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“ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN”

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2018

<p>Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Towards Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in the Kyrgyz Republic • MPTF Office Project Reference Number:¹ 00092002 	<p>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Beneficiaries</p> <p>KYRGYZ REPUBLIC</p> <p>New beneficiaries in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Direct</i> (women/men) 300 • <i>Indirect</i> (women/men) approximately 1,500 <p>Total beneficiaries since the beginning of the Joint Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Direct</i> (women/men) 2,731 (2,710 women, 21 men) • <i>Indirect</i> (women/men) 27,738 (14,179 women/13,559 men)
<p>Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO, IFAD, WFP, UN Women 	<p>Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic • Ministry of Agriculture, Food Processing and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic • Local self-government administrations • NGO Community Development Alliance • NGO Alliance for Budget Transparency • NGO Chui-Talas Rural Advisory Services • NGO Rural Advisory Service (RAS) • Centre for Activation and Development of Rural Initiatives • Republican Health Promotion Centre • Village Health Committees • Association of Poultry Farmers of the Kyrgyz Republic • Public Fund “Kelechek” • JICA One Village, One Product • Public Foundation “Emgek Talaa Birimdigi” • Local Sub-district administrations

¹ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number are as follows: ETHIOPIA: 00092000; GUATEMALA: 00092001; KYRGYZSTAN: 00092002; LIBERIA: 00092003; NEPAL: 00092004; NIGER: 00092005; RWANDA: 00092006

<p>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: USD 2,538,255</p> <p>MPTF Contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Women: USD 963,321 • UN FAO: USD 688,089 • UN WFP: USD 684,845 • IFAD: USD 202,000 <p>Agency Contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Women: USD 40,000 • WFP: USD 14,500 <p>Government Contribution</p> <p><i>(if applicable)</i></p> <p>Other Contributions (donors)</p> <p><i>(if applicable)</i></p> <p>TOTAL:</p>
<p>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p> <p>Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>February-April 2018</i> <i>(The evaluation was named as a Final Evaluation, as at the time there was no information on any additional funding).</i></p> <p>Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i></p>

<p>Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration 5 years</p> <p>Start Date <i>1 January 2014</i></p> <p>End Date <i>30 September 2019</i></p>
<p>Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name: Jyldyz Kuvatova ○ Title: National Programme Officer ○ Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women ○ Email address: jyldyz.kuvatova@unwomen.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the reporting period of 1 January through 31 December 2018, the joint programme partners of *Rural Women Economic Empowerment Programme* (RWEE) in Kyrgyzstan have continued implementing the programme building on the lessons from the final evaluation of the programme's previous phase (November 2014 – March 2018). Independent evaluation team identified the joint programme delivery on rural women's economic empowerment through income generating activities as highly relevant to the country's strategic priorities and rural women's needs. The programme was also found very effective in

- increasing rural women's income,
- improving livelihoods,
- strengthening food security and
- promoting their leadership through various interventions such as promoting the creation of self-help groups (SHGs), joint economic initiatives, providing access to training and interest-free loans.

The *Gender Action Learning System* (GALS) integrated into the implementation model has considerably increased the programme's positive impact on women's empowerment and even – to some extent – offset the disempowering effect of the reduction in leisure time available for women due to their greater engagement in income-generating activities. It was achieved, according to the evaluation, thanks to a more equal distribution of domestic tasks and supported gender-transformative changes within households through engaging men through participatory planning tools. The evaluation provided specific recommendations on the implementation of the new phase of the programme, which include *inter alia* improving the sustainability of programme's results, upscaling GALS to new beneficiaries, and institutional support for the established producer associations.

The programme's participating agencies developed a joint Management Response and a requisite Action Plan to follow up on the evaluation's recommendations.

In its new phase, the programme received additional USD800,000 allocation from the governments of Sweden and Norway through the RWEE Trust Fund in July 2018 for programme implementation through September 2019. Joint work plan for the new allocation included funding for

- mobilization of 700 new participants in all three southern provinces of the country – Jalal-Abad, Osh, and Batken – (670 women and 30 men) and
- building the sustainability of the previously supported groups, including building the institutional capacity of four province level organizations created under the project, and developing leadership potential of the participants of the second cohort (the ones mobilised in 2016-2017).

In the second phase of the joint programme, the agencies will also focus more on policy and governance level work in line with the project document to ***mainstream gender into national policies and programmes to create an enabling gender-sensitive environment.***

Since the launch of the programme in 2014 till the end of the reporting year, a total of 2,731 rural women are running productive agricultural and non-agricultural activities (with 700 more new beneficiaries to be engaged by September 2019) in 87 villages supported by the JPRWEE to improve their livelihoods, food security and nutrition in families. Out of 3,412 women beneficiaries, 805 are running small businesses with additional income of USD488 per beneficiary per year. Thirty-two women are elected to local councils.

During 2018, the programme partners implemented a series of activities contributing to the planned results. FAO conducted 20 trainings on poultry production and hens laying technology in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces benefitting 300 programme participants (283 women and 17 men). WFP has established four small vegetable and fruits processing workshops, providing a set of agricultural processing equipment (worth USD25,000-30,000 each) for four pilot sub-district administrations identified on a competitive basis following a call for business proposals. The processing shops aim to reduce post-harvest losses, improving food security and increasing the incomes of primary programme beneficiaries as well as a wider vulnerable population. WFP has also provided training in processing technology. Two out of four shops have already started the processing activity and earning income. The remaining two shops are ready to start the processing activity in the coming harvest season.

A set of activities to enhance the cooperation between rural women and policy makers were conducted at the national level in June 2018. More than 60 programme beneficiaries met with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, the members of the Parliament and Parliament committees and with UN Women to discuss the overall results of JPRWEE.

