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Spotlight Mid-term Assessment Report using ROM review

Type of ROM review	**Projects and Programmes**
Project title	*Spotlight Initiative - Kyrgyzstan*
Project reference	
EU Delegation in charge	*Kyrgyzstan*

Key information	
Domain (instrument)	Region: Central Asia
DAC Sector	Human and Social Development: « Gender Equality »
Zone Benefitting from the Action	Kyrgyzstan
Type of Project/Programme	Geographic
Geographic Implementation	Single-country
Contracting Party	SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE
EU contribution	4,700,000 $ (for Phase 1)

Project Implementation Dates (Phase 1)	Start Date	1 January 2020	End Date	31 December 2022
ROM expert(s) name(s)	Gulnara Ibraeva (national expert), Alice Behrendt (regional team leader)			
Field phase	Start Date	15 October 2021	End Date	18 November 2021

Scoring overview: green (good)   orange (problems)   red (serious deficiencies)   unable to assess.
🟢   🟠   🔴   ⚫

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Relevance	🟢	🟢	🟠	🟠	🟢	🟢

	7	8	9
Effectiveness	⚪	🟠	🟠

	10	11	12
Efficiency	🟢	🟠	🟠

	13
Sustainability	🟢

Persons interviewed and surveyed	Interviews/FGD.	Survey
EU Delegation	2	0
Partner country government	11	1
UN agencies	16	17
CSO reference group	7	1
Implementing partners	16	8
Final Beneficiaries	31	n/a
Other	3	0

Key documents[1]	Number
Essential documents	15
Other documents	29

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[1] Please consult Annex 1 for details on essential documents and other documents.

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A. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Purpose and objectives of the Mid-term Assessment (MTA):

The purpose of the MTA is to assess the programme at country level as soon as it reaches the end of Phase I, to take stock of where the Spotlight Initiative is vis-à-vis its initial programme and to assess the new ways of working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The specific objectives are to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the programme, based on the agreed MTA questions, and to formulate relevant recommendations to improve subsequent project implementation.

As per the Terms of Reference, the MTA uses the EU Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) methodology as an approach to ensure that the results are comparable (across countries) and easy to interpret. However, the questions to be answered for the MTA are different from standard ROM methodology questions and were agreed in advance by the EU and the Spotlight Secretariat. The 13 MTA questions are grouped by Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability, which form the main headings of the report.

The ROM methodology uses the following criteria for grading the questions:

Table 1. Grading reference table for criteria and monitoring questions

Qualitative	Grading reference table for criteria and monitoring questions
Good/very good	The situation is considered satisfactory, but there may be room for improvement. Recommendations are useful, but not vital to the project or programme.
Problems identified and small improvements needed	There are issues which need to be addressed, otherwise the global performance of the project or programme may be negatively affected. Necessary improvements do not however require a major revision of the intervention logic and implementation arrangements.
Serious problems identified and major adjustments needed	There are deficiencies which are so serious that, if not addressed, they may lead to failure of the project or programme. Major adjustments and revision of the intervention logic and/or implementation arrangements are necessary.
Unable to assess	MTA questions could not be answered because relevant performance monitoring data were not available

Context of the Spotlight Initiative

The Spotlight initiative programme commenced in the Kyrgyz Republic in January 2020. Apart from interventions at the national level, the programme covers 12 municipalities in the provinces (oblasts) of Osh, Chuy and Naryn. Two contextual factors had substantial impact on the programme: the Covid – 19 pandemic and government transitions in a context of political instability. The roll out of administrative reforms which aimed at reducing the number of state and municipal servants has resulted in a high rotation of staff in government structures including the Prime Minister's Office and its line ministries. Building governmental ownership in a context of high government turnover has represented a major challenge for the Kyrgyzstan programme.

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On March 18, 2020, the first case of Covid-19 was reported in Kyrgyzstan, and the government declared a state of emergency a week later. The global Covid-19 pandemic started, thus, only two months after the programme signature. Due to nation-wide lockdown measures introduced at the end of March 2020, most of the field level activities had to be postponed for one year. Another contextual barrier has been the shrinking space for civil society in Kyrgyzstan.

Methodological approach used for the MTA

The MTA involved a combination of three methodological approaches: qualitative data collection (Key Informant Interviews [KII] and Focus Group Discussion [FGD]), an online survey and a document review. A total of 27 stakeholders (25 women and 2 men) participated in the online survey. The participants from the UN had the strongest representation in the survey with 17 participants (1 from the RCO, 6 from the Spotlight Coordination Team and 10 from RUNOs).

The on-site data collection for the MTA took place in the cities of Bishkek, Osh and Kara-Suu. Online interviews were also conducted with 3 key informants from Chuy province and 2 from Naryn.

KIIs and FGDs were conducted in 39 different organisational settings - 11 government institutions (6 national level and 5 local), 21 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), 6 UN organisations, the Spotlight Initiative Coordination Team, the EU delegation (EUD) and 32 beneficiaries of the programme. A total of 86 respondents participated in the KIIs and FGDs, consisting of 75 (87,2%) women and 11 (12,8%) men. There were multiple respondents participating in some of the interviews (with EUD, with some of the RUNO personnel and with some of the Implementing Partners (IPs)). A total of 17 FGDs took place covering the following groups: government representatives, RUNO technical team members and management, CSOs and members of CSNRG, members of local/grassroot organisations as well as domestic violence prevention committees.

