awarded with a scholarship</li> <li>List of students enrolled per each language course and academic programme</li> <li>List of students enrolled per each Summer School Training events</li> </ul>	Number of Afghan women, enrolled in higher education outgoing learning mobility programmes, awarded with a scholarship with support of the intervention (disaggregated by country, higher education institutions, if relevant): none	2021	x	55	x	x	x	x	List of the women candidates enrolled in higher education outgoing learning mobility programmes and awarded with a scholarship. Risk in dropout due to intensive curriculum. Risk of non-admission to academic program due to failure to pass the admission procedures and meet admission criteria.
	2.1.2. Number of Afghan women, enrolled in TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes, awarded with a scholarship with support of the intervention (disaggregated by country, TVET institutions, if relevant)		Number of Afghan women, enrolled in TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes, awarded with a scholarship with support of the intervention (disaggregated by country, TVET institutions, if relevant): none	2021	x	50	x	x	x	x	List of the women candidates enrolled in TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes and awarded with a scholarship. Risk in dropout due to intensive curriculum. Risk of non-admission to academic program due to failure to pass the admission procedures and meet admission criteria.
	2.2.1. Number of Afghan enrolled in foundation language trainings with support of the intervention (disaggregated by language if relevant)		Number of Afghan enrolled in foundation language trainings with support of the intervention (disaggregated by language if relevant): none	2021	105	x	x	x	x	x	List of students enrolled per each language course. Risk of possible shift to distance learning at the beginning of the academic year due to Covid-19 related restrictions.

	2.3.1. Number of Afghan women attending Summer/Winter School Training events with support of the intervention (disaggregated by type of participant)		Number of Afghan women attending Summer/Winter School Training events with support of the intervention (disaggregated by type of participant): none		x	105	105	x	x	x	List of students enrolled per each Summer School Trainings. Media visibility. Risk of existence of personal and / or health issues limiting proper participation in the activities.
<b>Output 3:</b> 3.1. Strengthened capacities of the partner organizations and/or relevant CSOs/NGOs in Afghanistan to support women's employability upon return from outgoing learning mobility programmes. 3.2. Increased availability of placement opportunities relevant to and compatible with field of studies of the Afghan women participating in outgoing learning mobility programmes.	3.1.1. Number of study visits with support of the intervention on national system of education to Kazakhstan	• Internship reports/attendance sheet	Number of study visits with support of the intervention on national system of education to Kazakhstan: none	2021	X	1	1	x	x	x	Minutes and reports on study visits with support of the intervention on national system of education to Kazakhstan. Media visibility. Resistance of the Afghan authorities to gain best practices in development of international learning mobility programmes from host countries.
	3.1.2. Number of Afghan partner organizations and/or CSOs, and NGOs staff acquainted with the best international systems of employability with support of the intervention (disaggregated by sex and type of participant)		Number of Afghan CSOs and partner organizations staff acquainted with the best international systems of employability with support of the intervention (disaggregated by sex and type of participant): none	2021	X	3	3	x	x	x	Study visits schedules and reports on study visits with support of the intervention on national system of education to Kazakhstan. Resistance of the Afghan authorities to gain best practices in development of international learning mobility programmes from host countries.
	3.2.1. Number of Afghan women participating in the outgoing learning mobility programmes benefitting from a placement in a private company during their studies (disaggregated by sex)		Number of Afghan women participating in the outgoing learning mobility programmes benefitting from a placement in a private company during their studies (disaggregated by sex): none	2021	x	x	50	30	x	x	Internship reports reflecting the number of project participants benefitting from a placement in a private company during their studies. Risk of existence of personal and / or health issues limiting students' ability to benefit from a placement in a private company during their studies

## VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In accordance with UNDP's programming policies and procedures, the project will be monitored through the following monitoring and evaluation plans:

### Monitoring Plan

Monitoring Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Expected Action	Approximate costs (if any)
<b>Track results progress</b>	Progress data against the results indicators in the RRF will be collected and analysed to assess the progress of the project in achieving the agreed outputs.	Quarterly, or in the frequency required for each indicator.	Slower than expected progress will be addressed by project management.	According to the Project document
<b>Monitor and Manage Risk</b>	Identify specific risks that may threaten achievement of intended results. Identify and monitor risk management actions using a risk log. This includes monitoring measures and plans that may have been required as per UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards. Audits will be conducted in accordance with UNDP's audit policy to manage financial risk.	Quarterly	Risks are identified by project management and actions are taken to manage risk. The risk log is actively maintained to keep track of identified risks and actions taken.	According to the Project document
<b>Learn</b>	Knowledge, good practices and lessons will be captured regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects and partners and integrated back into the project.	At least annually	Relevant lessons are captured by the project team and used to inform management decisions.	According to the Project document
<b>Annual Project Quality Assurance</b>	The quality of the project will be assessed against UNDP's quality standards to identify project strengths and weaknesses and to inform management decision making to improve the project.	Annually	Areas of strength and weakness will be reviewed by project management and used to inform decisions to improve project performance.	According to the Project document
<b>Review and Make Course Corrections</b>	Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making.	At least annually	Performance data, risks, lessons and quality will be discussed by the project board and used to make course corrections.	According to the Project document
<b>Project Report</b>	A progress report will be presented to the Steering Committee and key stakeholders, consisting of progress data showing the results achieved against pre-defined annual targets at the output level, the annual project quality rating summary, an updated risk log with mitigation measures, and any evaluation or review reports prepared over the period. The progress and final report will be drafted in line with the provisions of article 3 of the General Conditions (Annex 2 to the Contribution Agreement)	Annually, and at the end of the project (final report)		According to the Project document
<b>Mid-term and Final Project Evaluation</b>	The Evaluation reviews the overall project cycle, draws conclusions and extracts lessons learned from the experience	Forth and the last year of the project implementation	UNDP	9,000 USD
<b>Project Review (Steering Committee)</b>	The project's governance mechanism (i.e., Steering Committee) will hold regular project reviews to assess the performance of the project and review the Multi-Year Work Plan to ensure realistic budgeting over the life of the project. In the project's final year, the Project Board shall hold an end-of project review to capture lessons learned and discuss opportunities for scaling up and to socialize project results and lessons learned with relevant audiences.	Specify frequency (i.e., at least annually)	Any quality concerns or slower than expected progress should be discussed by the project Steering Committee and management actions agreed to address the issues identified.	According to the Project document

**VII. MULTI-YEAR WORK PLAN**

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET BY YEAR								Total
			Funding Source	Budget Description	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Output 1. Strengthened capacity of the relevant stakeholders for the establishment and implementation of the higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility mechanism (1.1) and Increased awareness among the Afghan women of the existence of the higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programme with a special attention to women with disabilities (1.2)	International mobility Programme_ Enrollment (UNDP Kazakhstan)	AlmaU	EU	72100 Contractual services	388 502	52 590	0	0	0	0	441 092
	International mobility Programme_ Enrollment (UNDP Uzbekistan)	TSAU		72100 Contractual services	221 500	37 500	0	0	0	0	259 000
	International mobility Programme_ Enrollment (UNDP Kyrgyzstan)	UCA		72100 Contractual services	233 830	0	0	0	0	0	233 830
	<b>Total for Output 1</b>				<b>843 832</b>	<b>90 090</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>933 922</b>
Output 2. Increased access of the Afghan women to higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility mechanism in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan (2.1) and Improved knowledge of potential women applicants for higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes on languages and cultures of the host countries (2.2) and Strengthened awareness and capacity of women participating in the higher education and TVET outgoing learning mobility programmes on gender equality, women's empowerment, leadership, and other soft skills (2.3)	International mobility Programme_ Graduation (UNDP Kazakhstan)	KBTU, KazGAS A, KazNAU	EU	72100 Contractual services	0	516 743	271 288	234 874	234 874	21 036	1 278 815
	International mobility Programme_ Graduation (UNDP Uzbekistan)	TSAU		72100 Contractual services	0	122 300	217 500	106 500	0	0	446 300
	International mobility Programme_ Graduation (UNDP Kyrgyzstan)	UCA		72100 Contractual services	0	284 700	54 700	54 700	54 700	0	448 800
	Extracurricular activities, workshops and trainings	UN Women Kazakhstan		75700 Trainings / Workshops	0	131 800	131 800	0	0	0	263 600
	<b>Total for Output 2</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>1 055 543</b>	<b>675 288</b>	<b>396 074</b>	<b>289 574</b>	<b>21 036</b>	<b>2 437 515</b>
Output 3. Strengthened capacities of the relevant partners in Higher Education of Afghanistan to support women's employability upon return from outgoing learning mobility programmes (3.1) and Increased availability of placement	Project Associate, SB3, full time (UNDP Afghanistan)	UNDP	EU	71400 Project Coordinator	30 375	30 375	30 375	30 375	0	0	121 498
	Transportation and Vehicle-Related Expenses (UNDP Afghanistan)			72130 Svc Co-Transportation Services	10 000	3 000	3 000	2 000	0	0	18 000

