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**“ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN”
MPTF OFFICE GENERIC BI-ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2015**

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (RWEE) in the Kyrgyz Republic • MPTF Office Project Reference Number: 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p><i>(add Country/Region of implementation)</i> KYRGYZ REPUBLIC</p>
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN WOMEN • UN FAO • UN WFP • IFAD 	<p>The strategic result is to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the SDGs.</p>
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: USD 6,303,012 MPTF /JP Contribution³:</p>	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <p>National counterparts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic • Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic • Local self-government administrations • NGO Community Development Alliance • NGO Alliance for Budget Transparency • NGO Chui-Talas Rural Advisory Services
	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration 5 YEARS</p>

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

- UN Women: USD 520,321
- UN FAO: USD 385,589
- UN WFP: USD 382,345

Agency Contribution

- by Agency (if applicable)
- UN Women: USD 30,000

Other Contributions (donors)

(if applicable) – N/A

TOTAL: USD 1,318,256

Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.

Assessment/Review - if applicable *please attach*

Yes No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*

Mid-Term Evaluation Report – *if applicable please attach*

Yes No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*

Start Date (*15 10 2012*)

Original End Date (*14 10 2017*)

Report Submitted By

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³ The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the global amount (sum of Norway's and Sweden's contributions) transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

NARRATIVE REPORT FORMAT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Joint programme partners in Kyrgyzstan have made a significant progress in the implementation of the programme activities and results in 2015. Partners have developed and implemented a comprehensive approach to rural women's economic empowerment, addressing livelihoods and food security, women's participation in local decision-making, and integrating reproductive health and violence against women discussions in the community development dialogue. Programme continued implementation with 231 beneficiaries in five previously identified municipalities in Chuy and Naryn provinces, and expanded to cover additional 1,500 beneficiaries in 40 new municipalities in four provinces selected upon jointly agreed criteria. As a result of social mobilization and capacity development interventions 1,731 rural women in target communities have improved their financial literacy and business planning skills with some 319 starting own business initiatives in agriculture, handicrafts production, and service. Representatives of 20 local self-governments, and local water and pasture management institutions have been equipped with knowledge and practical skills for participatory gender-responsive planning and budgeting at the local level. In 2016 these trainees will be coached to develop or update their local development plans to integrate gender aspects through an inclusive process.

Rural women activists have been supported to formulate their challenges and offer recommendations to the policy makers on two important occasions. The Third National Conference devoted to Rural Women of Kyrgyzstan has been organized by the Ministry of Social Development on 18 June 2015 with the support of participating agencies among other donors. It brought together close to 150 active rural women, working in the health, education and agricultural sectors, as well as the former President of the Kyrgyz Republic HE Ms. Otunbayeva, Government representatives and members of Parliament. Recommendations developed during the conference have been submitted to relevant state agencies, and their implementation to be promoted and monitored by the Gender Policy Department.

During 1-17 October 2015 women's community funds of 18 villages have joined a global campaign of activism for rural women's empowerment. A total of 1874 of rural men and women, children and representatives of local governments have participated in the campaign activities, which included screening of short videos on the situation of rural women in Kyrgyzstan followed by public discussions, role plays and forum theatres showcasing challenges faced by rural women and ways to exercise their rights, song contests, and exhibitions of the women's groups' produce. Real case scenarios have been played out with participation of rural women and local government representatives using the forum theatre methodology, and alternative solutions to the issues faced by women and girls were developed with the public, raising awareness of both sides, and offering more favorable behavioral patterns for public acceptance and denouncing such harmful practices, as early marriages, bride kidnapping, and domestic violence.

Field activities during the reporting period have continued mostly in the two provinces Chuy and Naryn. Activities have focused on improving access of target groups to agricultural knowledge, quality inputs, and sustainable technologies as the agricultural season has kicked off in late February. As a result, 231 rural women have improved their production, learned and used resource effective

technologies, and thereby improved resilience to climate shocks, and ultimately food security and livelihoods. With the receipt of the second tranche of the RWEE Trust Fund in May 2015, similar assistance has been programmed to be provided to 1,500 new beneficiaries with the start of agricultural season in early March 2016.

Programme partners have developed a joint work plan, joint monitoring plan, and supported joint communication and advocacy events. Information sharing and coordination mechanism has been established through monthly coordination meetings. One National Steering Committee meeting has taken place in August 2015. Total budget received by the end of 2015 is 1,318,256USD from the Government of Norway and SIDA. Of the total programme budget received 51.4% have been expended, and 81.4% committed, with the remaining left to cover personnel, travel and operational costs through March 2016 when the next tranche is expected.