Limitations and measures taken:

- Certified data measuring progress against the indicators and milestones for 2021 were not available at the time of the evaluation. Qualitative information on activities conducted in 2021 was obtained from the document review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions, but the absence of quality assured monitoring data constitutes a limitation of the assessment. It was not possible to provide a full picture of progress against 2021 milestones and overall targets.[2] When official performance monitoring data from the Global Secretariat for 2021 become available, the findings regarding the achievement of results will be updated.

- Expenditure data are reported by the RUNO headquarters through the MPTF portal according to the UNDG budget lines as agreed in the contract with the EU. Expenditure in the country programme is not collected per outcome as this is not required under the current reporting system. This meant that a financial analysis of the respective outcomes was not feasible and is formulated as a recommendation for future monitoring of the programme.

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[2] To avoid this limitation in future evaluations, we recommend to place the time slots of the evaluations in the period after the annual monitoring data validation.

- The response rate to the online survey was low. Only 27 stakeholders submitted their responses. The low response number did not allow to analyse percentages and other more advanced quantitative measures. In the analysis of the online survey, we focussed on the qualitative data and on frequencies and carefully triangulated responses with other data sources to mitigate the risks associated with the low number of respondents. Furthermore, the majority (25 out of 27 respondents) were female. The same applies to the composition of the key informants which were also mostly female. This seems to reflect the over-representation of female stakeholders in the programme implementation. As very few men participated in the MTA, we did not provide information on the author's gender for quotes to protect their confidentiality.

- The data collection period for this MTA was limited to 20 days and overlapped with other UN evaluations and coincided with an intense period of implementation. IPs were working on tight deadlines to catch up with the delays accumulated during the state of emergency. This impacted negatively on their availability to participate in the interviews. The same applied to the members of the CS-NRG.

- Due to time limitations, we did not have time to work with reverse translation techniques to ensure the validity of the translation of quotes from Kyrgyz and Russian to English.

- The availability of national government partners at the line ministries was limited due to the parliamentary elections in November and the ongoing restructuration of ministries involving a reduction of the number of state servants. Only six key informants agreed to be interviewed. Some of them demonstrated reluctance to share their viewpoints on the programme. This implies that the opinions and experiences of the government are only reflected to a limited extent in this MTA report. To mitigate the potential effects of this under-representation, we thoroughly triangulated data sources during the data analysis process.

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B. RELEVANCE

1.Does the action align to the principles of the Spotlight Initiative as listed in the Spotlight Initiative Fund TORs?	☒ Very Good – Good
	☐ Problems
	☐ Serious deficiencies

To align the interventions with the Spotlight Initiative guiding principles, the design process of the Kyrgyzstan programme took a consultative approach. It included a literature review of secondary data (e.g., Demographic and Health Survey data and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys), consultations with Recipient UN Organisations (RUNOs), associated UN organisations, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the European Union Delegation (EUD) and different government ministries at national level. To identify the target municipalities for the programme, the following criteria were analysed and a preliminary mapping was undertaken: (1) The prevalence of interpersonal violence (IPV) and domestic violence, ala kachuu (abduction of girls and young women with the objective of marriage3) and children marriage; (2) attitudes regarding domestic violence and (3) availability of services and programmes to prevent and respond to Gender Based Violence (GBV). The selection of intervention areas was carried out in close collaboration with the government, the EUD and CSOs. The write up of the document was outsourced to an international consultant.

Our MTA online survey included a question on the extent to which different stakeholder groups were involved in the design of the programme. There was general agreement that all groups had been involved in the design process, but to varying extents. The involvement of UN organisations, the EUD and CSOs was perceived to be slightly greater than that of central level government ministries, women's organisations, women, and the National Civil Society Reference Group (NCSRG). Online survey participants estimated that the least involved were the Prime Minister's Office, relevant ministries at decentralised levels, government institutions, adolescent girls and boys, men as well as marginalised groups.

KIIs with RUNOs and representatives of CSOs corroborated that the design of the Kyrgyzstan programme was based on a consultative approach. Key informants (RCO, RUNOs) reported that the central level government played an active role in the design phase by organising the consultations (see also question 3 for more details). They also made meaningful contributions to the selection of the intervention areas. Interviewees also described how the consultative approach resulted in six specific Theories of Change (ToC) for each of the programme pillars with appropriate interventions to address the main drivers of VAWG in the country. They also highlighted, however, that the period for the design process was short (about two months) which limited the time available for consultations.

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3 The custom includes a variety of actions ranging from elopement or staged abduction for consensual marriage to violent non-consensual kidnapping or abduction.

After the start of the programme, the lack of explicit linkages between the ToCs developed for each of the six pillars was perceived as a gap by the RUNOs and the RCO. To address this, a workshop was organised in September 2020 to analyse the interlinkages and to construct an overarching pathway of change. This was appreciated by the interviewed CSOs and members of the CS-NRG as it allowed to deepen their understanding of the rationale and intervention logic of the programme (see also Question 5).

The results of the online survey indicate that the Kyrgyzstan programme is generally aligned with the 16 Spotlight Initiative principles. There is large agreement among the respondents that the principles are well incorporated in the programme design. For each principle, at least 22 of the 27 respondents rated the principle to be implemented. A detailed overview of these results for each principle is provided in Annex 3. The only principle for which agreement was lower (18 out of 27 respondents) was "reinforcing women's movement at regional and national level". The challenges associated with implementing this principle were commented on by some of the key informants (RUNOs, CSOs). They perceived that it was difficult to work with the national CSO which openly identifies as a feminist organisation. Their viewpoints are perceived as radical by other CSOs, and this had led to conflicts and tensions in meetings in the past. Additional points of tension in the CSOs community were also mentioned. They are described under Question 8 (in Table 4).