The purpose of the meetings was to discuss issues of sustainable and inclusive local development in the context of social protection, rural development and sustainable agriculture policies implementation. The results of the discussion informed next cycle planning and annual work plan.

The internal impact evaluation of the *Gender Action Learning System (GALS)* for JPRWEE conducted by the implementing partner (NGO Community Development Alliance) generated lessons that were shared and discussed in a JPRWEE final workshop in June 2018. Successful cases were documented in a video format and presented during the final workshop.

The workshop presented the programme's interim results for 2015-2017 to the broad circle of development stakeholders in the Kyrgyz Republic: government, international agencies, and civil society. Fifty-seven people (45 women, 12 men) participated in the final workshop: Kyrgyz Government Office, Members of Parliament, international organisations, members of the National Steering Committee of JP, beneficiaries, international and national partners of JPRWEE. Ambassador of Sweden to Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan Christian Kamil also participated in the final workshop. The programme presented results of the external evaluation of the JPRWEE and GALS internal impact evaluation. The workshop was also an opportunity to showcase women's products from four pilot provinces.

After the workshop the Swedish Ambassador visited the project site to Kara-Dobo Village of Chui Province. The FAO, UN Women, and WFP representatives accompanied him. The delegation met with the project participants and learned about their results and businesses. Women presented their Association of Self-Help Groups (ASHG), demonstrated agricultural activities (fields) and shared their experience with the GALS process. They also visited a small women's business – a dumpling shop supported by the seed grant from the *Revolving Fund* established with the help of the JP RWEE.

Within the reporting period FAO conducted gender analysis of three sectoral policy documents: The Concept of Forestry Development – 2040 and The Programme on Fishery and Aquaculture Development 2027; and State Programme on Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023. The gender analysis allowed developing and proposing specific recommendations how gender concerns and empowerment of women can be incorporated in the policy documents and action plan. All three documents are submitted to the Government and are undergoing peer review within the relevant state agencies.

In the end of 2018, UN Women selected a new Implementing Partner – Rural Advisory Service (RAS) Jalal-Abad, which, in coordination with the other Participating UN agencies, has identified new villages in the south of the country and started mobilizing new beneficiaries. By the end of the reporting period, RAS Jalal-Abad conducted a three-day leadership school training for representatives of local self-government. The leadership school aimed at building basic gender understanding and provision of the step by step guidance on gender-responsive local development planning and budgeting.

I. Purpose

The goal of the JP RWEE is to promote rural women's economic empowerment in the Kyrgyz Republic. This corresponds with the Global Programme goal to secure rural women's livelihoods and rights in the context of nationalization of the Agenda 2030 on sustainable development. The Programme is designed around the following four outcome areas: (i) improved food security for rural women; (ii) increased income to sustain livelihoods; (iii) enhanced leadership and participation of rural women in decision-making processes at the local and national levels; and (iv) a more gender responsive policy environment in the country. The Programme contributes to implementation of international and national commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment, including CEDAW, Beijing Platform of Action, and SDGs 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 13 and 16.

The programme is in line with national priorities defined in the *National Strategy on Sustainable Development (NSSD) 2018-2040*, the *National Strategy on Gender Equality (2012-2020)* with a special focus on improving the status of rural women, poverty reduction and sustainable agricultural development. The programme contributes to implementation of the following UNDAF 2018-2022 focus areas: 1) Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, industrial, rural and agricultural development, food security and nutrition; 2) Good governance, rule of law, human rights and gender equality; 3) Environment, climate change, and disaster risk management; and 4) Social Protection, Health and Education with particular attention to vulnerable groups, including women and youth, as well as to disaster-prone communities.

II. Results

i) Narrative reporting on results:

Outcome 1: Rural women have improved food and nutrition security.

- **Output 1.1: Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security.**
- **Output 1.2: Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves and their production.**

During the reporting period, the Programme conducted all the planned 20 trainings on poultry farming and technology for growing chickens in the pilot provinces for 300 beneficiaries, including 283 women and 17 men.

Below is the list of pilot villages where the trainings on poultry production technologies were conducted:

Provinces	District	Beneficiaries	Pilot villages	Number of whom were women	Number who have applied their new knowledge
Naryn Province	Jumgal	20	Kyzart, Jumgal, Kuiruchuk, Baizak	17	5
	Ak-Talaa	25	Kurtka, Togolok Moldo	24	13
	Naryn	15	Bolshevik, Birinchi May	13	1
	At-Bashy	15	Ak-Jar, Acha-Kaiyndy, Kyzyl-Tuu	15	6
Total Naryn		75		69	25
Chui Province	Jaiyl	15	Kaldyk, Kara-Dobo	13	2
		15	Aidarbek	13	1
	Sokuluk	15	Kamyshanovka	15	2
	Kemin	15	Altymysh, Kara-Bulak	15	4
Total Chui		63		56	9

Jalal-Abad Province	Bazar-Korgon	21	Beshik-Jon, Jon, Baimunduz	21	9
		15	Jeti-Koshkon	15	5
		15	Taldy-Bulak	12	3
		21	Kyzylai, Hadjirabad, Dukur	21	6
	Suzak	18	Blagoveshenka, Jany-Dyikan	17	3
Total Jalal-Abad		90		86	26
Osh Province	Kara-Kulja	15	Birinchi May	15	2
		15	Sary-Kamysh	15	5
	Kara-Suu	15	Kenjekul	13	3
		15	Mamajan	14	2
	Nookat	15	Apshyr-Ata, K-Aryk	15	5
Total Osh		75		72	17
Grand Total		300		283 (94%)	77 (25%)

The training included theoretical discussions on agricultural methods and techniques as well as practical lessons and exercises, focusing on such topics as cage systems vs floor systems, ventilation, lighting control, temperature control, nutrition, poultry behavior and weight.