I. Purpose

The goal of RWEE programme is to promote rural women's economic empowerment in the Kyrgyz Republic. This corresponds with the Global Programme goal to secure rural women's livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the post-MDGs agenda. Programme is designed around the following three outcome areas: (i) increased food and nutrition security; (ii) better income and livelihood opportunities; (ii) enhanced leadership and participation of rural women in decision-making processes at the local and national levels; and (iii) a more gender responsive policy environment in the country. In Kyrgyzstan the RWEE National Steering Committee has reviewed and approved the merge of the first two outcomes into one as being complimentary to each other as the majority of livelihood opportunities of rural women in the country are closely linked to subsistence farming practices, as well as strengthening the importance of moving rural women out of subsistence farming into more productive and profitable agricultural and non-agricultural practice in addition to strengthening the food security and nutrition status.

The programme is in line with national priorities defined in the National Strategy on Sustainable Development (NSSD) 2013-2017, and the National Strategy on Gender Equality until 2020 with a special focus on improving the status of rural women, poverty reduction and sustainable agricultural development. It closely reflects priorities specified in the National Action Plan for GEWE 2015-2017, and also addresses concluding observations to the fourth periodic report of the Kyrgyz Republic to CEDAW committee, which underlines the need to undertake actions in response to the challenges faced by rural women.

The Programme is aligned with National Food Security and Nutrition Programme and Social Development Programme for 2015-2017 and designed around the national priority of increased income opportunities and food security, targeted at improving food security and nutrition status of rural vulnerable households through improved knowledge and technologies on agricultural production, value chain development and nutrition, which leads to improved food access, consumption and dietary diversity along with social and economic development.

Programme objectives are also aligned with UNDAF focus areas: 1) Peace and Cohesion, Effective Democratic Governance, and Human Rights, including deepening state building, security and justice for all; 2) Social Inclusion and Equity, encompassing issues of social protection, food security, education and health; and 3) Inclusive and Sustainable Growth for Poverty Reduction, with particular attention to vulnerable groups, including women and youth, as well as to disaster-prone communities.

The National Steering Committee is chaired by the Minister of Social Development, which hosts national gender mechanism and is responsible for coordinating Government’s national and international commitments in the area of GEWE. Its members include other key ministries, which participate in the discussions of key strategic decisions of the programme, such as work planning, monitoring progress and reporting.

II. Results

i) Narrative reporting on results:

Outcome 1: Rural women have increased income, better livelihoods and food security from enhanced agricultural productivity (Global outcome 1 Rural women have improved food and nutrition security & outcome 2 Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods and create wealth).

Results: In 2015, RWEE partners have laid foundation for increasing income opportunities, livelihood, food security and nutrition status of the beneficiaries. Partners have jointly selected target areas based on the initial survey of existing women’s groups and their operations, as well as jointly agreed criteria. These criteria included:

- Families headed by women and living beyond poverty line, single mothers, and families with members with disabilities;
- With income per member of household not exceeding 1,354 KGS (a*prox.18.5USD) per month in accordance with the state criteria for receiving social allowances;
- Families with a big number of children (three and more children younger than 14 years old);
- Families with access to 3-8 ares of land;

Four provinces have been selected, namely Osh, Jalalabad, Naryn, and Chuy where a big number of previously supported women’s groups are located with two in each of the northern and southern regions to ensure a geographic balance, and to create a critical mass of women’s groups and organizations without stretching limited funds to all provinces. Coverage of beneficiaries has increased from 231 rural women in 2014 to 1,731 in 2015, which is a significant progress to achieve a target of 6,500 women from vulnerable groups mobilized in self-help groups by 2017.

Indicator	2014	2015	End target
Number of rural women	231	1,731 (1,500 new)	6,500 (cumulative)

participating in the programme			
Number of self-help groups of rural women	36	254 (218 new)	N/A
Number of community funds (self-help group associations/women's organizations in each village) running joint economic activities	7	46 (39 new)	90
Number of indirect beneficiaries of programme	924	6,924	26,000
Number of provinces covered	2	4	5

Participatory Rural Appraisal exercises have taken place in each village aimed at defining the category of vulnerable families, which would be eligible to benefit from the programme, identifying potential economic activities, women's groups' capacity needs, and off-farm jobs in the communities. As part of social mobilization process rural women have been trained on gender and community development, working in groups, savings and basics of financial literacy, among other specialized trainings tailored to the economic activities women's groups would like to pursue.