The document review also corroborated that the design of the Kyrgyzstan programme is aligned to the Spotlight principles. The pathways of change outlined in the Country Programme Document (CPD) are contextualised and aim at gender transformative changes. The use of innovative models and methods, such as the Gender Action Learning System (GALS), have been deliberately incorporated to support sustainable behaviour change. The interventions put a strong focus on cultural sensitivity, survivor empowerment and on leaving no one behind (LNOB). The document language draws on inclusive, human rights-based terminology. The improvement of services to GBV survivors are planned from a survivors' perspective with the survivor viewed as a solution holder. Adolescent boys and men are targeted with positive masculinity methods and are engaged as champions of change as part of a positive deviance approach[4]. To model the United Nations development system reform, the expertise of each RUNO is leveraged and there is a strong commitment to co-learning and joint implementation (see also evaluation question 2). The programme has also built its interventions on existing programmes and aims at further improve their gender responsiveness and effectiveness in terms of eliminating VAWG. The 'Bus of Solidarity' (BoS), for instance, was initiated with support from UNDP in 2015 with the objective of making legal advice available to disadvantaged communities in the country. As part of the Spotlight Initiative, this approach is being redesigned to increase the access to legal support for GBV survivors.

Key findings:

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[4] In positive deviance approaches, social change is led by new social norm holders from within the communities.

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- The programme design used a consultative approach and involved all relevant segments of the government, RUNOs, civil society and other right holders who are knowledgeable on VAWG issues in the country.
- The programme design is well aligned to the Spotlight Initiative principles as listed in the Spotlight Initiative Fund ToRs.

2A. Are the Initiative's deliverables aligned with the UN agencies' mandate, priorities and expertise? Are the right UN agencies involved? 2B. Are programmes implemented in line with the UN System reform?	☒ Very Good – Good ☐ Problems ☐ Serious deficiencies

Are the Initiative's deliverables aligned with the UN agencies' mandate, priorities and expertise? Are the right UN agencies involved?

There are five Recipient UN Organisations (RUNOs) involved in the Spotlight Initiative in Kyrgyzstan: UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and UNODC. An analysis of the mandates and current priorities of the five RUNOs is presented in Table 1 below. It shows that the mandates, priorities and expertise of the four core agencies of the programme (UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women) are instrumental to implementing the six pillars. The decision to add UNODC as a fifth agency was to draw on their experience in legislative reforms, gender sensitisation of law enforcement agencies and policing as well as education for justice and legal aid. Their partnerships (in the health, security and justice sector) and expertise in data and case management were considered to be further assets.

"There is a prior assumption that the four key agencies are likely to play a role because these four key agencies had agreed to provide technical support at the design phase in New York. So, they were already privileged over and above other agencies to being associated with the design and by offering technical expertise. And the truth, obviously, is that they also have mandates that relate to issues of gender-based violence against women and girls. But I did insist on UNODC. Because of their work, UNODC had the most comprehensive engagement and outreach to security institutions, and they had already begun implementing some case management processes with them." (key informant, UN Senior manager)

Table 2.	Mandate and priorities of the five RUNOs
RUNO	**Mandate and priorities**
UNDP	UNDP targets three areas as part of their mandate: (1) governance for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies; (2) crisis prevention and increased resilience; (3) women's empowerment and gender equality. These are relevant to the objectives of the Spotlight Initiative of the Kyrgyzstan context. UNDP has a long history and experience in working with key political institutions, including parliament and the Ministry of Justice. It has extensive expertise in gender sensitive legislation and policy work and in working with the government and civil society for strengthening the rule of law. This is a prerequisite for the implementation of Pillar 1 and 2.
UNICEF	UNICEF's work focusses on ending violence against children, child protection as well as realising child rights, especially among the most marginalised groups. In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF's main

	protection and inclusion initiatives are on access to justice and community behaviour change. They also have gathered substantial expertise in Communication for Development (C4D) approaches, which are built in behaviour change and awareness raising programmes. Their mandate, priorities and expertise are strongly required for Pillar 3 and 4.
UNFPA	UNFPA's strategic plan aims at achieving transformative results in increasing the access to Sexual and Reproductive Health with a strong focus on the SDG principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB) and on SDG 5 (gender equality) including the empowerment of adolescent girls and women. UNFPA has strong capacity and experience in GBV prevention and assistance to GBV survivors and in strengthening the availability of quality population data. UNFPA has also started supporting the government to strengthen the national system to respond and to prevent GBV. Their mandate and expertise are well aligned to the capabilities required for the roll out of Pillar 4 and 5 interventions.
UN Women	Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women are at the heart of UN Women's mandate. As a global champion for women's and girls' rights, UN Women is a key agency for all Spotlight Initiative programming. UN Women has built strong experience and leadership in civil society strengthening, in working with women's organisations and movements, governance, peace building and women's economic empowerment. As the facilitator of the UNiTE platform, the agency is well connected with activists and CSOs engaged in EVAWG. They have also been engaged in national legislation and policy work. Their mandate and experience are strongly required for Pillar 1, 2 and 6.
UNODC	The focus areas of UNODC are transnational organised crime, drug trafficking, corruption, and countering terrorism. In the context of Kyrgyzstan, their experience and existing partnerships with law enforcement agencies, health care and criminal justice institutions and their endeavours for the development of gender disaggregated data on survivors of the violence has placed the agency in a strategic position for making meaningful contributions to the Spotlight Initiative.

Some of the key informants (RCO, RUNOs) consider the number of RUNOs to be too high and a barrier to efficient coordination and implementation while other key informants perceive that the programme would lose its strategic potential without the selected five RUNOs. It was, however, generally acknowledged that the expertise, partnerships, and experience of all RUNOs have been effectively harnessed for the delivery of the Spotlight Initiative.

