

Cover Page

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Description	Proposal submitted to the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund focusing on support to early recovery and inclusive service delivery for vulnerable groups heavily affected by the COVID-19 crisis in Uzbekistan																			
Universal Markers	<u>Gender Marker:</u> <i>(bold the selected; pls select one only)</i> a) Have gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls as the primary or principal objective. b) Make a significant contribution to gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls; c) Make a limited contribution or no contribution to gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls.																			
Fund Specific Markers	Human Rights Based Approach to COVID19 Response <i>(bold the selected):</i> Yes/No Considered OHCHR guidance in proposal development																			
	Fund Windows <i>(bold the selected; pls select one only)</i> Window 1: Enable Governments and Communities to Tackle the Emergency Window 2: Reduce Social Impact and Promote Economic Response																			
Geographical Scope	Regions: Central Asia Country: Uzbekistan																			
Recipient UN Organizations	UNDP (Lead agency), UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM																			
Implementing Partners	Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction, Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support, partner with Ministry of Public Education and CSOs, UNODC (Technical Agency), UNV																			
Programme and Project Cost	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Budget</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Agency</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Amount</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Comments</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Budget Requested</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 1,000,000</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>In-kind Contributions</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 1,000,000</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Budget	Agency	Amount	Comments	Budget Requested		\$ 1,000,000		In-kind Contributions		0		Total		\$ 1,000,000	
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Programme Duration	Start Date: 1 June 2020																			
Duration (In months):	7 months																			
End Date:	December 2020																			



The UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UN COVID-19 MPTF)

Proposal

Proposal Title: **Support to Early Recovery and Inclusive Service Delivery for Vulnerable Groups Heavily Affected by the COVID-19 Crisis**

Amount: **USD 1,000,000**

I. Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19

The local transmission COVID-19 continues in various regions of Uzbekistan

On 15 March 2020, Uzbekistan detected its first case of COVID-19. As of 20 May 2020, there were 2,880 confirmed COVID-19 cases, including 13 deaths and 2,349 recoveries. Already in January, the authorities moved quickly to ramp up health preparedness, and following confirmation of the outbreak, the Government decided to close learning centres and cancel all public gatherings. Subsequently, the authorities implemented more restrictive social distancing policy measures leading to the closure of public transportation, non-essential businesses, and public spaces. Uzbekistan also closed its borders to non-trade entry or exit until to combat accelerated transmission of the virus. At the end of April, the Government began to ease restrictions on certain types of businesses. Nevertheless, in line with WHO guidance, a range of infection prevention and control measures, including movement restrictions, physical distancing, and disinfection measures, are likely to need to continue over the mid- to longer-term to prevent the uncontrollable spread of infection.

COVID-19 is progressively disrupting Uzbekistan's economy

Beginning with modest supply chain disruptions in February, the global spread of the crisis has had more acute effects on the economy as tighter transport, and travel restrictions eroded trade and tourism. Initial estimates from March 2020 are that about 475,000, or 85 percent of small businesses temporary closures. Economic projections show that GDP growth will fall sharply to 1.6 percent in 2020 compared with 5.7 percent projected in January. Exports are likely to fall by at least 10 percent, compared with 2019.¹

In 2019, the unemployment rate in Uzbekistan amounted to 9.1 percent of the economic active population and a level of registered female unemployment is more than male one and amounted to 12.7 percent. The share of informal employment is high at 54.3 percent in non-agricultural sectors. The structure of informal employment among women differs from men: most informally employed women work full-time; over a quarter of informally employed women are engaged in family-related business, while only one in ten men is informally employed in it. The share of women engaged in individual entrepreneurship was much lower in comparison to men.² The COVID-19 affected employees in low-paid jobs and in informal, temporary, or other precarious forms of employment, especially in the absence of social protection.

¹ According to the World Bank, early trade data for the first quarter suggest that imports have fallen by around 10 percent and exports by about 18 percent compared with the first quarter of 2019.

² 2020 Voluntary National Review for Uzbekistan

The COVID-19 outbreak has severely impacted the poorest and most vulnerable populations

While the Government has placed a strong focus on reaching the neediest categories of the population, the outbreak occurred at a time of significant transition of the new Ministry of Mahallas and Family Support (MMFS), which has the mandate to deliver coordinated assistance to the vulnerable populations in the community. Compounded by the legacy of a highly fragmented social protection system (acknowledged as such by the Government), there is constraint in the new Ministry's capacity to ensure evidence-driven decision-making and to reach the neediest people with targeted support. Moreover, the absorption of the major national gender machinery, the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, into the new Ministry, created an impediment to the ability of vulnerable women to access an important point of contact and immediate support from the state during this very challenging period.

Immediate health and socioeconomic responses to COVID-19 have been put in place

The Special Republican Commission on Developing the Programme of Measures on Prevention of Import and Spread of Novel Type of Coronavirus in the Republic of Uzbekistan oversees the national health response to the crisis. Established on 29 January, even before the confirmation of the first case of COVID-19, the Prime Minister chairs the Commission. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been working closely with the Commission through the Ministry of Health to prepare and respond to COVID-19 since January 2020.

To complement the Special Republican Commission's focus on the health response, on 19 March, the Government established the Republican Anti-Crisis Commission, also led by the Prime Minister, to manage the policy response to the socio-economic aspects of the crisis. The Commission has three objectives: (i) to preserve income and livelihoods, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable; (ii) to prevent long-term damage to the economy; and (iii) to safeguard the economic transition and reform program. Multilateral partners, including several UN organizations and agencies, have been engaging with the Commission on a regular basis to provide analysis, policy recommendations, and support drawing on emerging global good practice.

The authorities have so far announced two large anti-crisis packages, comprising financial and regulatory measures, to support the health and economic policy responses. The Government announced the first anti-crisis package, budgeted at about USD1 billion on March 20. The focus areas of health spending include large scale-up testing, procurement of new health equipment, boosting frontline workers' salaries, and creating temporary health infrastructure facilities. A second anti-crisis package, announced on April 3, seeks to support the economy with a range of tax exemptions, a reduction in import tariffs for medical supplies and food, an extension of deadlines for loan repayments, and additional social safety net payments. However, the socioeconomic response measures were of very limited scale in terms of direct income support to people, including many vulnerable groups. This limits the vulnerable groups' abilities to have their own resources to overcome challenges leading to their dependence on state institutions to take care of them.

The socioeconomic response is in line with emerging global practices

The government's anti-crisis package demonstrates a proactive and early approach to safeguarding well-being, incomes, livelihoods, and the long-term potential of the economy. Within the overall framework of the evolving national response, as well as the national economic reform roadmap and the national SDGs, the UN-led Crisis Management Team submitted to Government on 11 May 2020 a consolidated Multilateral Socio-Economic Response Offer on COVID-19. The Offer is guided by the "UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19" and the respective policy decisions of participating international financial institutions (IFIs) on the COVID-19 response. Under the overall guidance of the UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP provided technical leadership for the socio-economic response offer, in partnership with five international financial institutions and 16 UN entities.³ The present Joint

³ On 12 March 2020, the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) established the multilateral partners' COVID-19 Crisis Management Team (CMT), which includes the international financial institutions and the UN Country Team. Chaired by the UNRC, the CMT aims to enable a coherent and coordinated multilateral response to the crisis. Five Task Forces support the CMT: (i) Health capacity-building chaired by WHO and Ministry of Health; (ii) Health procurement co-chaired by ADB, UNDP and Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade; (iii) Socio-economic mitigation co-chaired by UNDP and the World Bank; (iv) Protection and

Programme is a response to gaps and challenges identified in the multilateral socio-economic response offer.

The need for an enhanced people-focused response

While the immediate national socioeconomic response measures targets vulnerable groups, the need to address the disproportionate impacts on highly vulnerable members of society including informally employed, people with disabilities, the elderly, families recently returned from armed conflict zones, women and children in closed institutions, returning migrants especially women living in difficult situations, necessitates specific additional tailor-made responses which are currently lacking. As such, to complement the current and planned socioeconomic measures, and building on the above-mentioned multilateral socio-economic analysis, the present proposal addresses specific and immediate problems faced by highly vulnerable populations, while also laying the foundation for actions for longer-term recovery and building back better and stronger. The solutions proposed also help leverage greater impact from broader UN/IFI investments and programming in the longer-term recovery, as set out in the Socio-Economic Response Offer. Further, the proposal responds not only to COVID-19 needs but also to the larger need to preserve and redouble progress toward the national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

II. Solutions Proposed

The Joint Programme offers an inclusive approach to ensure coverage for the most vulnerable groups

As part of the immediate response to alleviate COVID-19's impact on the most vulnerable groups of the population, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and IOM through this Joint Programme will provide (i) technical and financial support to unemployed informal sector workers, particularly the youth and women, including women with disabilities, women-headed families; (ii) legal and psychosocial support to families repatriated from armed conflict zones and children leaving specialized correctional institutions; (iii) inclusive legal, psychosocial, and direct support to women and girls as well as gender-based violence (GBV) survivors through shelters, hotlines, and social media; and (iv) socio-economic, psychological, and legal support to vulnerable returning migrants and migrants' family members. The scope of support activities within these interventions will include, but not be limited to, conducting countrywide community-level surveys on informal workers; provision of professional and business training for affected women and youth; development of guidelines on the protection of children and provision of workshops for family specialists, social workers, and psychologists in dealing with the caseloads of repatriated women and children affected by the COVID-19 crisis; conducting community outreach, awareness-raising, assessment, identification and referral of and assistance to returning migrants and migrants' family members. Also, the Joint Programme will take a multi-pronged approach to support GBV survivors and women with disabilities during and after COVID-19 lockdown by providing timely and relevant information on their rights, contact points for services, and direct support to the most vulnerable.