As a result of business planning and financial literacy trainings provided by ARWEE partners 1,500 rural women in 45 villages have gained practical knowledge of working in groups, operating an effective economic activity based on GET Ahead methodology. This methodology is specifically developed to assist women in poverty starting or developing their small-scale businesses taking into consideration gender-specific challenges they face. The trainings aim at both economic and social empowerment helping women entrepreneurs to meet their practical and strategic gender needs, and gain business planning, management and marketing skills. The modules cover gender and entrepreneurship, business environment for women entrepreneurs, business and financial planning, marketing, management of people and networks, among others. After the training women's groups have developed their joint business and financial plans, which have been reviewed and evaluated by a local monitoring committee comprising local government, local council, women's committee, and informal activists. A total of 39 women's groups out of 218 have started their small businesses, providing self-employment and stable income for 168 rural women in groups, with an aggregate expected income of over 37,000 USD per year. The business ideas ranged from traditional sheep raising and handicrafts production to such innovative ideas as operating an ice rink, photo services, and growing flowers. While the actual economic impact is yet to be verified, initial observations demonstrate that economic benefits had not only better food security and nutrition outcomes, but also led to improved self-confidence of women, increased management of resources, and decision-making on business growth and investments. Partners intend to support women activists in conducting a number of campaigns and awareness raising events to influence public perceptions and practices in favour of fair

distribution of care responsibilities in families, better access to reproductive and family planning services, and elimination of violence against women and girls.

To address a lesson learnt in 2014 on integrating climate resilient technologies in agricultural trainings, in 2015 FAO has focused its activities on improving access of target groups to agricultural knowledge, quality inputs, and sustainable technologies as the agricultural season has kicked off in late February. These activities have continued mostly in the two provinces– Chuy and Naryn. All 231 women have undergone 2-day trainings on agricultural technologies of growing vegetables with one day of theory and second day of practical training in the field. The second training focused on improved technologies, which were accompanied by installation of 12 drip irrigation systems on the 12 demonstration plots. Rural women have received 2-day trainings on integrated pest management, water-efficient irrigation techniques and maintenance of drip irrigation system. Demonstration plots serve to show the effect and added value of using climate smart technologies to the wider communities. In addition, 36 knap sack sprayers have been delivered to the members of 36 women’s groups elected by the groups to provide plant protection services in their villages. No-till planters provided to the selected beneficiaries also aim to demonstrate low-cost resource-effective technological solutions to smallholder farmers, which ease the time and labour burden on women participating in the programme. The monetary value of equipment provided to beneficiaries shall be paid into the revolving fund of the groups to allow the other group members to access these technologies.

Preliminary results of using drip irrigation equipment have demonstrated that water consumption per hectare of land decreases up to 20 times compared to traditional furrow irrigation methods, and time required for irrigation is over five times less. Other advantages include increased yields due to better soil condition, better delivery of nutrients, less soil erosion, among others. Its ease of operation decreased women’s burden, and dependency on male family members to irrigate her kitchen garden. Final round of trainings aimed at home processing of vegetables produced on their land plots provided easy to use tips and recipes to women to conserve vegetables, which has both nutritional benefits for the family, provide longer storage opportunity, and added value for selling the processed goods, and ultimately leads to popularization of sustainable food production and consumption practices. Regular extension support has played a key role in ensuring application of the knowledge on the fields by training participants, adjustments to the climatic specifics, and monitoring and providing additional coaching and support to women farmers participating in this programme. 231 rural women in two target provinces have improved their vulnerability to climate shocks and their access to quality services, thus improving the agricultural productivity, and ultimately food security and livelihoods of their families because of these interventions. Similar support will be provided in 2016 to the newly mobilized 1500 beneficiaries with the start of agricultural season in early March 2016.

WFP has launched preparation of training modules and modalities, identified implementing partners and purchased food to be distributed to 1500 project participants in February 2016 within the frames of Food for Training component. The latter will include training in nutrition and value chain development. For nutrition training WFP has contracted Republic Health Promotion Centre under the Ministry of Health to develop unified nutrition modules. Standard modules will encompass international best experience and national specifics to be used by all government and non-governmental partners working on nutrition in the country. Presently modules are being finalized and training is planned to be conducted in 2016. For participation in the trainings conducted by the programme partners, each participant will

be provided with 100 kg of fortified wheat flour and 10 liters of vegetable oil in February 2016. To enable this, WFP has purchased 163.800 MT of wheat flour end of 2015. Food assistance will allow the most vulnerable participants to benefit from training opportunities without compromising their need to search/engage in daily work in the field or as labourers. The provision of food assistance will support the project participants, who are vulnerable women-headed households, during the lean season and help them overcome the food gap, while also enabling them to purchase more varied local food products for the released money and thus improve their dietary diversity. Food assistance will also serve as an incentive for the participation of the women in a wide range of training activities provided by programme partners.