The labour division among RUNOs for the delivery of the Spotlight Initiative is described in Table 2. Pillar 1 and 2 are led by UNDP, Pillar 3 by UNICEF, Pillar 4 and 5 by UNFPA and Pillar 6 by UN Women. Pillar 1, 3, 4 and 6 are delivered with the participation of all RUNOs. Pillar 2 is executed by all RUNOs, but UNICEF. For Pillar 5, UNFPA is supported by UNDP and UNODC. The distribution of tasks is well aligned to the mandates and priorities of the five RUNOs (described in Table 2).

Table 3. Agreed Division of Labour for the Spotlight Initiative

Outcome / Pillar	Lead Agency	Focus of activities	Participating Agencies	Percentage of budget
1. Laws and Policies	UNDP	Legislative and policy frameworks, based on evidence and in line with international human rights standards, on all forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices are in place and translated into plans.	UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF, UNODC	10%

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2. Institutions	UNDP	National and sub-national systems and institutions plan, fund and deliver evidence-based programmes that prevent and respond to violence against women and girls and harmful practices, including in other sectors	UNFPA, UN Women, UNODC	13%
3. Prevention	UNICEF	Gender equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviour change at community and individual levels to prevent violence against women and girls and harmful practices.	UNFPA, UN Women, UNDP, UNODC	36%
4. Services	UNFPA	Women and girls who experience violence and harmful practices use available, accessible and quality essential services including for long term recovery from violence	UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP, UNODC	21%
5. Data	UNFPA	comparable data on different forms of violence against women and harmful practices, collected, analysed and used in line with international standards to inform laws, policies and programmes.	UNDP, UNODC	6%
6. Women's Movement	UN Women	Women's rights groups and civil society organisations, including those representing youth and groups facing intersecting forms of discrimination, more effectively influence and advance progress on GEWE and EVAWG	UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, UNODC	15%

Are programmes implemented in line with the UN System reform?

The accountability for the Spotlight Initiative in Kyrgyzstan lies with the UN Resident Coordinator (RC). The role of the RC is to (co-)chair the steering committee meetings, to ensure high level engagement of key stakeholders (in particular the EUD and the government) and to ensure that all RUNOs coordinate their work and demonstrate commitment to the implementation of the programme. This strategic set-up is well aligned with the UN Development System (UNDS) reform as all UN agencies are under the overall supervision of the RC. The leading role of the RC and his strong commitment to the programme were perceived as a positive driving force by key informants. The RC and RUNO country representatives have held strategic and high-level meetings with the EUD and the government. The RC also systematically includes the Spotlight Coordinator in relevant meetings (the UN Country Team retreats, the NSC meetings etc.) to ensure that latest updates on the programme are communicated and issues can be brought forward. His cultural sensitivity has been appreciated and national UN staff acknowledge his efforts to better connect national to international staff.

> *"He [the RC] includes the PCU in all UNCT retreats where only the heads [country representatives] are participating and they are almost all foreigners. Our inclusion in this meeting is very important because as national team members, we sometimes have*

different perspectives and different priorities. To recognise and discuss these differences is very fruitful." (Key informant, RCO)

To accelerate inter-agency coordination and coherence and to facilitate onboarding of new staff, the Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) conceptualised and launched "Pathways of Change" online talks to build a shared understanding of the respective ToC for the six pillars and EVAWG principles, to unpack concepts and to understand details of activities planned by each RUNO. Additionally, dedicated pillar-leads were appointed to coordinate programmatic activities. The terms of reference (TOR) for programme activities and other conceptual work were carried out by the Spotlight technical team (18 people including the PCU, pillar leads from the RUNOs as well as technical experts). Joint visibility and communications have also been used to ensure that the Spotlight Initiative programme is seen as a united team within the UN system in Kyrgyzstan. There were also joint procurement initiatives, for example, the joint tender launch by UNDP, UNFPA and UNODC for conducting a holistic review of the VAWG/GBV legislation.

The Spotlight Initiative technical team is not located within the same space. While the Spotlight Coordinator and the M&E specialist are based in the RCO, the remaining staff who are fully or partially funded by the Spotlight Initiative remain based in their respective RUNOs. This was perceived positively by some key informants who considered it to be politically inconducive to have staff relocated to the RCO. From a coordination perspective, the dispersed location of the technical team has increased the workload for the pillar-leads and the PCU. The lack of accountability of the technical team to the PCU for their time and efforts dedicated to the Spotlight Initiative has also created challenges for the PCU. While some RUNO staff have demonstrated strong commitment, key informants perceived that this has not been systematic for all. In absence of an accountability mechanism, the PCU has found it challenging to collaborate with RUNO staff who do not sufficiently prioritise the programme.

The online survey results confirmed that there was commitment to deliver the programme in an integrated fashion. Most of the online survey participants (20 out of 23[5] respondents) agreed that the RC effectively steers and oversees the action. There were mixed opinions regarding the engagement and support of RUNO country representatives with 17 out of 25 participants reporting it to be effective. The strong organisational culture of individual RUNOs was perceived by some key informants and online survey respondents (RUNOs, RCOs) as a barrier to the implementation of the UNDS reform. This includes, for example, their competition for funding and the promotion of the visibility of their own logo.

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[5] The total number of online survey respondents is lower than 27 for this question (and the following questions) as a few participants were not knowledgeable about its content and selected the 'do not know' response option. They were not counted in the analysis.