During the training, the project beneficiaries were highly interested in developing a poultry industry and launching a family business in this area. In the weeks following the training events, beneficiaries were called in order to assess: i) the interest in actually starting a poultry business and/or ii) how many of the beneficiaries applied the knowledge they gained to back-yard chicken raising. In total, over 25 percent of all beneficiaries either had made steps to start a poultry business and/or applied knowledge gained at their home within one month of training completed.

The trainings also showed that involving both husband and wife in the learning process is important. If there are prospects of starting a family business or farm, shared knowledge and information between husband and wife would make it easier to start it. Another lesson: additional proactive efforts need to be made to ensure participation of younger women, as mostly women in their 40 and above attended the trainings. The planning sessions of the next stage should identify more younger women for mobilization.

Outcome 2: Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods and create wealth

- **Output 2.1 Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products**
- **Output 2.2 Rural women have increased access to decent wage employment opportunities.**

Under this outcome, as a part of its value chain development activity, WFP has provided vegetable and fruits processing equipment (worth USD25,000-30,000 each) to the four pilot subdistricts in order to help the project beneficiaries reduce post-harvest losses and improve their income from value added production by processing their produce. This opportunity will also help the beneficiaries to considerably reduce the harvest losses.

Below is a list of target sub-districts, where the processing shops were launched:

Province	District	Sub-district	Equipment type
Batken	Leilek	Toguz Bulak	Vegetable and fruits drying equipment

Osh	Uzgen	Ak Zhar	Vegetable and fruit drying equipment
Jalal-Abad	Aksy	Kashka Suu	Vegetable and fruit canning equipment
Naryn	Naryn	Emgek Talaa	Milk processing equipment

Along with the provision of processing equipment, WFP worked on opening the processing shops jointly with the local authorities and project beneficiaries to prepare the shops for launching. This activity included a range of actions, including identification of pilot sub-districts, conducting tendering process, needs assessment of the shop, repair, equipment delivery, engineering support and technological training, quality of production, etc.

Identification of pilot sub-districts for the provision of the processing shops was conducted on a competitive basis following a call for business proposals based on the local needs, availability of resources and marketability of the products to be produced, with the help of a technologist.

The equipment was meant to serve primarily project beneficiaries, but also a wider vulnerable population in the pilot communities through processing and selling of value-added agricultural products. The provision of the processing equipment by WFP required financial contribution by the receiving sub-districts in terms of allocation of premises for the processing shop as well as conducting repair works at the processing shops, which comes to 10-15% of the total value.

The operation of the processing shops is arranged to be conducted through public private partnership, where sub-district administrations engaged local entrepreneurs who provided premises, conducted necessary repair works and are ready to operate the processing shops through employing programme beneficiaries and processing their agricultural products, while renting the equipment.

During the reporting period in all of these pilot sub-districts premises were identified and necessary repair work was conducted. A technologist hired through the Centre for Activation and Development of Rural Initiatives conducted a training for the staff of the newly opened processing shops in the technology of processing, HACCP standards and using the equipment. In two out of the four processing shops the beneficiaries have started processing and selling their products: Ak-Jar and Toguz-Bulak. Emgek-Talaa and Kashka-Suu, where the equipment was provided recently, are waiting for the next harvest season to start processing. WFP has also linked these processing shops with Japan International Cooperation Agency's *One Village One Product* (JICA OVOP) project to support beneficiaries with branding, certification, product quality and marketing. The processing shop in Ak-Jar has already received a certificate from JICA OVOP for their apple chips and apple pastilles and started selling their products at the JICA OVOP shop in Osh as well. On average, each shop can employ from five to ten persons depending on the harvest. In total up to 40 women are expected to be employed during the next harvest season. The shops will also apply the method of rotation-based engagement of project beneficiaries to benefit maximum number of project participants. The shops will also develop schedules so that all the project beneficiaries have an opportunity to access the shop and process their agricultural products. At this stage, it is not possible to estimate the incomes of the shops, because they have been launched at the end of the harvest season, and they are waiting for the new harvest season to resume the processing activities. The average income per women working at the shop as well as per processing shops will be calculated in the next reporting period.

Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes

- **Output 3.1: Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to take an active part in local governance systems.**
- **Output 3.2: Rural women have greater organisational capacities to form, sustain and participate into producer organizations, cooperatives and unions**
- **Output 3.3: Rural women, including young women, have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels.**

- **Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women, have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment.**

During the first semester of 2018, the Programme conducted a series of activities to enhance the cooperation between rural women and policy makers at the national level, including:

- The meeting of 20 programme participants (19 women and 1 man) with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development when they were informed about the priorities of the gender policy in the Kyrgyz Republic and in the *GEWE National Action Plan for 2018-2020*, and new trends of the social protection policy at the local level.
- The roundtable of 23 programme participants (20 women and 3 men) with the members of the Parliament and Parliament committees, when they raised a wide range of issues affecting rural women, including amendments to the law on electrification of new settlements, the campaign on introducing a special measure to the law on the elections for local councils, and the practical implementation of the national programme “*2018 is the Year of Rural Development.*”
- The meeting of 23 programme participants (20 women and 3 men) with UN Women to discuss the overall results of JPRWEE achieved up to date and plans for 2018-2019.

These activities contributed to dialogue between policy makers and communities on connecting national policy implementation with real and specific needs of rural women and men and inform development and fine tuning of the Phase II work plan of the programme.