opportunities relevant to and compatible with field of studies of the Afghan women participating in outgoing learning mobility programmes (3.2)	Office expenses (utilities, maintenance, premises management, security, and office communication costs, other CP related expenses)		73100 Rent and office maintenance	12 000	12 000	12 000	12 000	0	0	48 000
	Travel (DSA, terminals, travel fares, study tour, etc.) (UNDP Afghanistan)		71600 Travel	7 406	1 500	1 500	500	0	0	10 906
	Communications (mobile phone, Internet, email accounts, Zoom/DocuSign licenses, postage, conference rooms, etc.), (UNDP Afghanistan)		72135 Svc Co-Communications Service	250	250	250	250	0	0	1 000
	Office stationery (UNDP Afghanistan)		72500,72500, Office supplies (stationery, office supplies)	0	250	250	250	0	0	750
	<b>Total for Output 3</b>			<b>60 031</b>	<b>47 375</b>	<b>47 375</b>	<b>45 375</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>200 154</b>
Output 4: Effective Project Management	Project Manager, SB4, full time	UNDP	71400 Project Staff	0	25 200	25 200	25 200	25 200	0	100 800
	Project Specialist, SB3, full time		71400 Project Staff	0	17 500	17 500	17 500	17 500	0	70 000
	Communications Specialist, SB3, full time		71400 Project Staff	0	19 200	19 200	19 200	19 200	0	76 800
	Programme Officer, NOC, part-time		64397 DPC	1 873	1 873	1 873	1 873	1 873	0	9 366
	Resources Management Associate, G7, part-time		64397 DPC	4 500	4 500	4 500	4 500	4 500	0	22 500
	Procurement Specialist, G6, part-time		64397 DPC	1 161	1 161	1 161	1 161	1 161	0	5 807
	Finance Associate, G6, part-time		64397 DPC	1 972	1 972	1 972	1 972	1 972	0	9 862
	HR Associate, G6, part-time		64397 DPC	1 972	1 972	1 972	1 972	1 972	0	9 862
	Travel (DSA, terminals, travel fares, etc.)		71600 Travel	6 000	6 000	5 000	4 000	4 000	0	25 000
	Office expenses (utilities, maintenance, premises management, security, and office communication costs, other CP related expenses)		73100 Rent and office maintenance	7 000	7 000	12 000	12 000	12 000	0	50 000
	Workshops	75700 Trainings / Workshops	0	4 000	4 000	4 000	0	0	12 000	
Audio-visual equipment (laptops for project beneficiaries and/or office equipment)	72400 Audiovisual Equipment	17 370	0	0	0	0	0	17 370		