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Key findings:

- The mandates, experience, and expertise of UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNICEF are well aligned with the outcomes of the Spotlight Initiatives. UNODC's mandate has a less stronger focus on EVAWG, but its expertise and experience in the prevention and response to GBV in the country have made the organisation a valuable strategic partner.
- The distribution of pillar leads and tasks among RUNOs is coherent and grounded in their institutional capacity, partnerships and networks, experience and expertise.
- The Kyrgyzstan programme has put in place important foundations to operationalise the UNDS reform. The leadership and commitment of the RC has been strong and played a critical role in ensuring strategic engagement of the government and in encouraging RUNO's efforts to engage in integrated programming. Coordination structures have been put in place through the PCU, pillar leads and technical team. The programme's visibility has been promoted through joint communication. The lack of accountability mechanism of the technical team to the PCU was considered to be an obstacle by some UN key informants.

Recommendations:

1. To increase the efficiency of operations, it is recommended to improve the accountability mechanism for RUNO personnel fully or partially funded by the programme to ensure that they dedicate sufficient working time to the programme. The Spotlight Coordinator should also be asked to provide input to the performance reviews of staff funded primarily by the programme regarding the quality of their contributions to the programme. The application of the Mutual Recognition Policy could be useful (RUNOs, RCO).

3. Does the action presently respond to the needs of the target groups/ end beneficiaries? Are the necessary consultations taking place with key stakeholders?	☐ Very Good – Good
	☒ Problems
	☐ Serious deficiencies

Overall, 22 out of 26 online survey respondents[6] agreed that all relevant groups and key stakeholders were included in the Spotlight Initiative. The online survey results further indicated that all key stakeholders were to some or to a large extent involved in the design, monitoring and implementation of the programme. A detailed overview of the results per stakeholder group is provided in Annex 4. The two stakeholder groups at the centre of design, implementation and monitoring are the UN and CSOs. The CS-NRG was estimated to be involved to a lesser degree, which might also be linked to the long period of inactivity of the National Steering Committee (NSC) (see also evaluation question 11). Women are estimated to play an equally strong role in

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[6] One participant selected the "do not know" option. In the online survey analysis, we counted the respondents which had ticked "do not know" as non-applicable.

the implementation as the UN and CSOs. Men and adolescents have also been involved, but to a lesser extent than women.

Key informants also consistently confirmed the efforts of the UN to consult key stakeholders during the design phase. There were different perceptions, however, about how meaningful these consultations were. UN key informants felt that the design process was participatory although with considerable time pressure. It was also described as a success that the consultations were organised by a government institution, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MLSD), which allowed engagement of other core ministries and of CSOs. This enabled, for instance, CSOs and the UN to lobby for the mainstreaming of gender into school textbooks, which was accepted by the Ministry of Education. Key informants from civil society, however, reported that the involvement of CSOs in the design process was "minimal" and that the consultations were used by the UN to present concepts and intervention approaches for which they required IPs. In the view of the interviewed CSOs, there was no opportunity for joint brainstorming on solutions for EVAWG in the country. It was also perceived that the programme was not a platform for left behind and marginalised groups such as LGBTQI or women in prison. A representative from an LGBTQI CSO conveyed that it was not possible for the UN to openly give the floor to a group considered to be socially unacceptable and that their interests were not reflected in the programme. According to the online survey results, however, 19 out of 24 respondents reported that marginalised and other left behind group benefit from programme. Five respondents consider them to be insufficiently reached.

During the implementation phase, IPs and beneficiaries perceived that their feedback was considered in some instances, but not in others. Key informants (IPs, RCO) pointed out that the programme had not yet delivered on its promise to support GBV survivors to access holistic assistance as it had done by the Spotlight Initiative in other countries, for example, through the *One Stop Center* approach. The programme currently focuses on improving institutional mechanisms, standards and guidelines at the national level. It was acknowledged by IPs that this work was critical, however, in their view, the current approach of programme is insufficient to address the immediate needs of survivors of VAWG. It was suggested to provide technical and financial support to existing structures which assist survivors of GBV.

> *"The methodologies for the work of the crisis centres and standard operational procedures for psychological and legal assistance are critical. However, the programme hasn't been able to understand our needs and the pandemic of violence during the Covid lockdown has not been addressed properly. The need is still there." (Key informant, civil society)*

The representatives of crisis centres and shelters have strongly communicated their urgent need for financial support since the start of the pandemic but have only received small amounts through state subsidies. These have proven to be insufficient to deal with the increased influx of girls and women who required assistance after exposure to domestic violence. According to key informants from the civil society, this situation has been communicated to RUNOs. It was also reported that one of the RUNO country representatives organised a meeting with the Association of the Crisis Centres to gather information about their work and their problems. According to representatives from the crisis centres, however, there has not yet been a response from the UN

on how the Spotlight Initiative will support them. There was a general impression among partners that the protection and assistance of GBV survivors deserved more room in the programme.

> *"Before the Spotlight Initiative started, there were promises that crisis centres would be in focus of pillar 6, but now it is fully unclear what crisis centres can expect from the Spotlight Initiative." (key informant, civil society)*

> *"The issue of prevention is addressed in the programme, but the issues of protection don't have an adequate solution." (Key informant, CSO)*

Key informants from the PCU acknowledged the need to rethink their approach to Pillar 4 for the second phase. They had received requests from the global Spotlight Secretariat to share testimonies of GBV survivors who had been empowered by the programme. Due to the absence of direct support to GBV survivors, it was not possible to fulfil this request. According to the technical team, during the design phase, the primary focus had been on GBV prevention. The pillar 4 interventions aimed at strengthening standards and guidance for GBV assistance but did not plan for supporting shelters and centers.