To implement the activities under the new funding for 2018-2019, UN Women launched a call for proposals amongst qualified non-governmental organizations to identify a partner. As a result, UN Women have partnered with an experienced national service provider, Rural Advisory Service Jalal-Abad (RAS JA), which will contribute and be co-responsible for the achievement of the following outputs until August 2019:

- 700 (670 women and 30 men) new participants will be mobilized into self-help groups in about 14 new villages of Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken provinces;
- 700 (670 women and 30 men) new participants and at least 20% of the 2,731 (2,710 women and 21 men) old participants will have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance;
- 700 (670 women and 30 men) new participants and at least 20% of the 2,731 (2,710 women and 21 men) old participants will have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate in POs, cooperatives and unions;
- 80 rural activists (i.e., rural women, including young women) will have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels;
- 700 (670 women and 30 men) new participants and at least 20% of the 2,731 (2,710 women and 21 men) old participants (i.e., rural women, including young women) will have enhanced awareness on their rights (land, water, health, education, etc.) in a more supportive community / local environment.
- 75 (45 women and 30 men) government officials (policy makers and select members of the national Parliament) will have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural empowerment policies, laws and budget.

On 12-14 December 2018, RAS JA conducted a leadership school for heads of municipalities, chairpersons of local councils, women activists from each pilot village and representatives of the following sub-district administrations: Shaidan, Atabekov, Kashka-Suu, Too-Moyun and Naiman. The leadership schools attended by 33 people (19 women and 14 men) aimed at:

- to build a basic gender understanding amongst the representatives of these municipalities,
- to conduct a gender analysis of the local development plans and budgets,

- to provide a methodology and a step-by-step guidance on the gender responsive local development planning and budgeting through participatory processes, involving women, youth and other vulnerable groups,
- to build local implementation teams of municipal workers and activists and introduce them to the goals and objectives of the JP RWEE programme,
- to develop joint action plans with matrix of responsibilities, milestones and indicators for each municipality.

The leadership school helped participants:

- learn about existing gender stereotypes in society and gender roles in family that affect family life, society and women's leadership; national and international mechanisms of gender equality and empowerment of women; how to identify strategic and practical needs of women
- draft step-by-step action plans to conduct gender analysis in their respective municipalities

The action plans included

- organization of initiative groups to conduct gender analysis in their respective municipalities
- collection of statistics on women's participation in decision making processes, violence against women and women's access to resources
- advocacy initiatives to promote gender equality and deconstruct gender stereotypes
- identification and knowledge of the role of local governments in implementing of the national action plan on gender equality
- continuous awareness of the strategic plans of each municipality.

These themes will be replicated in the second round of the leadership programme within the programme.

During the reporting period, the programme Implementing Partner RAS JA also worked on identifying new geographical locations for the project in coordination with the UN agencies. The list of new villages has been disseminated among the UN partners and the following villages have been approved for further project interventions:

Province	District	AO	Village
Jalal-Abad	Toktogul	Torken	Kara-Zhygach
	Chatkal	Chatkal	Kurulush
	Aksy	Kashka-Suu	Tuuk-Jar
	Nooken	Sakaldy	Chon Bagysh and Arimjan
	Alabuka	Baltagulov	Kashkalak
Osh	Uzgen	Don-Bulak	Ozgorush
		Check-Abad	Kyzyr-Abad
		Naiman	Naiman
Batken		Suu-Bashy	Boz-Adyr
		Samarkandek	Min-Oruk
	Leilek	Toguzbulak	Aibike
		Kulundu	Maksat and Internatsional

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

- **Output 4.1: Policy makers and parliamentarians have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural employment policies, laws and budget.**
- **Output 4.2: Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women.**
- **Output 4.3: An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women's priorities in regional policy processes.**

Within the reporting period FAO conducted gender analysis of three sectoral policy documents: The Concept of Forestry Development – 2040 and The Programme on Fishery and Aquaculture Development 2027; and State Programme on Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023. The gender analysis allowed developing and proposing specific recommendations how gender concerns and empowerment of women can be incorporated in the policy documents and action plan. All three documents are submitted to the Government and undergoing peer review within the relevant state agencies.

More efforts to engage at the governance and policy levels to contribute to creating more gender responsive policy environment is one of the programme's country team priorities on a par with strengthening the leadership capacity and improving the economic opportunities for rural women. To this end, the country team is planning to focus on engaging with the national partners, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Development as well as the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration in 2019.

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

There were challenges with the coordination of activities between the agencies, including leading more governance and policy level work, as the country team had disruptions in the programme coordination role. The previous Programme Manager moved to another organization in the first quarter of 2018 and was replaced by a temporary manager. The new Programme Manager hired during the third quarter also had to quit the job due to personal issues. Currently, the lead organization is hiring a new Programme Manager, which is expected to put the coordination work back on track.

Such a disruption led to the lack of proper quality assurance of programme implementation, including a logframe without updated baseline and targets for the indicators. This management issue will be addressed through a coordination retreat within the programme's country team to create and agree on the joint logframe and updated project document.

But also, a change in the management of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development and staff turnover in the Gender Policy Department is also a risk factor and impedes close coordination and engagement with the Ministry as well as policy level work. Narrow sectorial approach of the ministry of agriculture and lack of inter-sectorial coordination contribute to these challenges. Delay in receiving donor's contribution and lack of committed funds or certainty in additional funding also hinders comprehensive activity planning and ensuring sustainability of results as the country team has to plan based on the available sporadic funding and not concentrate on the bigger conceptualization. The country team also acknowledges the need for improved and coordinated data collection and analysis. Towards this objective, it aims to develop an improved M&E and knowledge management systems with the help of global RWEE coordination team, although this is also challenged by the lack of budget.

There have also been challenges related to the provision of processing equipment for launching processing workshops due to low capacity and lack of co-financing from local sub-districts which resulted in the delay with the identification of sub-districts and conducting necessary repair works. However, it is worth mentioning that there were good examples and efforts by some of the sub-districts. For example, the leadership of Ak-Zhar municipality was supportive and collaborative in this process. The head of the municipality highly prioritized this initiative, allocated a premise and financial resources for the repair of the

processing shop and is already looking for market opportunities to sell products. He is also raising money to purchase additional equipment for the shop.