(i) Provision of financial and technical support to unemployed youth and women, formerly employed in the informal sector of the economy.

The loss of jobs due to the COVID-19 lockdown significantly reduced the incomes of youth and women and leaving many without social protection, which might be legally granted otherwise. With a view to addressing the unemployment and joblessness issues caused by the COVID-19 crisis, the Joint Programme, through UNDP, will provide financial and technical support to unemployed youth and women, including women with disabilities and women-headed families in self-governed community units (*Mahallas*) in selected regions. To identify the beneficiaries of the financial and technical support, there will be a rapid assessment and baseline study in 30 pilot mahallas to register and analyse employment/unemployment data among youth and women engaged in the informal sectors. With a new methodology to regularly monitor and analyse vulnerabilities and opportunities, there will be disaggregation of data by age, region, profession, family and economic status.

Key Populations chaired by UNFPA, with OHCHR as senior adviser; (v) Risk communications and community engagement chaired by the UN.

This intervention will target nearly 300 women and youth in 30 selected Mahallas in 3 regions and foresees providing support with cash-based services and start-up seed grants for the most affected households with no or limited access to finance and social protection. Specifically, the support envisages, among others, the procurement of items required for running small and family-based businesses. The purchased items may vary from sewing machines and technical equipment for tailoring and shoemaking to hair-cutting devices for hairdressers, etc. In addition, part of the support will be directed to the implementation of several successful innovative ideas/projects such as the development of mobile applications (e.g., Techno Fly, Genius Girls, Lady Bird, StepFit) dealing with job search, female unemployment, consultancy for young mothers and pregnant women, legal and psychological support to women facing GBV, fitness and healthy lifestyles for women, as well as the creation of social media channels, bots and web-sites providing art therapy to children with disabilities, who have been isolated due to COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, the graduates of workshops and trainings organized by the Joint Programme will be granted with equipment to start their small start-ups. Also, the Joint Programme will advocate for increased government and private sector procurement targeting new women-owned businesses and supporting women entrepreneurs to access new procurement opportunities. Through this, the programme will facilitate continuity for women-owned small individual businesses, support their productivity and make them more resilient to the impact of the potential crises.

The Joint Programme, through UNDP, will establish Special Centres for Professional Development in 10 pilot Mahallas. The Centres will train unemployed youth and women, including women with disabilities, in the most demanding professions, based on gender-responsive local labour market assessment, and help them become more competitive for long-term formal employment solutions. This intervention seeks to reach nearly 100 women and youth to help them to be better gainfully employed or start home-based entrepreneurship or small businesses. These Centres will identify the most popular professions that interest youth and women, and organize vocational courses for those women and youth, who want to develop their professional skills, be competitive in the labour market or open home-based sole entrepreneurship or small businesses. Those who successfully complete the courses will receive a vocational training Certificate with a professional qualification. The Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support will help the graduates with finding jobs relevant to their qualifications.

To further support the Employment Promotion Centres of MMFS and the Ministry of Labour⁴, the Joint Programme will also introduce the Integrated Support Services Programmes (ISSP) in 10 pilot Mahallas to help improve business and soft skills of people participating in state employment promotion programmes and receiving seed grants as well as loans on business development. The ISSP will deliver courses on digital skills, financial literacy, supply chain at the local level, online trading, delivery and logistics skills, and home-based entrepreneurship skills. The ISSP intends to target at least 100 women and youth from 10 pre-selected Mahallas.⁵ To streamline temporary job search and job placement for unemployed youth and women, inclusive of disabled people, the Joint Programme will effectively develop and utilize the Job Café mobile application through awareness-raising efforts among the target groups. The application will serve as a platform where the registered temporary workers will be able to apply for daily temporary jobs without leaving their home, thus avoiding the need to gather at traditional open labour markets.

(ii) Provision of legal and psychosocial support to families repatriated from armed conflict zones and children leaving specialized correctional institutions.

To address the anticipated increase in COVID-19-related child abuse and neglect, the Joint Programme, through UNICEF, will provide remote case management support to the MMFS to directly address the needs of children repatriated in 2019 from armed conflict zones. The remote case management support will include development and adoption of guidelines and technical notes on the protection of children

⁴ <https://kun.uz/news/2020/02/12/toshkentda-mardikor-ayollar-uchun-kunlik-ishchilar-markazi-ochildi>

⁵ There is a recognition that a lack of adequate investments in social infrastructure (including early childhood education, child-care and elder care) at the local levels have resulted in women assuming a disproportionate burden for care work and have prevented them to access education and formal employment. To address these gaps, the Joint Programme will explore local/grassroots level's solutions to reduce and redistribute unpaid care work and to invest into the local social infrastructure to ensure women's engagement into the vocational training and further employment.

during the COVID-19 outbreak along with the provision of a series of workshops to orient family specialists, social workers, and psychologists in dealing with the caseloads of repatriated women and children affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Further, because COVID-19 curtailed the delivery of social services, the Joint Programme will provide family-based alternative care and psycho-social support interventions for children leaving specialized correctional facilities through the implementation of individual reintegration plans and facilitation of their reunification with their families and communities. Through these solutions, UNICEF will be able to support the extension of services to respond and reduce widespread child protection concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specifically, the Joint Programme will implement regular counselling and intensify the referral initiative to existing social and legal services. UNICEF is cognizant that to fully address the impacts of COVID-19 to the target group, it is imperative to respond not only to urgent needs but also to take the necessary steps toward a longer-term recovery by introducing viable interventions and approaches such as getting the service providers of the MMFS equipped with the proper skills and information. Therefore, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Education, UNICEF will enhance the skills and knowledge of family specialists, social workers and psychologists on case management approach to determine the needs of returned children from armed conflict zones in the initial period of pandemic followed by regular counselling and referral to existing social and legal services. These interventions will focus on the issues of children leaving specialized institutions for their communities. The proposed approach is necessary to address both the immediate and mid-term COVID-19 impacts. Further, the Joint Programme will explore ways to follow the implementation of the policy framework of the Cabinet of Ministers prioritizing family-based alternative care for children left without parental care due to COVID-19 outbreak.

(iii) Provision of inclusive legal, psychosocial, and direct support to disabled women and girls as well as gender-based violence (GBV) survivors through shelters, hotlines, and social media

The Joint Programme, through UNFPA, will address the surge in gender-based violence and the economic hardship faced by women with disabilities due to the COVID-19 outbreak. In partnership with the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support (MMFS) and the Gender Equality Commission under the Senate, the Joint Programme will revive and strengthen the national phone hotline #1146 by putting Uzbek/Russian speaking trained operators to advise GBV survivors and refer them to available support services. Currently, the NGOs that run existing hotlines have limited local reach, and many regions do not have such dedicated NGOs to address the needs. The NGOs, unlike the national hotline (#1146), do not have immediate and automatic access to state authorities. The national hotline, therefore, can provide the much-needed support to address difficult cases when state authorities need to intervene, as well as many cases when survivors need to cross regions to seek help.

In partnership with the Gender Equality Commission, relevant ministries, and civil society organizations (CSOs), the Joint Programme will support the operation of the Telegram channel “No to Violence,” which at present is the only comprehensive information resource in the country publishing contact details of service providers, GBV statistics, analysis of issues, and human stories of the survivors. The Telegram channel also has a feedback mechanism to accept comments and tailor its content to the emerging needs of the audience. By publishing human stories and practical tips on where to get help, it raises awareness about GBV and encourages women to overcome their fear and seek the help they may need urgently specifically during the COVID-19 lockdown. In addition to the online resources, the Joint Programme will disseminate printed manuals on GBV prevention and response, hotline operator tips, information materials on working with GBV survivors and abusers for the staff of mahalla, and shelters.

Shelters are key institutions to help survivors to find refuge from abusers and get immediate psychological, legal support, and longer-term rehabilitation through skills development activities. In partnership with the MMFS and the Republican Rehabilitation Centre for the survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), the Joint Programme through UNFPA will support 14 shelters with food assistance, internet/mobile connection, and basic office equipment in each province. UNFPA will use this experience and advocate with the government to provide long-term state support to the system of shelters as a key intervention to address GBV. The ‘No to Violence’ channel will provide data from these shelters, raise awareness about GBV through anonymized case studies and advocate for funding to strengthen the network of shelters at the district level.