There was also mixed feedback on the sensitivity and flexibility of RUNOs to support civil society needs in terms of capacity strengthening and risk management. In some instances, CSOs felt that there was a strong responsiveness to their needs. An LGBTQ CSO, for instance, approached the programme after an exposure to digital attacks and hate speech. The technical team of the programme met with the organisation and helped with the development of a special communication strategy to deal with these incidents. The approach of UNFPA and UNICEF to IP recruitment and capacity strengthening was also appreciated. After the recruitment of their CSO partners, these two agencies provided tailored capacity building to their partners to support them in implementation of the programme and to help them in meeting the UN requirements. This was not the case of all RUNOs. In some cases, only a few CSOs were eligible for tendering due to the long list of requirements from the UN agencies. Key informants from CSOs reported that this applied in particular to UN Women. They perceived that the agency put the bar too high by recruiting only CSOs of high capacity with institutional policies on gender and with knowledge of advanced technologies. The exclusion of many CSOs from participating in the tendering process was considered to be a misalignment with the programme principle of strengthening grassroot and national CSOs. As one of the CSOs stated "*it seems like they [the RUNOs] selected the 'astronauts', with the highest indicators of development*".

As for feedback mechanisms, most online survey respondents confirmed that feedback is collected from different stakeholder groups and is fed back to them. The KIIs and the document review provided more nuance to this. The National Steering Committee (NSC) was consulted one time through an online survey and had one meeting which provided limited space for meaningful feedback. The Civil Society National Reference Group (CS-NRG) has been consulted on an ad hoc basis, but four of its three interviewed members reported to not yet have understood the purpose of the structure (more information on the NSC and the CS-NRG is provided under Question 11). In 2021, the programme organized an expectation mapping with all partners to give them room to provide feedback and recommendations. The results of the exercise are documented in a detailed report. This ad-hoc event was not perceived as an effective feedback mechanism by the

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key informants from CSOs. They stated that the report of the mapping exercise was not fed back to them. Two CSO representatives also addressed a letter to the MTA team in which they stated amongst other that the programme did not provide an appropriate space for feedback. A mechanism to collect feedback from beneficiaries at municipality level also seems to be lacking.

Key findings:

- Despite a very short design period, consultations were organised with a wide range of stakeholders including CSOs, government entities, UN agencies and the EUD. There were different perceptions about the quality of the consultations. The consultations met the expectations of RUNOs, the government and the EUD. CSOs on the other hand reported them to be tokenistic and superficial.
- There are mixed viewpoints on the extent to which the programme responds to the needs of its beneficiaries during implementation. Under Pillar 4, the programme's focus has been to set-up an institutional framework and procedures for assisting GBV survivors. The absence of direct technical and financial support to crisis centres and shelters in providing holistic support to GBV survivors was perceived as a gap in terms of responding to the needs of the latter.
- There were also mixed experiences regarding the RUNOs' approaches to strengthening CSOs. While it was recognised that some RUNOs have provided effective capacity building to their IPs, it was perceived by CSOs that other RUNOs excluded CSOs from tendering. Key informants from CSOs considered their extensive requirements inappropriate and not aligned to the programme's principle on civil society engagement.
- National level feedback mechanisms have been put in place via the NSC and the CS-NRG. Due to the political instability and Covid-19 pandemic, they have met on an ad-hoc basis. In addition, IPs and government partners were invited to provide feedback during the expectation mapping workshop. We did not find evidence on feedback mechanisms at municipality level.

Recommendations:

2. There is need to ensure a more meaningful participation of CSOs in the design process for Phase 2. They should be given more space to influence the design of interventions in line with their mandates and missions. This could include, for example, to designate for each Pillar one or two CSOs to co-lead the design process with the RUNO pillar lead. It is also suggested to harness the potential of the CS-NRG to support the design process. It could be entrusted, for instance, to conduct feedback surveys among CSOs and monitor the extent to which feedback and suggestions from CSOs were taken into account in the design decisions for Phase 2 (PCU, RUNOs, CS-NRG).

3. In line with the global grassroot action plan of the Spotlight Initiative, it is recommended that RUNOs explore mechanisms such as women funds to enable smaller and grassroots organisations to be eligible as IPs (RUNOs).

4. The degree of contribution to Outcome 4 in terms of scaling up the provision of survivor-centered essential services to all survivors needs to be strengthened. For Phase 2, it is recommended that the Kyrgyzstan programme should further increase support public

institutions on the ground so they can increase the scope and quality of their assistance for GBV survivors (PCU, RUNOs, government, CSOs).

5. To increase accountability, we recommend to set up and implement feedback mechanisms for the community and municipality level (RUNOs).

4. Do all key stakeholders still demonstrate effective commitment (ownership) and deliver accordingly?	☐ Very Good – Good
	☒ Problems
	☐ Serious deficiencies

Government

The government has not demonstrated stable leadership and commitment to the Spotlight Initiative. This was confirmed unanimously by key informants and online survey respondents from all stakeholder groups. There are several reasons for this. First, due to frequent staff turnover in the Prime Minister's office and other executive ministries in 2020 and 2021, the Spotlight Initiative had to regularly brief new government representatives about the programme. The position of the Vice Prime minister, for example, changed five times since the start of the programme. The lack of institutional memory about the Spotlight Initiative at government level combined with the high level of effort required to engage with newly arrived officials has created a strain on the delivery of the programme. Second, the Covid-19 pandemic significantly increased the workload of the government. In addition to managing the pandemic, the government was confronted with staff shortages due to illness among its personnel. Third, the topic of GBV and women's empowerment is not a vote winner for politicians in the mostly conservative Kyrgyz society. Some government officials have been openly reluctant to engaging with the programme while others were more receptive but did not treat the topic as a priority in their agenda.