Transportation and Vehicle-Related Expenses			72130 Svc Co-Transportation Services	300	300	200	200	200	0	1 200
Equipment and furniture for office space			72220 Equipment	400	0	0	0	0	0	400
Communications (mobile phone, Internet, email accounts, Zoom/DocuSign licenses, postage, conference rooms, etc.)			72135 Svc Co-Communications Service	300	600	600	600	600	0	2 700
Office stationery			72500 Office supplies	150	0	0	150	0	0	300
International Consultant for UNDP HACT quality check			71300 IC Consultant	0	0	0	4 500	0	0	4 500
Communication and visibility events			72100 Contractual services	55 000	63 000	63 000	37 967	60 000	0	278 967
<b>UNDP Kazakhstan subtotal:</b>				<b>97 999</b>	<b>154 279</b>	<b>158 179</b>	<b>132 296</b>	<b>154 679</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>697 433</b>
Task Manager, SB4, full time			71400 Project Staff	0	23 174	23 174	5 794	0	0	52 142
Office expenses (utilities, maintenance, premises management, security, and office communication costs, other CP related expenses)			73100 Rent and office maintenance	1 800	1 800	1 800	300	0	0	5 700
Audio-visual equipment (laptops for project beneficiaries and/or office equipment)			72400 Audiovisual Equipment	14 500	400	200	0	0	0	15 100
Communications (mobile phone, Internet, email accounts, Zoom/DocuSign licenses, postage, conference rooms, etc.)	UNDP	EU	72135 Svc Co-Communications Service	300	300	300	0	0	0	900
Travel (DSA, terminals, travel fares, etc.)			71600 Travel	3 250	1 450	1 450	0	0	0	6 150
Translation costs			74200 Translation services	800	800	800	0	0	0	2 400
Office stationery			72500 Office supplies	400	400	400	0	0	0	1 200
Workshops			75700 Trainings / Workshops	600	600	600	0	0	0	1 800
Administrative&Finance Assistant, SB3, part-time			64397 DPC	850	850	850	0	0	0	2 550
HR Associate, ICS-6, part-time			64397 DPC	600	400	200	0	0	0	1 200
Finance Associate, ICS-8, part-time			64397 DPC	2 400	2 625	2 810	0	0	0	7 835
<b>UNDP Uzbekistan subtotal:</b>				<b>25 500</b>	<b>32 799</b>	<b>32 584</b>	<b>6 094</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>96 977</b>
Project specialist, SC7, full time	UNDP	EU	71400 Project Staff	20 400	20 400	20 400	20 400	20 400	0	102 000
Translation costs			74200 Translation services	500	500	500	0	0	0	1 500

Office stationery			72500 Office supplies	100	100	100	0	0	0	300
Audio-visual equipment (laptops for project beneficiaries and/or office equipment)			72400 Audiovisual Equipment	2 000	0	0	0	0	0	2 000
Equipment and furniture for office space			72220 Equipment	500	0	0	0	0	0	500
Office expenses (utilities, maintenance, premises management, security, and office communication costs, other CP related expenses)			73100 Rent and office maintenance	200	200	200	0	0	0	600
Travel (DSA, terminals, travel fares, etc.)			71600 Travel	3 000	3 000	3 000	1 000	1 000	0	11 000
Workshops			75700 Trainings / Workshops	8 000	8 000	8 000	0	0	0	24 000
Administrative&Finance Assistant, SC5, part-time			64397 DPC	8 40	840	840	840	840	0	4 200
Project Officer, NOB, part-time			64397 DPC	2 804	2 804	2 804	0	0	0	8 412
Programme Associate, GS6, part-time			64397 DPC	1 611	1 611	1 611	0	0	0	4 833
HR Associate, GS6, part-time			64397 DPC	1 715	1 715	1 715	0	0	0	5145
Finance Associate, GS6, part-time			64397 DPC	1 715	1 715	1 715	1 715	1 715	0	8 575
<i>UNDP Kyrgyzstan subtotal:</i>				<i>43 385</i>	<i>40 885</i>	<i>40 885</i>	<i>23 955</i>	<i>23 955</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>173 065</i>
TOTAL OUTPUT 4				166 884	227 963	231 648	162 345	178 634	0	967 747
<b>TOTAL DIRECT COSTS:</b>				<b>1 070 747</b>	<b>1 420 971</b>	<b>954 311</b>	<b>603 793</b>	<b>468 208</b>	<b>21 036</b>	<b>4 539 065</b>
<b>TOTAL GMS (7%):</b>				<b>74 952</b>	<b>99 468</b>	<b>66 802</b>	<b>42 266</b>	<b>32 775</b>	<b>1 473</b>	<b>317 735</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				<b>1 145 699</b>	<b>1 520 439</b>	<b>1 021 112</b>	<b>646 059</b>	<b>500 983</b>	<b>22 509</b>	<b>4 856 800</b>