Outcome 2: Rural women have mastered leadership and actively participate in shaping laws, policies and systems of service provision at local and central levels (Global Outcome 3 Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes)

Results: Under this outcome programme partners aim to develop rural women's knowledge and skills to participate in local decision-making process, and simultaneously capacitate local governments in gender-responsive development planning and budgeting to provide platform for effective cooperation of women activists and the local government institutions. To implement this task UN Women has conducted four week-long leadership schools in each of the target provinces attended by a total of 155 persons, including 116 women. Participants have been selected from 20 target municipalities representing local self-government, local council, pasture committees, water users' associations, youth and women's committees and active rural women activists. During the leadership schools participants have been learned gender mainstreaming approaches and tools in local development planning and budgeting processes with a focus on participatory approaches to address specific needs of vulnerable groups, including women and girls. Participants have been introduced to the gender equality and women's empowerment situation in KR, the country's national and international commitments to ensure gender equality, and basic concepts of inequality, social diversity, rights and opportunities of diverse groups, and concepts of gender equality and women's empowerment. Leadership school participants have also discussed a comprehensive concept of women's economic empowerment going beyond the access to economic opportunities and decision-making, but also the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights, family planning, and elimination of violence against women and girls in achieving women's economic empowerment. Group work, such as exercise on gender budgeting, calculating cost of violence and time budgets have all contributed to learning. As a result, participants have improved overall gender sensitivity, skills to identify specific gender needs, knowledge and skills to participate/facilitate inclusive local development planning process. As a result of the leadership schools project implementation teams have been formed in 20 target municipalities comprising representatives of local governments, local councils, water users associations, pasture committees, rural health committees and women activists. Evening sessions have provided for informal discussions around the position of women in Kyrgyzstan using video and graphic materials, and leadership master classes were offered with prominent women leaders, including members of Parliament, local government officials, and successful women in business. In view of the challenges faced in meeting MDG indicators on maternal mortality in Kyrgyzstan UNFPA experts have been invited to contribute a session on the importance of the sexual and reproductive health and rights, along with family planning, and to highlight the importance of raising

awareness of rural women on these issues, including through effective partnerships with rural health committees. As a result, participants have gained skills to identify specific gender needs, knowledge and skills to participate/facilitate inclusive local development planning process. The participants are expected to use this knowledge in the participatory process of developing or updating a local development strategy/plan through joint discussion of development needs and priorities addressing specific needs of all population groups. Joint Programme partners will provide expert support and coaching throughout this process. Gender analysis of five samples of the existing local development plans have revealed that such plans are not only gender-blind, but also very weak in the problem analysis, prioritization, strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation of the progress. The Ministry of Economic Development of the Kyrgyz Republic has developed a methodological guidance for all local self-government bodies of the country to be used in their planning processes. The guidance requires integration of gender equality, environmental sustainability and conflict prevention dimensions throughout the problem analysis, prioritization, strategic planning, and M&E sections of the local development strategies and plans.

15 women activists from target communities, which have attended leadership school and training on gender-responsive local planning, have been equipped with knowledge and skills of gender-responsive local planning and budgeting, and will be involved and coached during 2016 to formulate gender-specific priorities, communicate and lobby them in the development process. Women activists have also been supported in formulating and voicing their concerns and recommendations to the local and national level government representatives during the National Rural Women's Day on 18 June and 17-days activism for rural women's empowerment during 1-17 October 2015. These forums, community level communications, and advocacy initiatives have been used to raise the profile of rural women activists, to increase public awareness of the situation of rural women, advocate with local governments, council members, and service providers.

The Third National Conference devoted to Rural Women has been held on 18 June 2015. This day has been established as Kyrgyzstan's National Rural Women's Day by special order of the government, thus recognizing the significant contribution of women to the development of rural areas and the national economy of the Kyrgyz Republic. It has been organized by the Ministry of Social Development with the support of ARWEE partners and other donors. It brought together close to 150 active rural women, working in the health, education and agricultural sectors, as well as the former President of the Kyrgyz Republic HE Ms. Otunbayeva and Government representatives including Vice Prime Minister Ms. Niyazalieva, Minister of Education Ms. Sariyeva, Minister of Social Development, Mr. Bazarbayev, members of Parliament including Ms. Roza Aknazarova, and others. The event provided an opportunity to remind everyone of the critical role and contribution of women in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty. Rural women highlighted their concerns regarding a high prevalence of early and unregistered marriages, as well as issues such as bride kidnapping and polygamy. The meeting agreed that such practices prevent women and especially girls from realizing their full potential and limit the growth potential of the economy, thereby impeding the reduction of the poverty rate. Concerted action would need be taken urgently to improve access of rural women to quality health, education and social protection services. The Gender Policy Department of the Ministry of Social Development has drafted recommendations developed during the conference and submitted them to responsible government agencies.