"[There is] high turnover of government officials, change in the governance structure and ongoing legal reforms and incompetency among the staff and team of government structure. Some stakeholders, including for instance the new structure of the Office of the General Prosecutor, are not fully committed to gender equality." (Online survey respondent)

"Due to frequent changes in the Government in 2020-2021, it was challenging to build an effective partnership in terms of effectively steering the action. [The] Deputy Prime Minister/Deputy Chair of Cabinet of Ministers who was supposed to be a co-chair of the National Steering Committee changed five times within two years." (Online survey respondent)

While it has not been possible for the programme to work with a 'whole-of government' approach, RUNOs have managed to build or maintain effective collaboration mechanisms with key line ministries and Members of Parliament (MPs). For the review of the concept for the Bus of Solidarity (BoS) (see also question 8), for example, the Ministry of Justice endorsed the

approach and has taken up a leading role. Engagement of government officials in legal and policy work has also led to promising outputs in terms of law amendments (described in detail in Table 4, Question 8). Certains MPs, including through the Council for the Protection of Women's Rights and the Prevention of GBV of the Zhogorku Kenes which was established with support from the programme, have championed the amendment of the law on alimony and in the Criminal Procedure Code to strengthen women's protection from violence (see also question 8).

The interviewed government officials at the district level reported that they lacked information on the programme. They perceived to be insufficiently engaged which has led to limited ownership so far. This was corroborated in the interview with the expert who conducted the field study for the expectations mapping which came to the same conclusion. As we only interviewed eight government representatives from three municipalities, it is possible, however, that this does not reflect the full reality of other Spotlight intervention areas. In one of the pilot communities, the local government allocated special funds to support the activities of the Committees of prevention of domestic violence. This was not the case in the other pilot municipalities, which was interpreted by some key informants as a low level of acceptance of the programme.

Civil Society

Since the start of the programme, RUNOs have started formal collaborations with 31 CSOs in different capacities (vendors, IPs and grantees). There are only few grassroot organisations among them. In addition, various CSOs operating at national and grassroot level participated in various activities with the objective to discuss and agree on solutions to tackle different forms of VAWG. There was general agreement among online survey respondents that CSOs participate effectively in the programme: 23 out of 26[7] respondents estimated that CSOs contribute to steering the action of the programme. The perceptions shared during key informant interviews did not corroborate this finding. Both CSO partners and members of the CS-NRG expressed dissatisfaction with the role given to civil society in the programme. They perceived that, despite the CSO positive discourse, the Spotlight Initiative is a UN driven programme in which CSOs were hired to merely execute interventions as service providers and vendors, rather than contribute meaningfully to its design and its implementation. This perception was shared by some of the UN key informants. At the design stage, for example, there was an impression that the feedback of CSOs was not considered. Some of the interviewed IPs shared the impression, for instance, that the UN had decided to test new tools and approaches which they perceived as inadequate. In addition to lacking space to influence the programme, CS-NRG representatives also reported that they did not have a clear understanding of their role. Apart from being consulted on an ad-hoc basis, they have not been associated with the technical programme coordination mechanism. The same applies to CSO partners. The coordination mechanisms set up for the programme are not yet sufficiently inclusive of CSO partners (see question 11 for more detail).

In the view of civil society representatives, CSOs, thus, execute but do not steer the programme. This has led to frustration and limited ownership. The members of the CS-NRG and IPs were also

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[7] One respondent selected the response "do not know" and was not counted for this item.

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difficult to mobilise for the KIIs and the online survey. They named time pressure and their limited influence on the programme as a reason for declining participation. According to key informants, the limited ownership is reinforced by the shrinking space for CSOs in Kyrgyzstan.[8]

UN Agencies

The ownership of RUNOs was generally perceived as strong. In the absence of a stable government and with a difficult operating context for CSOs, the RUNOs have been in the driver's seat and have effectively steered the action. Key informants from RUNOs and the RCO described a positive impact of the programme on staff attitudes in technical teams as well as management. According to these informants, GBV as a topic was traditionally attributed to UN Women and was of less concern to the other agencies. The process of rolling out and achieving results under the Spotlight Initiative has increased the understanding on EVAWG and strengthened general buy-in and support for the promotion of gender equality.

The members of the Spotlight technical team were described as skilled and highly dedicated to the programme. It was also reported, however, that their workload was too high due to the time required to coordinate their work with other RUNOs and that there was insufficient recognition of their work. Frustration and burn-out symptoms were described as a result.

EUD

The EUD has acted as a supportive programme partner in sharing technical expertise, supporting high-level engagement and decision-making and in meaningfully engaging national stakeholders. They participated actively in strategic meetings such as sessions with the Vice Prime Minister, meetings of the National Council on Women's Issues and Gender Development, and meetings of the CS-NRG as well as technical team meetings organised by the Spotlight Programme team. To respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Spotlight coordination team and the EUD collaborated on strategic programmatic decisions, especially when adjustments were needed. The EUD also facilitated the coordination and exchange with other EU funded programmes, for instance with the Rule of Law Programme on improving the availability of SGBV data and on achieving free legal aid to SGBV survivors. Their feedback and suggestions were seen as helpful for maintaining the quality of the programme documents.