### VIII. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

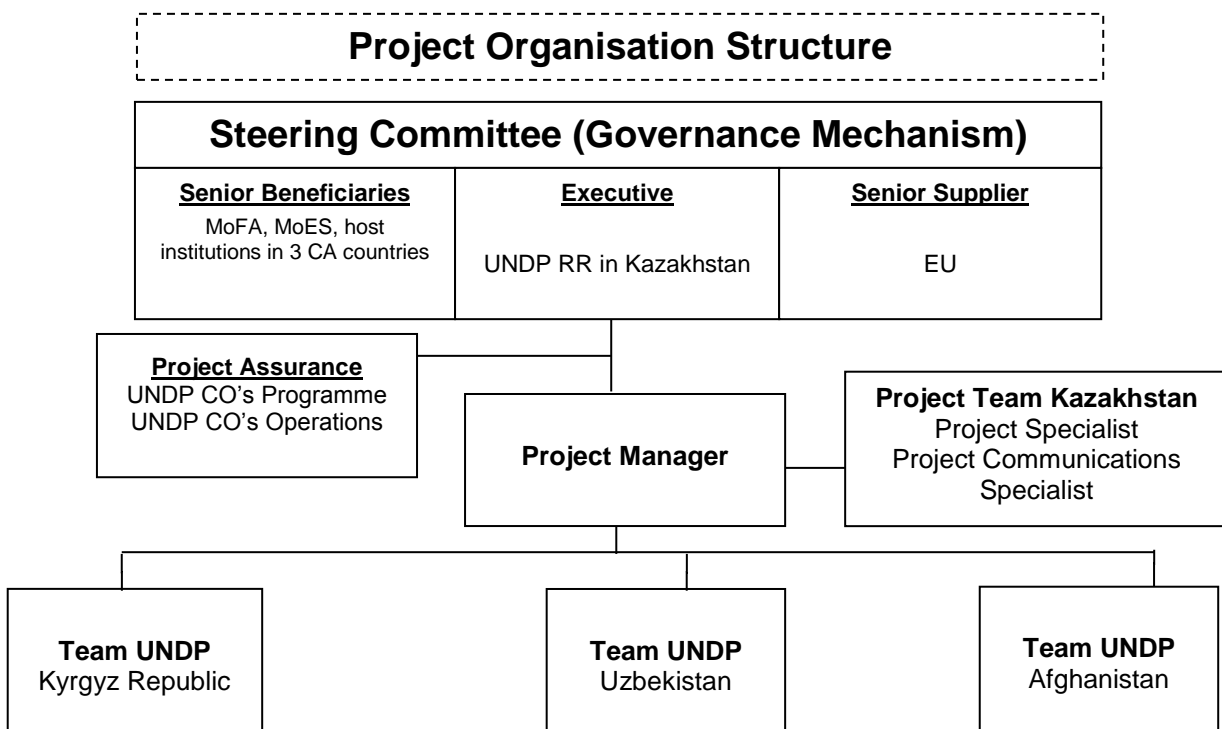
Due to its regional coverage and complex nature, and various levels of engaged partners in four countries, the Project will establish two levels of Project Boards. One is the **Steering Committee** and the second one called **Advisory Board**.

Among the main functions of the Steering Committee will be, but not limited to:

- Provide overall guidance and direction to the project;
- Confirmation of the annual Project plans and budget;
- Endorsement of the annual reports on the Project Implementation.