There were also challenges with identifying the best model for running the shop, as the project participants do not have enough resources to invest into the operational and other costs and potential to run the shop, at least at the initial stage. Thus, after studying various options, the programme has selected a public-private partnership model, where a local individual businessman leases the equipment, bears the operational, equipment maintenance and other related costs, hires the project participants for the shop. The shop primarily processes the fruits and vegetables produced by the project beneficiaries.

Other lessons from the joint monitoring visits, including the visit of the members of the National Steering Committee and the Global Project Coordinator, indicated that some groups were more active than others, and some of the groups were not benefiting to full extent from the project mechanisms, including learning from each other, benefiting from the joint collaboration under SHGs and created province level organizations. The following recommendations and follow-up actions, among others, that the Country team is going to focus during 2019 and which has been incorporated into plan of activities are:

- Work more on building the leadership potential of rural women at the individual level, also making sure that the successful ones (either individual or groups) can be of inspiration to the ones that are not very active, for instance, the ones that are not engaged in any Income-Generating Activity;
- Assess the financial capacity of the four associations created within the JP, linking the self-help groups (SHGs) who are still not part of these organizations, and making sure there is clear information on what these organizations can offer to their members.
- Assess the possibilities on registering the individual SHGs, where possible, as legal entities so they can access, for instance, microcredit from microfinance institutions who are more present in rural areas than regular banks;
- Ensure that the full potential of the four agro-processing shops is used to benefit maximum number of beneficiaries, using rotational work schemes, purchase of agricultural produce from the project beneficiaries, free access to the equipment by the beneficiaries to process their agricultural produce and creating an oversight mechanism to oversee the fair and equitable use of the processing equipment to benefit all the project participants.
- Engage more to support the national government in mainstreaming gender into national strategies and programmes.

Given the complexity of tasks and objectives for 2019, the JP country team is considering a request for no-cost extension of the programme until the end of the year.

- **Qualitative assessment:** Provide a qualitative assessment of the level of overall achievement of the Programme. Highlight key partnerships and explain how such relationships impacted on the achievement of results. Explain cross-cutting issues pertinent to the results being reported on. For Joint Programmes, highlight how UN coordination has been affected in support of achievement of results.

The JP RWEE Country Team, jointly with national partners, works continuously to improve the quality of assistance provided to project beneficiaries and to bring transformative change to the lives of rural women. Towards these ends, the Country Team conducted a participatory and gender-responsive external evaluation of the project in 2018.

The evaluation findings concluded that the complementarity of the mandates of partner UN agencies made the JP RWEE highly relevant to national strategic priorities and the needs of rural women. These agencies were involved in joint programme delivery and focused on engaging women in income-generating activities. The effectiveness of the programme - in achieving better livelihoods, food security, increased income and obtaining leadership roles for participating women – was facilitated by the promotion of solidarity economic models like worker cooperatives and group economic initiatives that

provided access to training and interest-free commodity and cash loans. The JP RWEE established a number of mechanisms to ensure sustainability of its results, including the creation of village *associations of self-help groups* and *regional producer organizations*. Relying on shared processes increased efficiency of their joint delivery. The JP RWEE could benefit if this approach is consciously used during the next programme phases.

The evaluation found numerous examples where the project approach led to increased productivity and greater income generation. Learning to grow vegetables was seen by community members as a crucial change that led to other positive intended changes: increase in income due to the sales of vegetables and improved diet due to consumption of fresh and preserved vegetables. Community members acknowledged that vegetable enrich their diet with vitamins and that the vegetables they grow are organic and thus have higher nutritional value. Households started growing new types of crops and stopped buying them from markets.

The JP RWEE also provided participants opportunities to obtain non-agricultural skills to ensure sustainable income during agriculture season off, e.g., growing and taking care of house plants, sewing, computer design, repair of mobile phones. Women used these skills to start group economic initiative with the support of the programme.

For example, in the village of Acha-Kayendy, Naryn region, women who started a dumpling facility, were making dumplings for limited sales at home before the programme. A loan from the JP RWEE induced these women to join forces and start the dumpling producing facility. This led to increase in production and income. Part of the revenue is reinvested in the facility: these women also opened a canteen where they serve their dumplings and benefit from higher value chain. There are also examples where group economic initiatives were based on the skills and ideas that women gained through the JP RWEE. For example, a group of women in the village of Blagovestchenko, Jalal-Abad region, is running a successful house plants business. Last fall this group tried drying and selling apples that were purchased in the market and managed to get good profit. Both ideas were suggested to these women by the JP RWEE.

Increased income (including savings due to provision of wheat flour and oil) combined with availability of home-grown vegetables led to significant improvements in household food consumption practices: consumption of vegetable and fruits have considerably increased – from 3.2 days a week before the project to 4.7 days a week after the project for vegetables and from 1.2 days a week before the project to 4.3 days a week after the project for fruits. As a result of the JP RWEE, proportion of programme households with ‘poor’ or ‘borderline’ food consumption score (which measures consumption frequency, diversity and relative nutritious importance), dropped from 24% before the project to 9% after the project.

The evaluation also provided the following recommendations to strengthen the project’s impact:

- 1) Enhancing all aspects of rural women’s economic empowerment as defined in the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index,
- 2) Applying Gender Action Learning System Household methodologies by International Fund for Agricultural Development for all target villages,
- 3) Continuing support to four province-level organizations created under the project to build their sustainability;
- 4) Developing and testing a strategy for the replication of the rural women’s economic empowerment model. These recommendations have informed the design of the Activity Plan for the new phase of the joint programme.