To address the urgent and specific needs of women with disabilities, the Joint Programme will partner with the NGO “Opa-singillar,” headed by a woman with a disability. UNFPA will provide funding to enable the NGO to scale up and strengthen its accessible service provision to women with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities from Tashkent province (covering over 300 families). This direct support will be used to provide food assistance and cover the cost of their internet/mobile plans and utilities thus enabling the families to receive vital information on COVID-19, other health information, on GBV, and connect with emergency services when needed. The Joint Programme will also support the NGO to develop and disseminate the information on GBV, raise a public awareness and recognition on zero-tolerance to GBV, and will collect information among its clients about their needs and challenges to incorporate them to the instruction materials of service providers which deal with GBV cases.

(iv) Provision of gender-responsive reintegration assistance to returning migrants (returnees) and migrants’ family members combined with community outreach, assessment and identification of the most vulnerable returnees

Returning migrants (returnees) and migrants’ family members, particularly those in rural areas of Uzbekistan, have been among the most severely hit by the COVID-19 crisis. Considerable economic slow-down, which caused thousands of job-cuts in destination countries left migrants and remittance dependent members of their families, especially women and children, in critical socio-economic situation, with no or very limited means for self-support. Moreover, there are thousands of migrants stranded in destination countries due to mobility restrictions, often stigmatized and in need of due legal, socio-economic, and medical assistance. Remittance flows - the lifeblood of hundreds of households - has slowed to a trickle. As a result, hundreds of families are now in danger of extreme poverty. Those migrants who do make it home (returnees) are returning to joblessness and potentially, social unrest. The lack of up-to-date information among the returnees, who have been away for a while, on where and how to seek support locally, puts them in an even challenging situation.

To mitigate the current socio-economic effect of the ongoing health crisis, as well as to identify and address the immediate needs of the most vulnerable returnees and migrants’ family members, it is vital to widen and improve the scope and content of and approaches to community outreach, awareness-raising, identification and support activities. Inclusive socio-economic, psychological, legal, and business counselling will greatly contribute to this mitigation. The provision of reintegration support to the most vulnerable ones for vocational training, skills development, and income-generating (entrepreneurial) activities will serve to minimize suffering. Furthermore, the assessment of the scale of return, strengthening of the local referral system, and the determination of the post-crisis recovery expectations of the target groups will contribute to addressing the longer-term socio-economic impact of the crisis in a more efficient manner.

The Joint Programme, through IOM, will provide reintegration support to the most vulnerable returnees and migrants’ family members, especially women left behind. The Joint Programme will also support community outreach, assessment activities, identification, and referral services. IOM, in close partnership with local NGOs in selected pilot regions, will conduct community outreach and deliver psychological, legal and socio-economic counselling to at least 400 returnees and migrants’ family members. The proposed activities will also target migrants by online means in order to provide them with counselling. It will also assess the scale of return of migrants in Uzbekistan, identify the most vulnerable ones, and deliver tailored reintegration assistance to at least 60 beneficiaries, including 35 males and 25 females, ensuring the human rights approach in implementation.

The Joint Programme seeks to address the urgent needs of highly vulnerable groups while also ensuring support to longer-term recovery and social cohesion.

The Joint Programme focuses on addressing the identified immediate needs of a targeted range of highly vulnerable groups. In addition, the Joint Programme also lays the foundation for a more sustainable post-crisis recovery, in two ways: by ensuring that the basis of the next steps in the recovery phase is informed by viable evidence and data, and also by mitigating social cohesion challenges which are placing acute strains on families and communities. The Joint Programme’s focus on laying the groundwork for a

sustainable recovery requires addressing, in part, outstanding capacity challenges that may otherwise hamper a robust recovery.⁶

III. What is the specific need/problem the intervention seeks to address?

The societal and economic changes resulting from the COVID-19 crisis have severely impacted the well-being of the most vulnerable populations while also testing social cohesion

While national authorities have undertaken comprehensive anti-pandemic and anti-crisis measures through financial and regulatory interventions across the country, there are significant gaps in regards to the timeliness, effectiveness, and scale of coverage of this support to the most vulnerable, including children, girls and women, people with disabilities and the elderly as well as migrant labourers. These groups of people are severely affected both socially and economically.

Moreover, the COVID-19 outbreak and related lockdown are having specific gender and generational impacts: (i) leaving tens of thousands of youth and women unemployed or employed informally, out of direct income and social protection; (ii) disrupting income channels and livelihoods of families of women migrant workers; (iii) seriously increasing the burden of care work by women and girls; (iv) negatively affecting the psychosocial well-being of families repatriated from armed conflict zones and children leaving specialized correctional institutions; and (v) increasing social stress and the risk of growing gender-based violence and violence against children. The proposed solutions will seek immediate responses to these aggravating problems that the vulnerable populations face.

The COVID-19 outbreak is causing an increase in unemployment and poverty levels, particularly in the informal sector of the economy and among highly vulnerable groups

New population groups are becoming vulnerable in the face of the unprecedented economic disruption, and there is a need for a better understanding of the actual urgent needs of these groups to be able to address them timely and effectively. This growing demand is compounded by significant pre-crisis social protection coverage gaps. Top priorities include: assessing the needs of all categories of the population; supporting the expansion of the existing social protection system in order to ensure coherence between social assistance, labour market, and social insurance programs; revision of eligibility and delivery mechanisms making them responsive to the current pandemic and future shocks and strengthening the capacity of the system on national and local levels to respond to the urgent and evolving needs of the population in the medium and long term.

According to the April 2020 Listening to the Citizens of Uzbekistan (L2CU) survey, a higher share of people reports that they are unable to afford basic needs and are without savings. The survey showed that the share of households with at least one member actively working fell more than 40 percentage points (from 85 to 43 percent) between March and April. Declines have been the largest among the self-employed. The share reporting any self-employment income fell by 67 percent in comparison to the previous month.

Lockdown and subsequent economic paralysis caused by the pandemic have been affecting disproportionately those in the informal sector. In Uzbekistan, they represent a significant number. Even before the pandemic, informal employment has been one of the key bottlenecks for sustainable development. In the first half of 2019, the share of employment in the informal sector made up 58.2 percent of the total labour force. This makes about 7.8 million employed informally (mainly in construction, trade, agriculture, tourism, and services), dominated by youth between 18 to 25 years old. This percentage share is even higher in regions with a higher share of the informal sectors in the economy

⁶ The Joint Programme will provide capacity development-related support to the sectoral ministries to be able to design and mainstream gender perspectives into COVID-19 long-term recovery plan and actions. In view of the national recovery plan, accurate and comprehensive age- and sex-disaggregated data are necessary to facilitate informed and evidence-based policymaking from gender and “Leaving No One Behind” perspectives. When possible, there will be targeted assistance to National Statistical Committee to produce and analyse updated, scientifically accurate and transparent information on the gendered risks and consequences of COVID-19.

such as those in the Andijan, Fergana, Namangan, and Samarkand regions.⁷ The informally employed is one of the most hard-hit groups – left with no income, let alone social protection or insurance. Even jobs with predominantly formal and female employment are affected, such as education and tourism. With all education facilities closed, many pre-school workers and teachers, particularly in private schools and institutions, are facing the prospect of losing their jobs and/or income.

The socio-economic conditions of informally employed are even more concerning because their non-registration in the formal employment system makes them ineligible for benefits and services accessible to officially registered employees who have paid income taxes and other social fees. Another complicating issue is that there is no sufficiently disaggregated data record covering the informally employed or unemployed people across regions, thus confounding the process of effective targeting of the vulnerable groups for further social and policy interventions. In addition, workers from informal sectors have limited access to additional financing, including bank loans to run supplementary home-based businesses. If immediate targeted responses and interventions are not undertaken to address the unemployment and joblessness-related issues among those in the informal sector, the current situation may get worse causing unforeseen economic hardships to more vulnerable households and families.

In turn, economic difficulties and hardships in families may trigger social tensions leading to increased domestic violence against women and children as well as abuse of vulnerable disabled people and the elderly. An evidence-based study on risk factors of domestic violence in middle-income and higher-income countries shows that unemployment was one of the key risk factors leading to gender-based violence. In particular, the loss of income, the stress of job finding, business, and trade issues in the private sector increased the risk of abusing the wives by their husbands.⁸

COVID-19 lockdown is severely impacting the psychosocial well-being of families recently repatriated from armed conflict zones and children leaving specialized correctional institutions

In accordance with the recent rapid assessment of the situation of vulnerable families conducted by the social workers of the Republican Centre for Social Adaptation of Children, the COVID-19 and the associated lockdown is severely impacting the socio-economic conditions of more than 90 percent of women and children repatriated from armed conflict zones. With the onset of COVID-19, the disruption of community and social support services increases the potential for over-stressed caregivers to become violent or abusive. These new stresses are occurring at a time when children are less visible to statutory bodies (guardianship and trusteeship bodies, commission on minors, etc.), social workers, or paraprofessionals who are normally engaged in their protection, and when the child and family welfare services are over-stretched and disrupted. In the medium-term, the expected dramatic decrease in income of repatriated families during quarantine will also inevitably impact the increased risk of separation of children from families, their placement into residential institutionalization, and associated psychological distress.