The **Steering Committee**, established in the Inception phase of the project, will function as a multi-stakeholder board to review performance-based monitoring and evaluation, and address implementation issues to ensure UNDP's accountability for activities, results and the use of resources, while at the same time fostering national ownership and alignment to national processes. The Steering Committee will be chaired by UNDP Resident Representative in Kazakhstan and consist of the senior management representatives of the country offices and the key stakeholders engaged in the project implementation. It will comprise representatives of engaged stakeholders, and particularly ensure representation of student rights-holders, including a representation of women with disabilities. Board members are expected to meet at least once a year. It will hold regular project reviews to assess the performance of the project and review the Multi-Year Work Plan to ensure realistic budgeting over the life of the project. The Project Steering Committee shall hold an end-of project review to capture and disseminate lessons learned with relevant audiences.

The project hierarchy will be organized as follows:



The **Advisory Board** will continue to be the main consultation body to ensure a wider partners' participation and opinion. Executing its advisory role, the Board will meet on quarterly basis to discuss a specific agenda of project's each quarter delivered and planned activities, to capture lessons learned, to share opinions on ongoing concerns. Advisory Board will consist of representatives from a wide range of stakeholders (working level), and particularly ensure representation of student rights-holders, including a representation of women with disabilities.

The issues that capture controversial points and recommendations of the Advisory Board will be brought to the attention of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee, as the primary coordinating authority reserves the right and prerogative to undertake and discharge coherent and integrated decisions for smooth and successful implementation of the action.

Taking into consideration the strategic importance of this project, the CO will ensure to keep RBEC/IRH informed regularly about the Steering Committee decisions and project progress and consult with IRH senior management/ GPB team prior to Steering Committee meetings.

## IX. LEGAL CONTEXT

This project forms part of an overall programmatic framework under which several separate associated country level activities will be implemented. When assistance and support services are provided from this Project to the associated country level activities, this document shall be the "Project Document" instrument referred to in: (i) the respective signed SBAs for the specific countries:

- **Kazakhstan:** Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Kazakhstan and UNDP signed on 4 October 1994.
- **Afghanistan:** Standard Technical Assistance Agreement between the Royal Government of Afghanistan and UN signed on 10 May 1956.
- **Kyrgyz Republic:** Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Kyrgyz Republic and UNDP signed on 14 September 1992.
- **Uzbekistan:** Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Uzbekistan and UNDP signed on 10 June 1993.

This project will be implemented by United Nations Development Programme ("Implementing Partner") in accordance with its financial regulations, rules, practices, and procedures.

## X. RISK MANAGEMENT

1. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will comply with the policies, procedures and practices of the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS.)
2. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure that none of the [project funds]<sup>39</sup> [UNDP funds received pursuant to the Project Document]<sup>40</sup> are used to provide support to individuals or entities associated with terrorism and that the recipients of any amounts provided by UNDP hereunder do not appear on the list maintained by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999). The list can be accessed via [http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq\\_sanctions\\_list.shtml](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq_sanctions_list.shtml). This provision must be included in all sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered under this Project Document.
3. Social and environmental sustainability will be enhanced through application of the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (<http://www.undp.org/ses>) and related Accountability Mechanism (<http://www.undp.org/secu-srm>).
4. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will: (a) conduct project and programme-related activities in a manner consistent with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards, (b) implement any management or mitigation plan prepared for the project or programme to comply with such standards, and (c) engage in a constructive and timely manner to address any concerns and complaints raised through the Accountability Mechanism. UNDP will seek to ensure that communities and other project stakeholders are informed of and have access to the Accountability Mechanism.

<sup>39</sup> To be used where UNDP is the Implementing Partner

<sup>40</sup> To be used where the UN, a UN fund/programme or a specialized agency is the Implementing Partner