As part of joint communication on rural women, participating agencies have supported the conduct of the series of events devoted to the 17 days of activism for rural women's empowerment. During 1-17 October 2015 women's community funds of 18 villages have joined a

global campaign of activism for rural women's empowerment. A total of 1874 of rural men and women, children and representatives of local governments have participated in the campaign activities, which included screening of short videos on the situation of rural women in Kyrgyzstan followed by public discussions, role plays and forum theatres showcasing challenges faced by rural women and ways to exercise their rights, song contests, and exhibitions of the women's groups' produce. Real case scenarios have been played out with participation of rural women and local government representatives using the forum theatre methodology, and alternative solutions to the issues faced by women and girls were developed with the public, raising awareness of both sides, and offering more favourable behavioral patterns for public acceptance and denouncing such harmful practices, as early marriages, bride kidnapping, and domestic violence.

Outcome 3: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women (Global Outcome 4)

Results: Main activities aimed at improving the policy environment have been planned to start in 2016 with a focus on sectoral policies with biggest influence on the lives of rural women, such as the national agricultural development strategy, social protection policies, etc. However, the Joint programme partners have started taking initial steps with national partners in this direction, as described below.

One of the interventions of the joint programme to improve national policies for the rural women's empowerment is to strengthen the productive safety net system for rural population, including rural women, thereby increasing rural women's resilience to economic and environmental shocks through an improved social protection. To achieve this WFP has facilitated an establishment of an inter-ministerial working group with the aim to enhance the role of national social protection schemes in strengthening food security. Such measures include supporting the national counterparts to address fragmentation of existing social benefits to support poor and vulnerable households through more holistic approach in a coordinated manner, including addressing needs and gaps of the poorest households. WFP and national partners will be conducting further analysis and will be working with various national institutions to design a unified system for providing safety net support for families in difficult life situation. It is expected that the system will be designed and piloted in 2016, and the results of the pilot will be used by the national counterparts to enhance existing social protections systems.

At the request of rural women activists UN Women and its implementing partners have carried out an express analysis of the law, which has recently introduced changes to the social insurance tariffs. The analysis have concluded that the amendments have increased the burden on women and the poor in general without any benefits in the pension allocations. Further in-depth analysis and consultations will be held with relevant stakeholders to identify next steps.

As part of the work on improved rural gender statistics, the programme has tapped into an ongoing initiative of FAO to support the conduct of agricultural census in Kyrgyzstan in 2016. FAO has helped to develop a comprehensive concept, methodologies, and

indicative budget for the Government to use for raising the required funds in addition to those allocated from the national budget. The survey questionnaires have been analyzed and recommendations have been made to improving gender-disaggregation of data. The census is planned to start in 2016 and will provide important data on the access of women to productive assets in the agricultural sector, reveal gender gaps in ownership and inheritance of land resources, as well as their participation in agricultural business enterprises. Census findings will inform Government policies on agricultural development from gender perspective, and serve as the basis for the programme's dialogue with relevant state institutions.

- **Describe any delays in implementation, challenges, lessons learned & best practices:**

If there were delays, explain the nature of the constraints and challenges, actions taken to mitigate future delays and lessons learned in the process. Provide an updated risk analysis (have any of the risks identified during the project design materialized or changed? Are there any new risks?). Were there any programmatic revisions undertaken during the reporting period? Please also include experiences of failure, which often are the richest source of lessons learned.

Delays: The programme has seen delays related to two main components: agricultural activities and leadership trainings for rural women as explained in detail below. The remedial actions have been taken and all activities foreseen by the work plan will have been completed by March 2016.

Participating agencies have developed a joint proposal and work plan for funding following the receipt of an additional contribution to the RWEE Trust Fund by SIDA with an expectation to receive funds before the start of agricultural season in late February. The funds have been received in late May 2015, and agencies have revised the work plan to deliver agricultural inputs and extension support in late February 2016. The relevant revisions to the work plan have been reviewed and endorsed by the National Steering Committee in late August 2015 with a note that such revision not to impede the quality of work planned for the year 2016. Agencies have undertaken all necessary preparations by the end of 2015 to implement this recommendation.

Activities aimed at building leadership skills of rural women to meaningfully participate in local decision-making processes have not started as initially planned during the reporting period. UN Women, primarily responsible for this set of activities, has designed one solicitation process for these services to implement planned tasks, in order to ensure synergies and unified approach across all target areas. The planning for activities has been finalized and scheduled to actively start in mid-October 2015. Parliamentary elections taking place on the 4th October 2015 and accompanying election campaigns left little opportunity for the programme to convene group members and conduct capacity building activities. Training activities have been completed mostly in 2015, however delivery of results under Outcome 2 of the programme will take place by the end of the second quarter of 2016.

One of the main lessons learnt from implementation is related to the fact that rural women face a wide range of challenges to become economically empowered. While the joint programme cannot address all of them, it is important to ensure that programme participants get access and referral to the services and information vital for their empowerment. Thus while the programme focuses on productive assets the reproductive functions will continue putting a constraint on the women. To address these challenges the programme has

established a cooperation with UNFPA trainers to conduct sessions on the sexual and reproductive health and rights for women, community action to improve reproductive health during the leadership training sessions of the programme. In addition, the joint programme partners have agreed to pool their resources to support joint communication activities in order to raise public awareness on the problems of violence against women and girls, early marriage, and other pertaining issues in the communities.