The COVID-19 outbreak also worsened the situation of more than 500 children (260 girls) placed in specialized correctional institutions, which are considered as closed facilities for children aged 11 to 16 who committed minor offenses. Children in these specialized correctional institutions have higher risks of exposure to COVID-19 due to the likelihood of cluster infection and remaining in the institutions makes them more prone to the virus transmission, as well as abuse and neglect due to the stress that COVID-19 brings to staff and those institutionalized. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the risk to children in specialized correctional institutions has increased due to the rapid closure of two out of four specialized correctional institutions in line with the Presidential Resolution on Restructuring Closed Facilities and the children's return to families without proper preparation. These children, especially girls will face the risk of not having access to social services in their communities, including psychosocial support and preventive measures during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The reduction of resources such as school psychologists, case managers, and social workers to detect and refer those in need of support further compounds the risks to these children.

⁷ <https://review.uz/ru/post/razglyadet-nevidimku-neformalny-sektor-v-uzbekistane>

⁸ Kyriacou, D.N., Anglin, D., Taliaferro, E., Stone, S., Tubb, T., Linden, J.A., Muelleman, R., Barton, E. and Kraus, J.F., 1999. Risk factors for injury to women from domestic violence. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 341(25), pp.1892-1898.

COVID-19 lockdown and the economic hardship has brought increased psychological stress on families and violence against women

The data published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan for May 2020 shows that on a week-to-week basis the number of reported cases increased from 54 to 170, the protection orders issued increased from 90 to 241. Amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, two well-established NGOs' hotlines experienced a fivefold increase in calls in the first week of the stay-at-home modality. In their calls to the hotlines, survivors noted that their situation worsened due to increased stress in their families caused by lockdown measures and economic hardship. These registered numbers probably represent a fraction of the true scale of violence in the country. Many endure violence because they are not aware of their rights and are too afraid to report the violence, seek help, or have no functioning shelters nearby to find refuge. In addition to psychological, legal support, the hotlines provide important referral services by placing survivors of GBV in scarce shelters that have space and funds. Further, when necessary, the hotlines perform case referrals to the police, health, and local authorities. The hotlines act as private communication channels for both victims and survivors. At the same time, there is an increasing demand for public information channels where all relevant authorities and service providers can present information about services available as well as statistics. Such broadcast channels will help to raise awareness about GBV and publish success stories to encourage more women to come out and seek the help they need.

The government adopted the Law on the "protection of women from harassment and violence" on 2 September 2019, which was institutionalised on 4 January 2020 through a special decree on the Cabinet of Ministers on "Protection order" to be issued by police. In support of the law, 197 shelters were established with partial funding from the Foundation under the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support. Due to the limited funding support, there were only 14 operational shelters at the onset of COVID-19, while the rest faced staff and resource shortages. The system of shelters, once fully operational, has a strong potential to address the needs of survivors of GBV, but it is evolving and needs support during and in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic. The existing shelters experienced an increase in the number of survivors seeking support. Due to the economic impacts of COVID-19, even operational shelters experienced a sudden drop in resources they were getting from local authorities, communities, and private individuals. The few NGO shelters had to overcrowd their facilities and increasingly refuse to accept survivors on their premises because they could not provide space, food, and conditions of social distancing.

The COVID-19 lockdown has severely impacted women with disabilities and their families. Their allowances were already low and due to lockdown measures their families lost income opportunities. The NGOs that supported them also faced a sudden drop in the donations they received to help their clients. Women with disabilities and their families are sinking into deeper poverty, facing mounting debts for utilities, communication charges, and not enough income to buy food. With partial lockdown in place, the economic recovery will be slow, and these families will continue to experience hardship. In addition to food, the families also need immediate support to cover their internet and phone charges to keep them connected to emergency services and vital information resources, including on the job, education, and potential income opportunities. These lines of communication will also be important to ensure consideration of the needs of women with disabilities in the multi-sector coordination mechanism planned by the government to prevent and address all forms of domestic violence and leave no one behind.

Returning migrants and migrants' family members, especially women left behind, are in critical need of psychological, legal, and socio-economic assistance, including reintegration support.

Uzbekistan is the most populous and most migrant-sending country in Central Asia, with IOM estimating at least 3 million Uzbek nationals making earnings abroad, mainly in the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, and Turkey. According to the government data, more than 140,000 migrants have already returned to Uzbekistan due to the COVID-19 crisis, with more expected to return once the travel restrictions are lifted. The economic slow-down and job-cuts in destination countries, combined with a sharp decrease in the volume of remittances, leaves thousands of migrants, returnees and hundreds of remittance-dependent households, especially women and children in rural areas of the country, with almost no alternatives of income, thus pushing them into further poverty. Further, the lack of due community outreach,

counselling, assessment, referral, and identification of the most vulnerable returnees, as well as determination and addressing of their immediate and longer-term socio-economic needs would contribute to increased social tension and, even, social unrest.

The impact of disrupted migration in both the immediate- and longer-term is high. The effect of domestic disruptions on the incomes of the poor and vulnerable will be compounded by rapidly falling remittances, which predominantly accrue to low-income households in Uzbekistan. Due to travel restrictions, many seasonal migrants have not been able to return to work. According to data from L2CU, in April, the share of households with members currently abroad fell by 22 percent in comparison to the same period in 2019 (from 17 to 13 percent). In the longer-term, reduced legal migration options may also increase the risks of irregular migration and human trafficking, further exacerbating socio-economic vulnerabilities.

IV. How does this collaborative programme solve the challenge? Please describe your theory of change.

The Joint Programme aims to help accelerate efforts to minimize the negative impacts of the pandemic on Uzbekistan's progress against its national SDGs, and in particular, to embed in the national socio-economic response architecture a focus on minimizing exclusions and ensuring a strong focus on leaving no one behind both in the immediate term, and – through extensive engagement with government and civil society partners – in the longer term recovery, while also striving to minimise social tensions and reinforce social cohesion at both family and community level.

UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and IOM will be the recipient UN organizations (RUNOs). The RUNOs will collaboratively implement the Joint Programme, using their country-level and regional expertise, knowledge and staff. UNODC will provide technical and analytical support based on its mandate to provide harm reduction, treatment, and prevention support to ensure continuity of services to key vulnerable populations targeted by the Joint Programme. Other resident and non-resident UN agencies may collaborate on joint activities. Where relevant, the RUNOs will also involve national or international UNVs to support certain activities in local communities as well as online activities to target groups.

The Joint Programme's activities will complement the UN's existing programme portfolio under the current UNDAF, while ensuring enhanced impact and sustainability of the national COVID-19 anti-crisis programme and associated major IFI investments. The UN's ongoing collaboration with national partners on poverty reduction and social protection, as articulated in the draft National Poverty Reduction Strategy along with the draft National Social Protection Strategy, and the National Gender Equality Strategy and other relevant government programmes and policies also inform the Joint Programme. The Joint Programme builds on the evidence on vulnerable groups and gaps in social protection that the UN Country Team generated in the past couple of years through joint effort, such as the comprehensive social protection system assessment (CODI) by the UN and World Bank and a comprehensive [situational analysis](#) on disability commissioned by the UN.

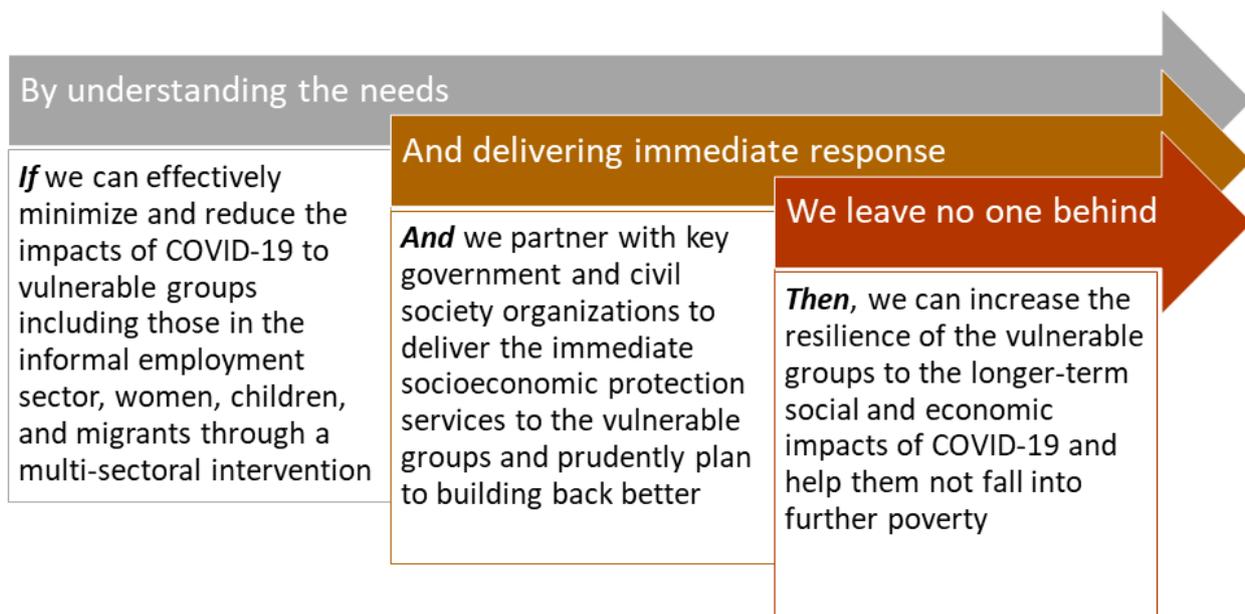
While the proposed Joint Programme seeks to provide rapid solutions to protect the most vulnerable during a time of crisis and help lay the groundwork to build back better, at the same time, the design of this Joint Programme complements longer-term national efforts to build an integrated and inclusive social protection system in Uzbekistan which the flagship UN Joint Programme on Social Protection supports under the Joint SDG Fund. The UN Country Team will ensure synergies across these initiatives, while also helping to build partnerships and demand for deeper social protection reform, thereby further enhancing the Joint Programme's social protection results.