These recommendations have been integrated into the 2018-2019 Activity Plan, which the JP RWEE is now working on.

UN Women Representative delivered a presentation of the programme's final evaluation for the period of November 2014 – March 2018 at the side event of the Committee on World Food Security in Rome in October 2018. The presentation focused on the evaluation of the joint delivery of the holistic support for increased food security and nutrition with a special focus on lessons learnt both from programmatic and coordination perspectives. The details of the progress and performance of the JP RWEE intervention from the point of view of relevance, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency and sustainability have been presented to participants. In particular, the presentation demonstrated how innovative approaches such as the use of *Gender Action Learning Systems* (GALS) had contributed to the overall effectiveness of food security and nutrition interventions. It also attempted to answer the question whether joint operations produce more value for money.

Overall progress of the JPRWEE during January-December 2018 has been on track with finalization of key activities related to enhancing rural women's leadership and participation at local and national levels and continuing providing support to programme beneficiaries.

The partnership of the four UN agencies in conducting the joint external evaluation of the project was also very effective in terms of learning from each other through joint planning and cost sharing. But we have also drawn lessons from this experience that we have discussed and documented for improvement in the future.

In terms of partnership with other organizations, the JP country team has successfully collaborated with central and local level government partners in project implementation. The joint field monitoring visit to the south of the country in autumn 2018 together with the members of the National Steering Committee witnessed more engagement and enthusiasm by the members of the committee in project results and challenges faced by the beneficiaries, unlike the previous years, where their involvement in the JP RWEE used to be more formal. There is also active support and engagement by the national partners at the local level project implementation activities.

WFP is collaborating with JICA One Village, One Product (OVOP) project, which has a good experience in the country in supporting local producer groups to improve product quality and marketing. WFP is trying to establish linkages between OVOP JICA and the four processing shops with a view that JICA OVOP can further assist them with successful operation. The JICA OVOP project has initially worked in Issyk-Kul province of the country supporting local women to develop same products in various villages throughout the province meeting the same quality standards and using the available local resources. The Project is now disseminating this experience throughout the country. The products developed under the JICA OVOP's province brands are displayed in their shops and exported to abroad. As the JICA OVOP specialists work not with new groups from the scratch but with already established groups who are producing some products, it would be very beneficial linking them with the RWEE women so that the latter can benefit from the JICA OVOP project in improving the quality of their product and market them under the JICA OVOP brand.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1: Rural women have improved food and nutrition security			
Output 1.1: Rural women have increased access to and control over resources, assets and services critical for their food and nutrition security			
Indicator 1.1.1 Increase of agricultural production in beneficiaries' families Baseline: 20 tons per hectare Target by 2019: 30 tons per hectare, 35% above average of country value Indicator 1.1.2 Number of rural women utilizing improved production techniques Baseline: 2,731 Target: 3,401 Indicator 1.1.3 Average % of increase in household income among members of SHGs Baseline: 32.2% Target: household income of families of SHGs members increased at least by 30%	20	To be measured in 2019	Partner reports
	2,731	To be measured in 2019	Verification and post-distribution monitoring reports
	32.5%	To be measured in 2019.	
Output 1.2: Rural women have greater capacity to enhance and control local food security reserves and their production			
Indicator 1.2.1 % of families of SHG members with improved dietary diversity and consumption patterns both during harvest and lean seasons	no data	Ongoing	Partner reports

<p>Baseline: no data</p> <p>Target: at least 95 % of families of SHGs members have increased access to diversified diet both during harvest and lean seasons</p>			
<p>Outcome 2: Rural women have increased income to secure their livelihoods</p>			
<p>Output 2.1: Rural women have enhanced entrepreneurship skills and value chains to access markets for their products</p>			
<p>Indicator 2.1.1 % of trained participants who are using the obtained skills in income generation activities</p> <p>Baseline: to be confirmed</p> <p>Planned Target: 60%</p>	<p>To be collected</p>	<p>Activities are planned for 2019, will be reported in 2019</p>	<p>Partner reports</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Rural women have enhanced leadership and participation in their communities and in rural institutions, and in shaping laws, policies and programmes</p>			
<p>Output 3.1: Rural women, including young women have enhanced confidence and leadership skills to participate in local governance</p>			

<p>Indicator 3.1.1. Number of rural women leaders participating in the process of local planning and budgeting</p> <p>Baseline: 33</p> <p>Target: 50</p> <p>Indicator 3.1.2. Number of local development plans/budgets developed based on participatory process</p> <p>Baseline: 15</p> <p>Target: 20</p> <p>Indicator 3.1.3. Number of community initiatives addressing specific needs of rural women</p> <p>Baseline: 12</p> <p>Target: 16</p>	<p>33</p> <p>15</p> <p>13</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Partner reports</p>
<p>Output 3.2: Rural women have greater organizational capacities to form, sustain and participate into POs, cooperatives and unions</p>			
<p>Indicator 3.2.1. Number of women members of SHGs running own business startups</p> <p>Baseline: 71</p> <p>Target: 100</p>	<p>71</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Partner report</p>
<p>Output 3.3: Rural women, including young women, have increased capacity to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels</p>			
<p>Indicator 3.3.1. Number of rural women participating in policy lobbying activities at local and central levels</p>	<p>45</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Partner report</p>