- **Qualitative assessment:**

Programme partners have completed all activities under annual work plan approved by the National Steering Committee, under which all agriculture-related activities have been postponed to take place in the first quarter of 2016. Social mobilization and initial capacity building interventions have laid foundation for future inputs in the agricultural production, nutrition trainings, and Value Chain Development support to beneficiaries.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

Using the **Programme Results Framework from the Project Document / AWP**⁴ - provide an update on the achievement of indicators at both the output and outcome level in the table below. Where it has not been possible to collect data on indicators, clear explanation should be given explaining why, as well as plans on how and when this data will be collected.

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1 Rural women have increased income, better livelihoods and food security from enhanced agricultural productivity			
Output 1.1 Rural women are equipped with the skills and knowledge to run economic activities			
Indicator 1.1.1 Number of rural women mobilized in self-help groups for joint economic activities Baseline: 231	1,731	On target	Partner reports

⁴ Please refer to the attached PMF for your easy reference

<p>Target by 2017: 2,000 women from vulnerable groups</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.2 % of families of SHGs having increased access to diversified diet both during harvest and lean seasons (% of families with improved food consumption indicators) Baseline: 0 Target: at least 95 % of families of SHGs members have increased access to diversified diet both during harvest and lean seasons</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.3 Number of women organisations (Community Funds, cooperatives, CBOs) running economic activities Baseline: 0 Target: at least 40 women organizations</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.4 Average % of increase household income among members of self-help groups Baseline: 0 Target: at least up to 20 % by the end of project</p>	<p>Not available</p> <p>all 39 community funds</p> <p>Not available</p>	<p>Data will be collected in early 2016</p> <p>On target</p> <p>Data will be collected in June 2016</p>	<p>Verification and post-distribution monitoring reports</p> <p>Partner reports</p> <p>Household summary report profiles,</p>
<p>Output 1.2 Rural women have increased opportunities for remunerated work at village level</p> <p>Indicator 1.2.1 Number of rural women trained on professions in demand at village level through Food for Training activities Baseline: 0 Target: at least 20 women (in 2015)</p> <p>Indicator 1.2.2 Percentage of trained women establishing their own enterprise/business, producing agri/livestock/craft. etc. Baseline: 0 Target: at least 50% (in 2015) of trained women get paid for their professional services</p>	<p>0</p> <p>0</p>	<p>Will be achieved by June 2016</p> <p>Will be achieved by December 2016</p>	<p>Partner reports</p> <p>Partner reports</p>
<p>Outcome 2 Rural women have mastered</p>			

leadership and actively participate in shaping laws, policies and systems of service provision at local and central levels			
Output 2.1 Rural women have mastered leadership skills to participate in and influence decision making at local and central levels Indicator 2.1.1 Number of rural women leaders participated in the process of local planning and budgeting Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 30 (in 2015) Indicator 2.1.2 Number of rural women participated in policy lobbying activities at central level Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 0 (in 2015)	0 n/a	Will be achieved by March 2016 No central level policy lobbying activities planned for 2015	Partner reports n/a
Output 2.2 Local governments have increased capacities to ensuring transparent and gender responsive planning and budgeting system Indicator 2.2.1 Number of local development plans/budgets developed based on participatory process Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 10 (in 2015) Indicator 2.2.2 Number of joint local government-communities initiatives addressing specific needs of rural women Baseline: 0 Target: 0 (in 2015)	0 0	Will be achieved by June 2016 No initiatives planned in 2015	Partner reports Partner reports
Output 2.3 Rural women are equipped with the skills and knowledge to participate in and influence decisions of local service providers Indicator 2.3.1 Share of rural women participate in Association of Water Users and Pasture	0	Will be achieved by June 2016	Partner reports

<p>Committees Baseline: 0 Planned Target: at least 30% (in 2015)</p> <p>Indicator 2.3.2 Share of priorities proposed by rural women included in the AWUs / PC development plans Baseline: 0 Planned Target: at least 10% (in 2015)</p>	0	Will be achieved by June 2016	Partner reports
<p>Outcome 3 A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women</p>			
<p>Output 3.1 Policy makers have enhanced capacities to mainstream gender into food, agriculture and rural employment policies, laws and budgets</p> <p>Indicator 3.1.1. Agricultural Development Strategy integrates gender priorities, including in its Action Plan and budget Baseline: gender neutral Target: Adoption of the Strategy with gender priorities integrated throughout the text, plan and budget</p> <p>Indicator 3.1.2. Gender priorities integrated in the Employment Policies (rural development) of the Ministry of Economic Development, including its Action Plan and budget Baseline: gender neutral Target: Adoption of the Policy with gender priorities integrated throughout the text, plan and budget</p>	n/a	Activity planned for 2016	Strategy, report
<p>Indicator 3.1.2. Gender priorities integrated in the Employment Policies (rural development) of the Ministry of Economic Development, including its Action Plan and budget Baseline: gender neutral Target: Adoption of the Policy with gender priorities integrated throughout the text, plan and budget</p>	n/a	Activity planned for 2016-2017	Relevant policies, report
<p>Output 3.2 Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women</p> <p>Indicator 3.2.1. % of recommendations for filling in data gaps in rural gender statistics integrated</p>	n/a	Activity planned for 2016-2017	Gender statistics reports