This Joint Programme, in supporting a more effective government response to the immediate social and economic needs of target groups impacted by COVID-19, focuses on safeguarding the basic rights and freedoms of vulnerable and at-risk groups affected by the quarantine, physical isolation measures, travel bans and overall economic downturn. In particular, the Joint Programme focuses on the right to health, right to safety and protection from violence, right to employment, right to social security, right to

participation and inclusion, socio-economic rights of children, as well as the right to peace and security. The concluding observations of UN Treaty Bodies, such as CEDAW, HRC, CRC, and CESCR committees on consideration of national reports of Uzbekistan and corresponding normative framework of international human rights conventions will be at the core of the policy advice, development interventions, research and risk analysis as well as monitoring of the impact of the Joint Programme’s results.

The Joint Programme will benefit from the UN Country Team’s status as a fast-track UN Youth 2030 pilot, ensuring a strong youth-orientation and continuous youth consultation (through both U-Report and the UNCT Youth Advisory Board). The involvement of CSOs and consultations with relevant target groups (including the UNCT Youth Advisory Board) will be key to making inclusive dialogue with all partners at all levels and taking informed decisions within the project management arrangements. The UNCT Gender Theme Group will also provide input and feedback to the Joint Programme on a periodic basis.

Considering the collaborative and inclusive approach that the Joint Programme will carry out, the proposed interventions will help the government and relevant organizations to have a better picture about the scope of vulnerabilities of those who suffered most from the COVID-19 crisis. By responding to the immediate needs of the vulnerable groups and preparing for the longer-term recovery, the Joint Programme will help decrease the overall negative effect of the pandemic, reduce deepening of inequalities not only among vulnerable groups but within the society, and contribute to resilience and sustainable recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 crisis. This will contribute to the effective implementation of the government socioeconomic measures in line with the Agenda 2030 principle of ‘leave no one behind’ and will help to minimize the negative impact of the crisis on the achievement of Uzbekistan’s national SDGs. Taking this into account, the theory of change of the Joint Programme is as follows.

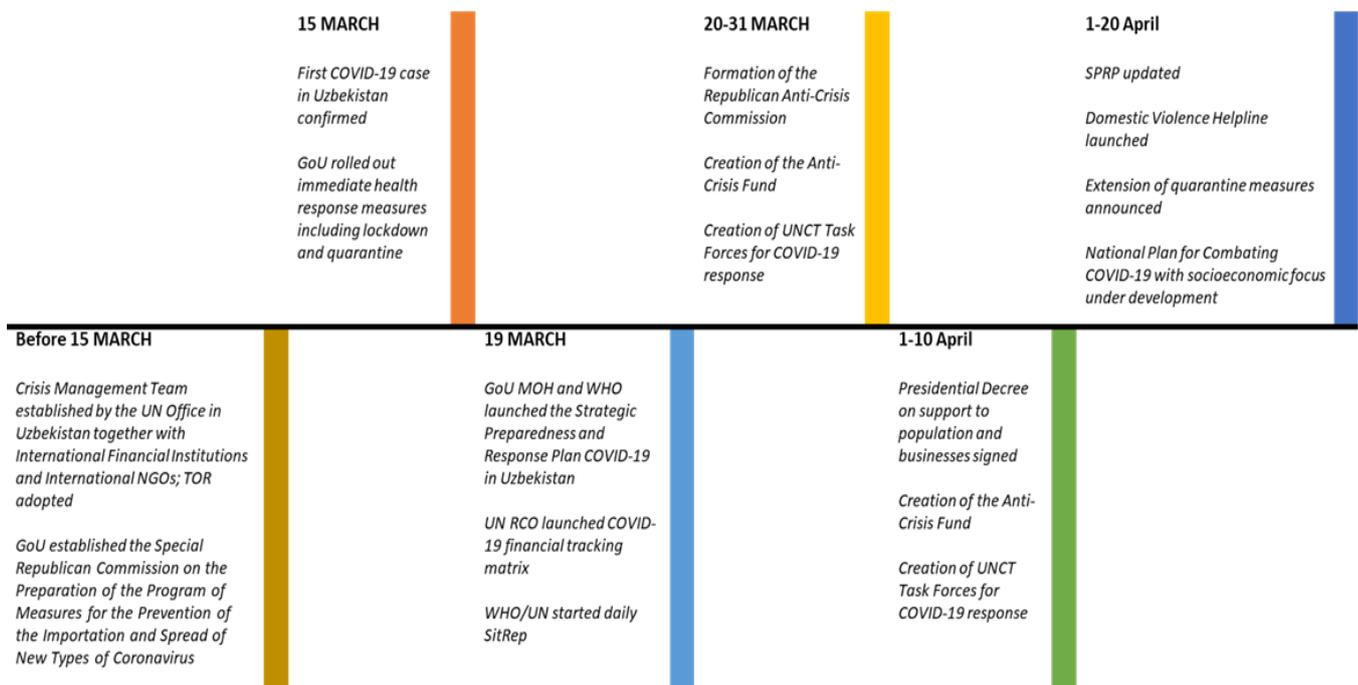


V. Documentation

Even prior to the detection of the first COVID-19 case in Uzbekistan, since January 2020, the UNCT and the GoU have been preparing independently and jointly to address possible COVID-19 impacts. The figure below provides a timeline on how the UNCT together with the government and other development partners address the immediate and potential cumulative impacts of COVID-19.

On March 15, the government [reported](#) Uzbekistan’s first COVID-19 case, and the GoU rolled out immediate health response measures including border closures, observance of quarantine, physical distancing, and limited mobility. Immediately, WHO worked with the Ministry of Health to complete and post the national [Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan](#) on the WHO partner portal initially on March 20 with the latest version updated on 6 April. Concurrent to these immediate actions, the UN RCO

launched the [COVID-19 financial tracking matrix](#) to help match available resources with the SPRP priorities and started producing a joint UN-WHO [daily Sitrep](#).



In late March, the GoU formed the [Republican Anti-Crisis Commission](#) in preparation for the medium- and longer-term health, social, and economic impacts of COVID-19 and launched the first iteration of the [national anti-crisis plan](#).

The UNCT formed a joint UNCT and IFI [Crisis Management Team](#) chaired by the UN RC, and created relevant Task Forces to support the national response. The task forces are:

- Health Capacity-Building Task Force (Chaired by WHO)
- Health Procurement Task Force (Chaired by Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade, with UNDP and ADB)
- Socio-Economic Mitigation Task Force (Co-chaired by UNDP and the World Bank)
- Protection and Key Populations Task Force (Chaired by UNFPA with participation of UN and INGOs)
- Crisis Communications Task Force (chaired by RCO and UNICEF)

At present, the GoU is developing an updated National Plan of Action for Combating COVID-19 with a socio-economic focus and consulting the UN system in the process. The Protection and Key Populations Task Force has developed an updated [Leave No One Behind analysis](#), analysing which groups are particularly at risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This builds on the recently drafted Common Country Analysis (CCA) currently covering the time period up to end 2019 in preparation for the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-25. The CCA will be updated during summer 2020. The task force has also developed policy briefs and analysis drawing on global standards to ensure the protection of the most vulnerable, such as [people living with HIV](#), children in closed institutions, survivors of gender-based violence, labour migrants, [the elderly](#), and those in informal employment, among others.

Meanwhile, the socio-economic Task Force has produced an initial draft mapping of assessments and data, as well as (forthcoming) [the socio-economic task force inventory](#) of UN/IFI support, in line with the SG's Response and Recovery Framework. The World Bank has already conducted one round of its ongoing longitudinal survey [adapted to COVID-19](#).

[Link to Dropbox folder](#) with attachments linked to above.

VI. Target population

The fundamental focus of the Joint Programme is to deliver the most needed services to vulnerable groups

Cognizant that the UN's COVID-19 Leave No One Behind (LNOB) analysis assesses that there is a considerable risk that the socioeconomic measures under the national Anti-Crisis Programme may fail to adequately reach and provide full-fledged and rights-based support to certain categories of vulnerable groups, this Joint Programme focuses on those identified by the UN COVID-19 Protection and Key Populations' Task Force LNOB analysis, and ongoing assessment exercises such as the World Bank's '[Listening to Citizens of Uzbekistan](#)' (L2CU), rapid assessments conducted by UNDP and other agencies. The data from the UN Results Group on Social Protection including the core systems diagnostics instrument (CODI) assessment also informed the identification of the target vulnerable groups for this Joint Programme. These groups are as follows: *a)* informally employed youth and women; *b)* recently repatriated families from armed conflict zones (Syria and Iraq), *c)* children in detention facilities including specialised correctional institutions or recently released from those; *d)* women at risk of being victims and survivors of gender-based violence and disabled people; *e)* returning migrants (returnees) and migrants' family members.