Baseline: 45 Target: 80			
Output 3.4: Rural women, including young women have enhanced awareness on their rights in a more supportive community/local environment			
Indicator 3.4.1. Number of young rural women with enhanced awareness of their rights participating in policy lobbying activities at local and central levels Baseline: 0 Target: 378	0	Ongoing	Partner report
Outcome 4: A more gender responsive policy environment is secured for the economic empowerment of rural women			
Output 4.1: Policy makers and parliamentarians have enhanced capacities to effectively mainstream gender into land, food, agriculture, nutrition and rural employment policies, laws and budget			
Indicator 4.1.1. Number of policy-makers participated in the learning and advocacy events Baseline: 10 Target: 30	10	Ongoing	Partner reports
Indicator 4.1.2. Number of policies and strategies include gender equality objectives and address the barriers to women’s economic advancement Baseline: 1 Target: 3	1	To be measured in 2019	Policy documents

Output 4.2: Greater availability of tools and data to track progress in the economic empowerment of rural women			
Indicator 4.2.1. WEAI calculated for selected target areas, contributing to programme's baseline Baseline: 0 Target: 1	0	The endline survey will be conducted in 2019	Survey data
Output 4.3: An enabling environment is promoted to reflect rural women's priorities in regional policy processes			
Indicator 4.3.1. Number of regional policy documents integrating gender concerns Baseline: 0 Target: at least 1 document Indicator 4.3.2. Number of advocacy activities promoting women's rights in regional policy processes Baseline: 28 Target: 58	0	Ongoing	Policy documents
	32	Ongoing	Partner reports

iii) A Specific Story

Result (if applicable): Describe the observable *change* that occurred so far as a result of the Programme interventions. For example, how did community lives change or how was the government better able to deal with the initial problem?

A Self-help group “Gulgaaky” that consists of ten married women with kids in Tort-Kol subdistrict of Uzgen District of Osh Province in the south of the country joined the Joint Programme RWEE in 2016. These are young and middle aged (up to 40 years old) married women with kids. They participated in the training activities under the project such as the social mobilization, financial literacy and business planning as well as agricultural production and created their savings fund. Once their *Savings Fund* has accumulated up to KGS85,000 (USD1,230), they decided to start an income generation activity and improve their household incomes. With this in mind, they have purchased three sewing machines and two traditional bread making ovens “tandyr” and approached sub-district administration requesting a premise for opening a workshop for producing national handicraft items and bakery products. A village municipality has provided them a premise, for whom the group is paying a small amount of KGS500 (USD7.25) for rent.

Currently the women work at the workshop in two-day shifts as they have to attend their household duties as well. On a daily basis, when they do not have orders, they bake about 70-80 pieces of traditional bread and sell in the local market. When they have orders from others, they bake up to 300 pieces. As for the sewing activity, they mainly produce items for weddings such as national blankets, pillows and other embroidered clothes.

Every 20 days, the group divide their earnings amongst the members. On average each woman receives KGS5000 (USD72) for their 10 days’ work (as they work 10 days during a 20-day period in shifts). Until this joint activity they were mostly engaged in seasonal agricultural activity.

When asked about their plans, the group leader Gulgaaky mentioned that the group was interested in expanding their income generation activity. In particular, they were interested to start producing confectionary products and sell to the kindergartens and other institutions in their locality. The sub-district administration also expressed their support with facilitating orders with interested organizations. But what the group needs for this is training. WFP has informed the group that they will arrange a training for them in confectionary course within their “Support to smallholder farmers” project activity.

Lessons Learned:

While this is a very good example when a self-help group has made a saving and bought the necessary equipment and inputs and successfully running and income generation activity, bringing additional incomes to their families and improving their livelihood. During the monitoring visit, we have identified that the group needs further capacity building, mainly they require training in hygiene and HACCP standards, including the use of special protective uniform, such as a cap, gloves, apron especially for a bread making activity, so that they follow the necessary hygiene and safety requirements and standards. The lesson learnt is that to achieve sustainable results the groups require further follow up, coaching and mentoring. The group also expressed an interest and a need in training in confectionary goods as they would like to produce confectionary items and increase their income from the marketing of confectionary products.

Another lesson learnt is to promote and encourage other self-help groups as well through exchange of information and experience between the successful groups and the ones that are not active and not benefiting from joint income generation activities. Because, unfortunately not all the groups are initiative and ready to take risks to succeed. Because of their vulnerabilities often some groups are afraid of taking risks and not quick to launch income generation activities. Therefore, sharing the best practices amongst the groups will be very inspiring for those who are not yet very active.

III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)

External consultants were recruited to conduct mid-term evaluation of the JPRWEE (see attachment #1)

Internal impact evaluation of GALS (see attachment #2)

From November 2017 to January 2018, an internal impact evaluation of the GALS was conducted. Service providers undertook extensive field visits to gather information to evaluate the impact of the GALS in the lives of JPRWEE participants and their livelihoods. First, evaluation methodology was designed. Data collection methods included:

- in-depth interviews with the GALS participants of all three levels² and their family members, friends were used to identify changes that participants had after experiencing GALS;
- “Radar” tool was used with catalyst champions to assess extent to which each GALS tool was successfully used. Number of criteria were developed for each tool and each criterion was ranked from 0 to 10 (0 – minimum level of achievement and 10 is maximum level of achievement of the criteria). Champions rank each criterion according to their own observation of the impact on participants (considering facts they experienced during piloting);
- focus group discussions were conducted with catalyst champions³ to identify advantages and challenges they faced during upscaling of the GALS with regards to methodological part and organization of the work. Focus group discussions identified lessons were and elaborated no recommendations for the future;
- review of the champion’s diaries (documentary evidence of change). Champions on a voluntary basis have recorded changes of the participants they observed during the whole piloting period. They were analyzed and used to get evidence that support other evaluation findings;
- review of the narrative reports of the project team.

In summary, the evaluation showed that GALS has a positive impact for the JPRWEE. In general, level of impact of the tools is similar from village to village and from province to province. The difference in the level of activism has been observed during the piloting phase. The participants in Jalal-Abad and Osh provinces were more active and champions of these two provinces ranked the impact level of GALS higher than others. However, all four provinces demonstrated the same depth of the GALS impact, i.e., each province reported very strong positive changes catalyzed by GALS.