<p>Baseline: 0 Target: At least 60 % of recommendation integrated</p> <p>Indicator 3.2.2. The census and agriculture units of NSC integrate gender-inclusive methodologies in agricultural census and/or surveys on rural populations</p>	<p>Done</p>	<p>Will continue as per NSC requests</p>	<p>Survey templates</p>
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iii) A Specific Story (Optional)

Human story 1

Mahabat Botasheva, in her early 50s, is an enthusiastic leader of a group of five women in Blagoveshenka village of Jalal-Abad province in Kyrgyzstan. For a few years, she had an idea of a growing pot flowers as a business, made a few attempts, but lacked starting capital and business skills. In August 2015, she joined a self-help group “Dostuk”, and together with her groupmates from the same village attended a number of trainings of working in a group, operating savings, keeping records of group activities, basics of gender and development. The group Mahabat leads is very representative of her multi-ethnic village, and unites women of Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Russian ethnic background, who face similar livelihoods challenges, and difficulties in fending for their families’ lives. Mahabat offered her groupmates to start growing pot flowers as a joint business. Everyone supported the idea of what they called a “beautiful business”. The group started saving up small amounts of money, bought a magazine “The world of flowers” to learn about trends, types of flowers in demand, and specifics of growing technology. However, the amount of savings was not sufficient to start the business and purchase the necessary inputs, such as pots, seedlings, fertilizers, working tools, etc. Through trainings provided by ARWEE partners in October and November 2015, the group developed their business and financial plan, identified potential buyers and marketing channels. Their business plan has been selected as the most viable, profitable and beneficial for economic empowerment of group members in their municipality, and 60,000 KGS (approx. 800 USD) was granted as a starting capital. The group invested 18,000 KGS (240 USD) from their savings and purchased all necessary inputs. According to their cash flow this amount is due on 14 March 2016.

Today the flower business is prospering. In one and a half months since the start, total income from sales has exceeded 93,000 KGS (approx.1240 USD).

Mahabat believes that the key to success has been in a good business and marketing plan, discipline and responsibility of her group. There is a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities in their joint work. Thus, Mahabat and Dilbarhan are responsible for service agreement with the greenhouse where they grow seedlings, for purchasing seeds at the market and overseeing other supplies, and financial record keeping of their cash flow. Dilbarhan is the group’s treasurer. Natalya and Ainura are in charge of marketing of their produce. They visit offices, schools, kindergartens, post offices in their village and district capital township, which are potential buyers. They also help take care of the flowers. Katcha is the main flower gardener of the group. She maintains the flowers, keeps record of their growth, moving of the seedlings, fertilizing, and preparing for sale. Hasiyat’s strengths are in communicating with buyers, so she volunteered for operating a stall at the market. She enjoys talking with customers, and asking about their preferences.

The women expect large orders for the celebration of the 8th of March. Mahabat is confident that they will return the capital to the revolving fund on time for the next group of women to start their own business. The remaining income will be reinvested in working capital and expanding the assortment of flowers. Moreover the head of their municipal administration, who is a member of the local monitoring committee, responsible for selection and monitoring of economic initiatives, having observed the success of this group, has offered support to grow their business. He committed to contribute part of the funds for construction of a greenhouse for growing flowers from the municipal budget. Mahabat proudly reported that she already found a suitable land plot for rent. Together they have made a cost estimate and plan to start the construction as soon as they have sufficient funds saved after the initial capital will have been repaid.

Mahabat’s group continues regular collection of savings of the group. Today they have about 10,000 KGS (133 USD) in savings. They have agreed to use these funds for buying a present to

each group member on their birthday. The present will need to be something that makes their household chores easier. The first in line is Ainura. On the 30th of March they will make a gift of a refrigerator – she does not have one and keeps her food in her neighbor's fridge. Next in line is Natalya. She asked a computer to connect to internet, get more information about growing flowers and help develop their business. This would also help her keep better contacts with her relatives in Russia. Mahabat will be the last to get a present. She has long wanted to buy an automatic washing machine. Despite having a profession of an accountant, she could not find a paid job in the village. Last year she rented a piece of land to grow barley and grass to earn money for paying her daughter's tuition. As a single mother, she needs to take care of her two daughters alone. According to Mahabat participation in this programme helped women to get skills for operating a small business effectively, and better managing their incomes. Most importantly, women have become more confident in their families and more active in community life. The income they started receiving will not only improve their economic status but will help make women's lives easier, so that they can be healthier and happier.