Informally employed youth and women

According to the April 2020 Listening to the Citizens of Uzbekistan (L2CU) survey, a higher share of people reports that they are unable to afford basic needs and are without savings. The survey showed that the share of households with at least one member actively working fell more than 40 percentage points (from 85 to 43 percent) between March and April. Declines have been the largest among the self-employed. The share reporting any self-employment income fell by 67 percent in comparison to the previous month. Lockdown and subsequent economic paralysis caused by the pandemic has been affecting disproportionately those in the informal sector. In Uzbekistan, they represent a significant number. The informally employed is one of the most hard-hit groups – left with no income, let alone protection or insurance. Even jobs with predominantly formal and female employment are affected, such as education and tourism. With all education facilities closed, many pre-school workers and teachers, particularly in private schools and institutions, are facing the prospect of losing their jobs and/or income.

Care burden increased during the COVID-19 pandemic created risks to stifle young women and girls' educational and employment opportunities. Girls tend to join their mothers in household care and domestic work. Recent data shows that adolescent girls spend significantly more hours on chores compared to their male counterparts. School closures mean that girls are taking on more chores at home and could lead to millions more girls dropping out of school before they complete their education, especially those living in poverty, in rural, isolated locations or with a disability. Evidence from other countries show that adolescent girls are at particular risk of drop out and not returning to school even after the crisis is over. These risks need to be further addressed by the post-pandemic recovery actions.

An insufficient state's funding for social protection and care systems weakened the ability to respond to the COVID-19 economic impact on people's lives. Increased investments in the gender-responsive social protection system will support income security and increase women's and families' resilience to future shocks. Evidence shows that the availability of these services increases women's ability to (re)enter the labour market, while also creating jobs – with important positive spill over effects on economic growth and household wellbeing. Since the Government intends to develop a new social protection strategy and integrate post-COVID-19 specific priorities, this momentum needs to be also used to advocate for recognition of unpaid care work and for investments in social care infrastructure – including expanded access to affordable quality child and long-term care services – as important conditions for gender-responsive economic recovery efforts.

Families recently repatriated from armed conflict zones and children leaving specialised correctional institutions (detention facilities)

The Government of Uzbekistan returned 156 Uzbek women and children living in armed conflict zones in the Middle East, to Tashkent in May 2019. In October 2019, the Government repatriated another group

of unaccompanied 64 children from Iraq, with ages ranging from 2 to 17 years. The returned population from armed conflict zones are 48 family units made up mostly of young women with an average age of 31, returning with biological children. Six grandmothers also returned. A total of 108 returnees were young children and gender parity was about even with 55 percent girls and 45 percent boys. Of the 64 children who were repatriated from Iraq, all were unaccompanied, though many came with siblings and other children with whom they had close kinship ties. Their ages mirrored those of the returnees from Syria, with 40 children being between 0-6 years, 22 between 7-14 years, and only 2 children between 14-17 years old; 48 percent of which were girls and 52 percent were boys.

Within the Governmental Action Plan of the Cabinet of Ministers, the Government assigned the newly established Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support to continue providing re-integration services and ensure smooth rehabilitation of returnees. Amidst the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government also continues addressing the needs of 515 children in four specialized correctional institutions and making mitigation plans to start reintegrating boys and girls from specialized correctional institutions back into their families and communities in the medium-term. The reintegration process coincides with the Presidential Resolution #4342 of May 2019 which calls for the closure of two out of four specialized correctional institutions in Uzbekistan.

Considering the above, the Joint Programme through UNICEF's access to returned families and detention facilities will specifically reach 100 children repatriated from armed conflict zones out of 172 and around 100 boys and girls leaving specialised correctional institutions. The output of the Joint Programme will be implemented through support to the MMFS to lead intensive case management to determine the needs of the targeted population affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the initial period followed by regular visits and referrals to existing services. These vulnerable children, especially girls may face the risk of stigma and not having access to services, including psychosocial support and response services for gender-based violence during and post COVID-19. Therefore, the family specialists, social workers and psychologists will be supported to facilitate their reintegration into their communities and to have sustained access to psychosocial support services, including virtual and adapted one-to-one counselling.

Women at risk of being victims and survivors of gender-based violence and people with disabilities

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan and NGOs report more cases of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in May 2020 the number of the issued protection orders increased from 90 to 241. Victims and survivors who turned to the state authority and NGOs reported that due to lockdown and economic hardship their situation worsened, and many lost hope that it may ever improve. The number of reported cases to NGO hotlines increased during the lockdown. Specifically, in the first three months of 2020, the number of calls was less than 300, while during the first month of the quarantine there were 203 registered calls to the same hotline.⁹

To address the surge in violence and support survivors of GBV, the Joint Programme will support 14 shelters (one in each province) with food assistance, procurement of basic hygiene items, putting in place legal and psychological support to cover an expected number of 360 women. To provide legal, psychological counselling and referral services nationwide to at least 200 GBV survivors per month, including women with disabilities, the Joint programme will revive the national hotline. Currently, the 4,200 subscribers of the "No to Violence" Telegram channel will continue posting daily information on GBV statistics, legal advice, information on service providers, including shelters, and success stories to encourage women to come out and seek help. Further, the Joint Programme will encourage subscription of nearly 10,000 representatives from the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support. To address the specific needs of women with disabilities and families with disabled children, the Joint Programme will strengthen the partnership with the NGO 'Opa-singillar' (literally 'Sisters') and will provide funding to cover the needs of 300 families with food assistance and hygiene items, get connected to critically important for the

⁹ As noted by the UN Secretary-General's message on gender-based violence and COVID-19 made on 5 April 2020, though essential to suppressing COVID-19, the lockdown measures can trap women with abusive partners. He went on to stress that amidst the global surge in domestic violence, local support groups were paralyzed or short of funds, and shelters were closed; others were full. He called on countries to make the prevention and redress of violence against women a key part of their national response plans for COVID-19, increase investments in online services and civil society organizations, and declaring shelters as essential services.

disabled people mobile connection, inclusive to the basic social services. Through connecting to social news and issuing a newsletter Opa -singillar NGO will raise awareness among women with disabilities and their families in Tashkent region about their rights, opportunities to access medical and social aid, get informed and updated on educational, vocational and job opportunities

Returning migrants and migrants' family members

According to the April 16, 2020 data from the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of Uzbekistan¹⁰, the GoU counted more than 140,000 migrant workers, who had returned home without a source of income. Amidst the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and linked economic disruptions and job-cuts in destination countries, the government expects that many more migrants will return home with no or very limited means for self- and family-support. Moreover, as the latest L2CU survey from April 19 indicates that remittances have fallen by more than half, pushing hundreds of households into poverty. As the L2CU survey stresses, the share of households receiving any remittances fell by 54 percent over the same period the previous year. Among those that did receive remittances, the value of the median transfer fell by 21 percent. In April, the share of households with members currently abroad fell by 22 percent in comparison to the same period in 2019.

Future migration expectations have fully collapsed. In the first quarter of 2020, the number of respondents with household members considering seasonal migration fell by more than 95 percent over the previous year. In April 2020, there was not a single L2CU household reporting anyone considering migration abroad. The evidence gives bold grounds to consider vulnerable returning migrants (returnees) and migrants' family members, especially women dependent on remittances, as target groups under this Joint Programme.

VII. Who will deliver this solution?

Recipient UN Organizations

[UNDP, being a lead coordinator of this Joint Programme](#) and lead technical agency of the socio-economic response, has been supporting the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan in job creation, labour market policies formulation, institutional capacity building, overview and diagnostics of the labour market and digitization to enhance public service delivery and social protection. UNDP is currently providing support to the Government of Uzbekistan in advancing the next stage of the labour market reform through continued support and capacity building, with a special focus on achieving greater efficiency, accountability and transparency of government in implementing labour market policies.¹¹ The work within this Joint Programme will feed into the broader effort on supporting the Government with elaborating the national Poverty Reduction Strategy, which UNDP is currently leading jointly with the World Bank, and into UNDP's engagement in the ongoing UN Joint Programme on Social Protection. UNDP will ensure that the measures and policies implemented within the context of COVID-19 response are well aligned and integrated into the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Since 2000 UNDP has been actively engaging with the Government on building national capacities to formulate evidence-based policies, build data ecosystems and promote the establishment of an effective monitoring framework based on accurate and readily available data. Besides, UNDP has extensively worked on facilitating job creation at the regional level, effectively implementing projects in the Aral Sea region, Fergana Valley, and other regions characterized by a large share of the vulnerable population.¹² While UNDP has more than 150 staff (10 of them will be involved in this project implementation) and project personnel with expertise on poverty reduction, employment, women empowerment, good governance and climate change in total, it will also involve UNVs where needed. In addition, a project manager and administrative-finance assistant will be hired. As Co-Chair of the UN/IFI COVID socio-economic Task Force, UNDP will ensure that the Joint Programme is complementary to the evolving UN-IFI socio-economic response programmes, so as to ensure enhanced impact and results across the wider UN/IFI offer.