From February to April 2018, the UN partners have conducted external joint evaluation of the project involving two experts, covering a period from November 2014 till March 2018, in all five regions where the JP RWEE was implemented: Naryn, Chuy, Jalal-Abad, Osh and Batken. The evaluation focused on lessons learnt both from the programmatic and coordination perspectives. Its main purpose was to assess in more detail the programmatic progress and performance of the intervention in terms of relevance, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency and sustainability. The evaluation came up with the following four main recommendations:

1. For the next stage of the JP RWEE implementation the partner UN agencies shall use the operational model that enhances all aspects of rural women economic empowerment as defined by the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index.
2. In the second phase of the JP RWEE GALS shall be applied in the second cohort of villages to mitigate the negative JP RWEE impact on women’s leisure time.

² Champions – catalyst champions trained by GALS facilitators (project team staff). Those champions train 5 people (first level GALS participants). Those 5-GALS beneficiaries train 3 people (second level GALS participants). Those 3-GALS beneficiaries train 2 people (third level GALS participants).

³ Champions – person that start upscaling GALS in the communities. GALS is upscaled in a pyramid shape. During piloting champions used registers where they registered participants and gathered observations about participants' changes and achievements in their diaries. Champions’ registers and diaries acted as source of data to monitor and evaluate in addition to service providers’ data.

3. Under the second phase the JP RWEE shall continue supporting four producer organizations until they are fully self-sustainable.
4. Partner UN agencies shall consider developing and testing the strategy for replication of women economic empowerment model in the villages and sub-districts where the programme has already worked.

The evaluation findings also fed into the design of the new Activity Plan for 2018-2019, that secured the JP RWEE US\$ 800,000 from the Governments of Sweden and Norway.

On 22 June 2018, the final JPRWEE workshop was conducted to present results of the programme for 2015-2017 to a broad circle of development stakeholders in the Kyrgyz Republic including state structures, international agencies, and local civil society. The meeting was attended, among others, by Vice Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic Altyнай Omurbekova and the Ambassador of Sweden to the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Kazakhstan Christian Kamil. During the meeting, the results of the JP RWEE mid-term evaluation and the results of the internal impact evaluation of GALS were presented. A video clip covering GALS success stories in the Kyrgyz language was also presented followed by the success stories shared by project beneficiaries, including by Nuria Temirbek kyzy, who has been elected as a member of the local council, Karataeva Sanabar, head of the Women's Cooperative in Osh; Atyrkul Jumabaeva, deputy head of Ak-Bashat subdistrict of Jayil District in Chui Province. Participants of the JP RWEE were awarded with honorable diplomas of the Ministry of Economic Development in the Kyrgyz Republic during the workshop, including Nuria Temirbek kyzy from Naryn, Jyldyz Abdullaeva from Jalal-Abad, Salyamova Idoyat from Chui and Abdukulova Raikan from Osh. The participants of the meeting raised different questions about the JP RWEE experience, GALS methodology and plans of JP RWEE for 2018-2019. The workshop was followed by the exhibition fair of women's products (bakeries, dairy products, canned fruits and vegetables, fresh fruits and vegetables, handicraft and other products). The workshop was covered by the national TV channels ("Ala-Too 24" and "April"), radio channel "Maral FM" and publicized in online media resources.

IV. Programmatic Revisions (if applicable)

Given the scope of work for the implementing partner – RAS Jalal-Abad – the JP country partners will request a no-cost extension till December 2019.

V. Coordination mechanisms

- The National Steering Committee of the programme has been established in October 2014 and convenes on a bi-annual basis to review progress and endorse key programmatic decisions. It comprises representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Agency for local self-government and inter-ethnic relations, and representatives of four participating agencies. The Minister of Labour and Social Protection co-chairs the National Steering Committee jointly with the head of one of the participating agencies on a rotational basis. FAO Representative in Kyrgyzstan has been elected as co-chair for the year 2018 and will hand over the co-chairing to the next partner agency in 2019, UN Women.
- On 14 May 2018, the 7th meeting of the NSC was called to report on the progress of the JP in 2017 and present and agree on the Annual Work Plan 2018-2019. The meeting was co-chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Development Taalaikul Isakunova and FAO Representative in Kyrgyzstan. The members of the Steering Committee were updated on results of the JP. The detailed presentation on planned activities in 2018-2019 was delivered, including the review of JP agencies' approaches in programme implementation. Overall, the NSC agreed with proposed activities and endorsed the work plan with some comments on the indicators, which were later integrated in the work plan.
- The Technical Working Group comprises the focal points of four agencies participating in the joint programme. It convenes on a monthly basis to share information, coordinate, and discuss any upcoming events and issues. Technical Working Group develops a joint work plan annually with details of each agency's activities, schedule and places to facilitate better coordination of individual interventions. Based on the work plan, partners develop a joint monitoring plan to review progress,

monitor key activities in the field and start discussions on the effectiveness of the programme's approach. Joint monitoring visits take place on a quarterly basis.

VI. Resources

- Provide any information on financial management, procurement and human resources.
- Indicate if the Programme mobilized any additional resources or interventions from other partners.

The programme has been designed as a 5-year initiative with a total budget of US\$ 5 million for 2012-2017. The first allocation was received in 2014 from the Government of Norway followed by a funding from SIDA in 2015 through end 2017. With the confirmed funding of US\$ 800,000 for June 2018 – September 2019 the JPRWEE in Kyrgyzstan has received a total contribution of US\$ 3,338,255 and intends to replicate and upscale the best practices gained over the previous implementation phase.