Human story 2

Bolshevik village is one of the 45 villages where RWEE started working in 2015. It is located in a Naryn province, close to high altitude mountains with a poor transport access and limited social infrastructure. There is one school, a kindergarten, and a medical point, which are the only employers in the village. In the absence of water and heating the rural women and children, carry the burden of collecting water and wood for families. Due to harsh climatic conditions, vegetation period is short, hence the main source of livelihood is animals, which are often of low quality and productivity.

Munara Mambetova, 30 years old, mother of five children, joined a self-help group in August 2015 when RWEE started social mobilization in their village. With her fellow groupmates who have young children, she regretted that their children had no place for cultural or physical activities. Munara has seen an ice rink on the way from the nearest city and thought it was a good idea for their village too, given their winters could last up to six months. She suggested this idea to the group, another woman suggested photo services, and they agreed to develop a business plan for these two ideas. From among five other alternatives their business plan has been selected as the most viable, and the group received 80,000 KGS (1067 USD) from the revolving fund to start their business.

In early December 2015 Munara, her groupmates, and their husbands have together started levelling the ground and preparing an ice rink. They bought 9 pairs of skates, including three for kids, installed a projector, connected player to loudspeakers, and waited. Schoolchildren have flooded the rink after their classes finished, and stood in line to try skating. As it coincided with Christmas season, the women have also decorated a Christmas tree in the middle of the rink. Both children and adults were happy to come for skating, and photo service was very popular with Christmas tree on the background.

Until today the group has earned over 30,000 KGS (400 USD) of income besides paying salaries to two group members who operated the rental of skates during two months. According to their financial plan, their first payment of 40,000 KGS is due at the end of March, with the second and last payment at the end of June. These funds will then be given to the next group to realize their business idea. Munara is confident that the payments will be done on time, as they have already

exceeded their planned targets.

Munara and her peers are happy with their business, and started discussing further plans. When the warm season starts, they intend to turn the ice rink into a roller track. Villagers started inviting them to their festivities for taking and printing their pictures. They are still struggling with the use of computer, photo editing applications and the printer. They intend to send one of them to the nearest city to get training and come back to train others. Munara sees this as another business opportunity and started thinking about opening computer literacy classes once they have additional income to reinvest and expand.

Munara and her peers feel a big change in their lives, beyond economic gains. They told about feeling accomplished and useful for others. They are proud to have their own business, where they can make their own decisions, and manage their joint resources and money, make plans for the future. They have learned new skills, which increases their status in the eyes of the villagers.

Every month Munara and her group report at the meeting of the self-help groups association about the progress, financial status, challenges, and achievements. Besides the joint activities, rural women also started discussing issues of reproductive health, family relationship, and improving quality of life with the income women started bringing to their families. The agenda for next month is celebration of the 8th of March. They want to devote the celebration to women's activism, show the examples of prominent women leaders from their region known in the past and now, and encourage more active political participation of women at the next local council elections this autumn.

According to Munara, participation in RWEE helped women get out of their home routines, and start engaging in community life, voice their concerns, and learn skills to bring change.

III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)

- No assessments or evaluations during the reporting period

IV. Programmatic Revisions (if applicable)

- With the endorsement of the National Steering Committee implementation of the second tranche has been extended through May 2016 to allow delivery of agricultural assistance when the season starts.

V. Coordination mechanisms

- National Steering Committee of the programme has been established in October 2014 and convenes on a bi-annual basis to review progress and endorse key programmatic decisions. It comprises representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Agency for local self-government and inter-ethnic relations, and representatives of four participating agencies. The Minister of Labour and Social Protection co-chairs the National Steering Committee jointly with the head of one of the participating agencies on a rotational basis. UN Women's Representative in Kyrgyzstan has been elected as co-chair for the year 2015 and will hand over the co-chairing to the next agency in 2016.

- Technical working group comprises the focal points of four agencies participating in the joint programme. It convenes on a monthly basis to share information, coordinate, and discuss any upcoming events and issues.
- Technical working group develops a joint work plan with details of each agency's activities, schedule and places to facilitate better coordination of individual interventions. Based on the work plan, partners develop a joint monitoring plan to review progress, monitor key activities in the field and start discussions on the effectiveness of the programme's approach. A joint communication plan development is also in progress.

VI. Resources

- No additional resources have been mobilized.