5. In the implementation of the activities under this Project Document, UNDP as the Implementing Partner will handle any sexual exploitation and abuse (“SEA”) and sexual harassment (“SH”) allegations in accordance with its regulations, rules, policies and procedures.
6. All signatories to the Project Document shall cooperate in good faith with any exercise to evaluate any programme or project-related commitments or compliance with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards. This includes providing access to project sites, relevant personnel, information, and documentation.
7. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will ensure that the following obligations are binding on each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient:
  - a. Consistent with the Article III of the SBAA *[or the Supplemental Provisions to the Project Document]*, the responsibility for the safety and security of each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient and its personnel and property, and of UNDP’s property in such responsible parties, subcontractor’s and sub-recipient’s custody, rests with such responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient. To this end, each responsible party, subcontractor, and sub-recipient shall:
    - i. put in place an appropriate security plan and maintain the security plan, considering the security situation in the country where the project is being carried
    - ii. assume all risks and liabilities related to such responsible party’s subcontractor’s and sub-recipient’s security, and the full implementation of the security plan.
  - b. UNDP reserves the right to verify whether such a plan is in place, and to suggest modifications to the plan when necessary. Failure to maintain and implement an appropriate security plan as required hereunder shall be deemed a breach of the responsible parties, subcontractor’s and sub-recipient’s obligations under this Project Document.
  - c. In the performance of the activities under this Project, UNDP as the Implementing Partner shall ensure, with respect to the activities of any of its responsible parties, sub-recipients and other entities engaged under the Project, either as contractors or subcontractors, their personnel and any individuals performing services for them, that those entities have in place adequate and proper procedures, processes and policies to prevent and/or address SEA and SH.
  - d. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will take appropriate steps to prevent misuse of funds, fraud or corruption, by its officials, consultants, subcontractors and sub-recipients in implementing the project or programme or using the UNDP funds. It will ensure that its financial management, anti-corruption and anti-fraud policies are in place and enforced for all funding received from or through UNDP.
  - e. The requirements of the following documents, then in force at the time of signature of the Project Document, apply to each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient: (a) UNDP Policy on Fraud and other Corrupt Practices and (b) UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations Investigation Guidelines. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient agrees to the requirements of the above documents, which are an integral part of this Project Document and are available online at [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org).
  - f. In the event that an investigation is required, UNDP will conduct investigations relating to any aspect of UNDP programmes and projects. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will provide its full cooperation, including making available personnel, relevant documentation, and granting access to its (and its consultants’, subcontractors’ and sub-recipients’) premises, for such purposes at reasonable times and on reasonable conditions as may be required for the purpose

of an investigation. Should there be a limitation in meeting this obligation, UNDP shall consult with it to find a solution.

- g. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will promptly inform UNDP as the Implementing Partner in case of any incidence of inappropriate use of funds, or credible allegation of fraud or corruption with due confidentiality.

Where it becomes aware that a UNDP project or activity, in whole or in part, is the focus of investigation for alleged fraud/corruption, each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will inform the UNDP Resident Representative/Head of Office, who will promptly inform UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI). It will provide regular updates to the head of UNDP in the country and OAI of the status of, and actions relating to, such investigation.

- h. Where such funds have not been refunded to UNDP, the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient agrees that donors to UNDP (including the Government) whose funding is the source, in whole or in part, of the funds for the activities under this Project Document, may seek recourse to such responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient for the recovery of any funds determined by UNDP to have been used inappropriately, including through fraud or corruption, or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Project Document.

Note: The term "Project Document" as used in this clause shall be deemed to include any relevant subsidiary agreement further to the Project Document, including those with responsible parties, subcontractors, and sub-recipients.

- i. Each contract issued by the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient in connection with this Project Document shall include a provision representing that no fees, gratuities, rebates, gifts, commissions or other payments, other than those shown in the proposal, have been given, received, or promised in connection with the selection process or in contract execution, and that the recipient of funds from it shall cooperate with any and all investigations and post-payment audits.
- j. Should UNDP refer to the relevant national authorities for appropriate legal action any alleged wrongdoing relating to the project or programme, the Government will ensure that the relevant national authorities shall actively investigate the same and take appropriate legal action against all individuals found to have participated in the wrongdoing, recover and return any recovered funds to UNDP.
- k. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient shall ensure that all of its obligations set forth under this section entitled "Risk Management" are passed on to its subcontractors and sub-recipients and that all the clauses under this section entitled "Risk Management Standard Clauses" are adequately reflected, *mutatis mutandis*, in all its sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into further to this Project Document.

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## XI. ANNEXES

1. **Project Quality Assurance Report**
2. **Social and Environmental Screening Procedures Checklist**
3. **Risk Analysis**
4. **Project Board and Advisory Board Terms of Reference**