¹⁰ <https://mehnat.uz/en/news/open-letter-to-cotton-campaign-coalition-on-removing-the-uzbek-cotton-pledge>

¹¹ <https://www.uz.undp.org/content/uzbekistan/en/home/projects/promoting-youth-employment-in-uzbekistan.html>

¹² <https://www.uz.undp.org/content/uzbekistan/en/home/projects.html>

[UNICEF](#) is particularly concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on children repatriated from armed conflict zones and those leaving specialised correctional institutions who are already affected by poverty and social exclusion. UNICEF gained the trust of the Government of Uzbekistan to allow exclusive access to the returned women and children returned from armed conflict zones. In this context, UNICEF supported the Cabinet of Ministers to develop a joint Action Plan #2157 to ensure smooth re-integration of returned children into their communities. In addition, within the Presidential Resolution #4342 of May 2019 which calls for the closure of two out of four specialized correctional institutions in Uzbekistan, UNICEF is committed to providing capacity building activities to local authorities to apply a case management approach aimed at reducing the impacts of COVID-19 during the reintegration of children from specialised facilities back into their families. UNICEF child protection team consisting of two national officers will spend around 20 percent of their time per project duration for overall coordination and facilitation of the project implementation who are funded against UNICEF's own regular resources, specified as contributions to achieve the project objectives. The requested two social work consultants with expertise in developing rehabilitation and reintegration services will be engaged to build the capacity of service providers of the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Affairs. The Joint Programme will also extend the impact of the ongoing UNICEF-led UN Joint Programme on Social Protection.

[UNFPA](#) has been working with the National Gender Commission, CSOs and the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support (MMFS) to raise awareness about the heightened risk of gender-based violence, limitations imposed by COVID-19 lockdown to help survivors and deteriorated financial situation of CSOs to shelter survivors and their children. UNFPA launched an information channel in the popular Telegram platform with over 4,200 subscribers at present, where the contact details of all relevant authorities and CSO service providers for GBV response are shared; the channel is also broadcasting legal advice, and operational summaries with GBV dynamic statistics from the government entities, including from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and CSOs. The channel is linked to legal and psychosocial help provided by CSOs through the hotlines, that are also supported by UNFPA. Several CSO shelters where survivors and their children found refuge and the NGO for women with disabilities were supported by UNFPA to survive through extremely difficult times during the COVID-19 lockdown. However, only survivors who reach out to these services will benefit, while many are too afraid or not well-informed to approach the helplines available. Therefore, the MMFS which has its branches in each mahalla nationwide, can consistently identify, help and link survivors to the relevant authorities, CSOs, and professional psychosocial support. The mahalla staff (specialists on family issues) also are encouraged to collect data and provide state-funded direct social support (though quite limited) to families in challenging situations, including elderly and people with disabilities. UNFPA will be working with NGOs of women with disabilities. In addition, two UNFPA full-time staff will be involved in the project implementation. As chair of the UN COVID Protection and Key Populations Task Force as well as the UNCT Gender Theme Group, UNFPA will ensure a consistent human rights, protection and gender lens are applied throughout all aspects of the Joint Programme.

[IOM](#) as the UN agency leading on migration issues both globally and regionally, is actively engaging with various partners from the GoU, the private sector, civil society, local communities and individuals to re-establish means of socio-economic support to prevent human suffering during the crisis, as well as to provide for durable recovery in the post-crisis recovery environment. Within this Joint Programme for Uzbekistan, IOM will closely partner with the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support and identified partner-NGOs to conduct analysis of the scale of return, undertake community outreach activities, assess the needs of returning migrants (returnees) and migrants' family members, especially women dependent on remittances, as well as to identify the most vulnerable ones in need of urgent support for reintegration and deliver tailored assistance. IOM, in close partnership with local NGOs, will be involved in outreach, assessment and identification activities, delivering counselling (both in-person and online), including socio-economic, psychological, legal, and business-counselling to the target groups. IOM will also work on enhancing referral of beneficiaries among the involved stakeholders. IOM possesses sufficient capacity to implement its part of the Joint Programme and is also fully backed by its offices in Central Asia, the main destination countries, HQ and Regional Offices. Furthermore, the PUNO maintains a wide-angle fruitful partnership with the key GoU institutions, a national network of partner-NGOs covering all the regions of the country. The IOM staff in Tashkent will be involved in the project implementation. IOM will apply its

vast experience and good methodologies in implementation of this project, in order to ensure a tailored and human-centred approach with sustainable results.

Implementing UN Organization Partner

UNODC (Technical Agency) has extensive experience with harm reduction, drug treatment and prevention programs in Uzbekistan, which will be used to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support to ensure continuity of services to key vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 crisis. As a technical agency, UNODC will not be receiving direct funding from the COVID-19 MPTF but will support implementation indirectly through letters of agreement or joint implementation of activities funded by RUNOs. UNODC will work with RUNOs to ensure expert support to the needs assessment and measures to ensure continuity of pharmacological and psychosocial therapy and other services for people living with HIV and drug disorders. In 2019, UNODC conducted a technical needs assessment, which resulted in a report with recommendations to guide support to the return, reintegration and rehabilitation of women and children returning from conflict zones. UNODC will partner with RUNOs on these issues. UNODC will partner with RUNOs to support the Ministry's functions to support family strengthening and better parenting during the COVID-19 epidemic, and to facilitate cooperation with police in matters of ensuring the rule of law and preventing violence against women and children in mahallas, including through the development of standard operating procedures to provide essential services to victims during and in the aftermath of COVID-19.

National partners

At the national strategic level, the RUNOs will coordinate with the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction, Gender Equality Commission under the Senate as well as the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support in close coordination with the Department of Cabinet of Ministers on Mahalla, Family and Youth supporting culture and public organizations affairs. To leverage the planned initiatives, the RUNOs also plan to involve the Ministries of Finance, Labour, Public Education, and Interior and others in support of a whole-of-government approach. The RUNOs will also work with civil society organizations and the UNCT Youth Advisory Board.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Monitoring Activity	Purpose	Frequency
Track Results Progress	<i>Progress data against the results indicators in the RRF will be collected and analysed to assess the progress of the joint Programme in achieving the agreed outputs.</i>	<i>Quarterly, or in the frequency required for each indicator.</i>
Monitor and Manage Risk	<i>Identify specific risks that may threaten the achievement of intended results. Identify and monitor risk management actions using a risk log.</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>
Learn	<i>Knowledge, good practices and lessons will be captured regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects of RUNOs and partners and integrated back into the joint Programme.</i>	<i>December 2020</i>
Annual Project Quality Assurance	<i>The quality of the Programme will be assessed against UNDP quality standards to identify Programme strengths and weaknesses and to inform management decision making to improve the joint Programme.</i>	<i>Before the official launch of the Joint Programme</i>
Review and Make Course Corrections	<i>Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making.</i>	<i>As necessary</i>
Project Report	<i>A progress report will be prepared by the Project Manager, having received inputs from all RUNOs and partners, and presented to the Project Board. The report will be prepared in line with MPTF requirements.</i>	<i>At the end of the programme (final report)</i>
Project Review (Project Board)	<i>The Programme's governance mechanism (i.e., project board) will hold regular project reviews to assess the performance of the project and review the Annual Joint Work Plan to ensure realistic budgeting over the life of the project. In December 2020, 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.</i>	<i>2 times during programme duration</i>

Results Framework

Window 2: Outcome	<i>The most vulnerable and at-risk groups (informally employed youth and women, returning migrants and migrants' family members, children leaving specialized correctional institutions, recent returnees, PWDs, victims and survivors of gender-based violence) have sustained/better access to socio-economic protection and inclusive gender responsive services including to legal and psychosocial support activities during and post COVID-19 situation.</i>				Outcome Total Budget
					USD 1,000,000
		Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Responsible Org
Outcome Indicator	2.1a Percentage (%) of informally employed youth, women and men, targeted through this project interventions, included into the programmes of support of the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support and benefiting from access to socio-economic protection and inclusive services	data not available	20% of the informally employed in 30 pilot mahallas (out of which 10% are women). 10% of the total number of informally employed target group will be youth.	Reports of the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support (MMFS), Ministry of Employment, Project report, Government decision, national legislation portal, UNDP reports	UNDP Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support
	2.1b Percentage (%) of GBV survivors and their service providers, people with disabilities included into the programmes of support of the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support and are benefitting from legal and psychosocial protection from GBV	0	50% (for each group) GBV survivors, and people with disabilities applying to GBV hotline received needed assistance	UNFPA and NGO reports, Reports of the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support	UNFPA Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support NGOs
Proposal Outputs	Output 2.1.1. The MMFS can better target social support to unemployed youth and women, people with disabilities, formerly employed in the informal sector hardly hit by the COVID-19 crisis and improve professional skills and capacities of this vulnerable group to find jobs and effectively run small family-based businesses.				
	Output 2.1.2: Access to continuous child protection services is ensured through a remote case management approach and psycho-social support to families repatriated from armed conflict zones and children leaving specialized correctional institutions during and post-COVID-19 pandemic.				
	Output 2.1.3: The most vulnerable returning migrants (returnees) and migrants' family members have access to sustainable reintegration opportunities, through reintegration support.				
	Output 2.1.4. Mahalla specialists and partnering NGOs/rehabilitation centres have strengthened their capacities and resources to provide relevant information, psycho-social support to survivors of gender-based violence and disabled				

		Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Responsible Org
Proposal Output Indicators	Output indicator 2.1.1a Gender responsive actions targeting unemployed and informally employed youth and women are implemented by the MMFS	Special programmes targeting specifically informally employed are not implemented by MMFS.	Special programmes to support informally employed are piloted, including online skills development courses, entrepreneurship programmes.	Reports of the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support	UNDP
	Output indicator 2.1.2b Number of children repatriated from armed conflict zones and girls and boys leaving specialized correctional institutions reached by assessment and psychosocial support activities during COVID 19	108 repatriated children and 0 children leaving institutions	Additional 200 (40% of them are girls)	Quarterly reports of the MMFS and MOPE	UNICEF
	Output indicator 2.1.3a Number of the most vulnerable returning migrants (returnees) and migrants' family members, benefitting from reintegration assistance (disaggregated by sex and age)	N/A	60 (35 men/25 women)	List of beneficiaries, Number of grants issued, IOM monitoring reports	IOM
	Output indicator 2.1.3b Number of vulnerable returning migrants (returnees) and migrants' family members, received socio-economic, psychological and legal counselling and advice, (disaggregated by sex and age)	N/A	400 (200 men/200 women)	List of beneficiaries, Reports from partners, IOM monitoring reports	IOM
	Output indicator 2.1.4a Number of women - survivors of GBV have access to safe shelters and referral services to receive psychosocial and legal support to reintegrate to the society (disaggregated by sex, age, disability)	26 women and children	280 women and children	List of beneficiaries, Case reports from shelters, UNFPA monitoring reports	UNFPA
	Output indicator 2.1.4b Number of families of women with disabilities and women with children with disabilities received social assistance, and access to information and services.	20 families	300 families	List of beneficiaries, Reports from partner, UNFPA monitoring reports	UNFPA

SDG Targets and Indicators

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [select max 3 goals]			
<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 1 (No poverty)	<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure)
<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 2 (Zero hunger)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)
<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 3 (Good health & well-being)	<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities & Communities)
<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 4 (Quality education)	<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SDG 5 (Gender equality)	<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 13 (Climate action)
<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 14 (Life below water)
<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 7 (Sustainable energy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 15 (Life on land)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SDG 8 (Decent work & Economic Growth)	<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 16 (Peace, justice & strong institutions)
<input type="checkbox"/>	SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)		
Relevant SDG Targets and Indicators			
Target	Indicator # and Description		Estimated % Budget allocated
5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age 5.2.2. Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence		\$313,510 (31.4%)
8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services	Indicator 8.3.1: Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex		\$ 400,000 (40%)
10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	Indicator 10.7.1: Recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of monthly income earned in country of destination Indicator 10.7.2: Number of countries with migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people		\$ 286,490 (28.6%)

Risk

Event	Categories Financial Operational Organizational Political (regulatory and/or strategic)	Level 3 – Very High 2 – Medium High 1 - Low	Likelihood 6 – Expected 5 – Highly Likely 4 – Likely 3 – Moderate 2 – Low Likelihood 1- Not Likely 0 – Not Applicable	Impact 5 – Extreme 4 – Major 3 – Moderate 2 – Minor 1 – Insignificant	Mitigating Measures (List the specific mitigation measures)	Risk Owner
Risk 1 Short term solutions within the Government's COVID response plan do not translate into long-term strategies	<i>Strategic</i>	3	4	4	Regular consultations with Government and key stakeholders. Informing project board/steering committee members to make further decisions and communications/advocacy with the Government.	Programme team
Risk 2 Quarantine regime can be further tightened or significantly extended hindering implementation of the joint programme	<i>Organizational</i>	2	3	4	Programme team will regularly monitor the quarantine regime and regulations, which may affect project implementation. Results of monitoring will be communicated to the Project Board/Steering committee and UNRCO for further decisions and informing the MPTF Secretariat. Programme team will also ensure planning for activities that can be delivered remotely/online	Programme team

Budget by UNDG Categories

Budget Lines	Fiscal Year	Description [OPTIONAL]	UNDP	UNFPA	UNICEF	IOM	Total USD
1. Staff and other personnel	2020	UNDP: Project team costs (Project Manager and Administrative-finance assistant) IOM: Project Team costs	\$ 20000		0	\$ 43120	\$ 63120
2. Supplies, Commodities, Materials	2020	UNDP: Office supplies, stationery for trainings and events, PPE commodities for project team, local communities/stakeholders UNICEF: Stationery and training supplies budget line will be used for everyday printing, copying costs, stationary and basic materials	\$ 21542	0	\$ 15000	0	\$ 36542
3. Equipment, Vehicles, and Furniture, incl. Depreciation	2020	UNDP: office ICT and furniture for project needs. UNFPA: Support to rehabilitation centres to become centres of excellence for providing needed assistance to survivors of GBV UNICEF: This budget line covers purchase of mobile phones and sim cards for social workers and psychologists to lead case management and psychosocial counselling to targeted families. Access to the IT equipment for the family departments of the MMFS will also enable better reporting and case management recording.	\$ 20000	\$33000	\$ 20000	0	\$ 73000
4. Contractual services	2020	UNDP: hiring consultants, vendors, companies for products and services (research, assessments, survey, data analysis, training, translation, public services provision, consultancy, printing, communication materials, event management, logistics, etc) IOM: Reintegration support (skills development, grants to launch business initiatives) to the most vulnerable returning migrants (returnees) and migrants' family members, especially remittance dependent families (to be identified in partnership with the Ministry and local partner-NGOs). UNFPA: Hiring of consultants for services (service provision, assessments, trainings, translation etc) and companies (printing, other services) UNICEF: National experts will be hired to conduct mapping of services, develop and operationalize the remote case management and psychosocial counselling. It also includes the cost of interpreter/translator, expenses to translate the caseloads from Russian, Uzbek to English.	\$ 230000	\$ 88900	\$ 20000	\$ 154103	\$ 493003
5. Travel	2020	UNDP: project staff and consultants travel to regions to cover transportation and DSA costs. Monitoring & field visits of project board/steering committee members to regions to cover transportation	\$ 15000	\$ 6100	\$ 10000	\$ 10000	\$ 41100

		and DSAs. IOM: IOM staff travel within the country, to cover both travel and DSA costs. UNFPA: UNFPA staff and consultants travel within the country, to cover both travel and DSA costs, including monitoring missions. UNICEF: National travel will include face to face consultations including provision of outreach services, travel costs of staff for monitoring and experts for mapping to regions (mostly flight expenses and DSA).					
6. Transfers and Grants to Counterparts	2020	UNDP: Direct support with cash-based services and start-up seed grants for the most affected households with no or limited access to finance and social protection. The support envisages (i) the procurement of items required for running small and family-based businesses, (ii) implementation of several successful innovative ideas/projects of youth. IOM: Subgrants to 5 partner-NGOs to conduct (i) community outreach and awareness raising, (ii) analysis and needs assessment of returnees and migrants' family members, and identification of the most vulnerable ones for reintegration assistance, (iii) delivering counselling to the target group, including Uzbek migrants abroad, including domestic migrant workers (online counselling). UNFPA: Direct support to shelters and rehabilitation centres working with survivors of GBV to provide women and children with food and services during crisis, as well as to NGOs to support people with disabilities). UNICEF: This is direct cash assistance to the partners for providing remote counselling and services for re-integration of children from closed institutions into their families. Activities within this cost will also include workshops for family specialists, social workers and psychologists in identifying and addressing the situation and needs of affected children by COVID 19 epidemic.	\$40000	\$ 40000	\$ 50000	\$ 35000	\$ 165000
7. General Operating and other Direct Costs	2020	UNDP: office running/utilities costs, DPCs costs, CO staff time IOM: Office running and M&E costs UNFPA: Operating expenses, M&E activities. UNICEF: This budget line covers cost for a wide range of publications and printing (guidance, assessment forms, training materials, etc.)	\$ 27290	\$ 5000	\$ 5000	\$ 25525	\$ 62814
Sub Total Programme Costs			\$ 373831	\$ 173000	\$ 120000	\$ 267748	\$ 934579
8. Indirect Support Costs * 7%	2020		\$ 26168	\$ 12110	\$ 8400	\$ 18742	\$ 65421
Total			\$ 399,999	\$ 185,110	\$ 128,400	\$ 286,490	\$ 1,000,000

* The rate shall not exceed 7% of the total of categories 1-7, as specified in the COVID-19 Response MOU and should follow the rules and guidelines of each recipient organization. Note that Agency-incurred direct project implementation costs should be charged to the relevant budget line, in line with UNSDG guidance.