Key findings:

- As a result of political instability, recurrent staff turnover in government institutions and limited interest of politicians in the topic of GBV, the government has not effectively contributed to steering the action. Specific line ministries such as the Ministry of Justice have demonstrated commitment to support specific interventions.
- CSOs reported limited ownership of the programme. In their view, they are confined to execute interventions for the UN without space to shape the programme and to

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[8] In 2021, following the example of the Russian authorities, the parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted an amendment to the law on NGOs, and the President signed it. Although the Kyrgyz version of the law does not introduce the provision to label NGOs as foreign agents, the new amendment obliges NGOs to make public records of their work - including accounting documents, accounts, and property of organizations, as well as personal data of employees.

influence its actions in a holistic way. As CSOs play a critical role in the design of the Spotlight Initiative, their perception to lack ownership in the programme is of concern.

- The RUNOs and the EUD have effectively contributed to steering the action and in alignment with their role defined in the CPD.

Recommendations:

6. The RCO and RUNOs have invested extensive efforts to engage government actors at all levels. As long as turnover in government agencies remains frequent, our recommendation is that the UN and EUD maintain their current level of efforts to strengthen and consolidate government commitment to the Spotlight Initiative. In view of the new political regime, we suggest to dedicate time for building relationships with the new Presidential Administration using a joint EU-UN engagement approach. To facilitate the engagement of new state representatives, it is also recommended to develop a set of briefing materials on the Spotlight Initiative, including its achievements (e.g. legislative changes) as well as government and CSO commitments and areas of collaboration (RCO, RUNOs, EUD).

7. To foster ownership and meaningful participation of CSOs, it will be critical to build in extensive civil society participation in the design sessions for Phase II. This should include participatory learning exercises that allow CSOs to share their perspectives and to contribute to designing the interventions. The programme in Kyrgyzstan should also define in their Phase II proposal how they will implement the Global Grassroot Action Plan of the Spotlight Initiative (RCO, RUNOs, CSOs). It will also be critical to harness the potential of Pillar 6 to act as an incubator for a newer generation of CSOs (RCO, RUNOs).

5. Is the programme Theory of Change well developed? Are the indicators to measure results well defined and relevant to measure the achievement of the objectives in line with the ToC?	☒ Very Good – Good ☐ Problems ☐ Serious deficiencies

Is the programme Theory of change well developed?

The CPD does not have an overarching Theory of Change (ToC) for the programme. It presents one ToC for each of the six pillars. The interventions and risks are described for each pillar in a separate section, but the linkages and synergies between the pillars are not elaborated on in the CPD. The Spotlight technical team picked up on this gap during the first year of the programme. They developed a concept note outlining four steps for reviewing the pillar ToCs and for reflecting on the overall ToC. The first two steps involved the PCU and RUNOs technical staff. IPs were invited to participate in the process from the third step forward to share the results and to gather their feedback. The working sessions allowed the team to identify missing pieces in the pathways. They realised that some of the outputs were insufficient for reaching the outcomes and that the programme lacked qualitative indicators. According to key informants (RCO, RUNOs), the work

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on the pathways of change helped to strengthen the intervention logic between activities, outputs and outcomes and to create understanding about the interlinkages between the pillars. The results of the working sessions were documented and finalised in February 2021. The expectation mapping organised later in 2021 was another opportunity in which the ToCs and intervention logic were discussed with partners (see also evaluation question 3). There is, however, still no overarching ToC of the programme. Key informants of different stakeholder groups (RCO, RUNOs, EUD, CSOs) acknowledged the innovative nature of the various approaches integrated in the programme, but also questioned the complexity of such an elaborate design. Some voiced concerns that it might be too demanding in a context of political instability, a shrinking space for civil society and the Covid-19 pandemic.

> *"When we talk about the Spotlight Initiative and if you ask someone to speak about it, they say 'Gosh, where do I start?' The programme is really too complex. Sometimes downscaling the complexity seems to be right option. One part of me says 'yes' to that, but another part would regret losing the beauty of the programme. There is a need to keep together the transformative approach, but sometimes there is a need to be more responsive and less ambitious. This would make people understand quicker and better what the actions are about. Being less ambitious might be helpful." (key informant, EUD)*

The report of the expectation mapping exercise[9] also highlighted that the CSO and government partners have different levels of comprehension of the complexity of the programme. One participant (CSO) affirmed that "*it is important to ensure minimum levels of understanding of this complexity across all key stakeholders*". In light of this finding, an overarching ToC could be an important element to increase an understanding of the programme across all stakeholders involved.

In the CPD, the assumptions for the Kyrgyzstan programme have not been associated with the ToCs but are listed in the risk management matrix. There are only four assumptions which focus on political stability, support and national commitment for promoting gender equality and for dedicating sufficient domestic resources to ensure the sustainability of the programme. To date, these assumptions have not always held, which has resulted in delays and barriers to programme delivery. Political support, for instance, for programme activities has been inconsistent. CSO partners reported in KIIs that they had to invest extensive time and effort to overcome the resistance of the government bodies to start the gender audits. Some of these bodies have still not given their permission for this activity and had to be removed from the list for this activity (e.g., the general prosecutor office).

Programme related assumptions were discussed at a UN Planning Retreat in February 2021. They are documented in the report of the retreat, but no connection was established to the ToCs.

Are the result indicators well developed to measure the achievements of the objectives?

By end of 2020, the Kyrgyzstan programme used 29 output and 11 outcome indicators, which is an adequate number for a programme of this scope.[10] The indicators were selected from the global Spotlight Initiative Results Framework in order to allow for global aggregation and

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[9] A feedback exercise conducted with all partners in 2021.

[10] See https://unsdg.un.org/resources/technical-briefs-aligned-results-based-management-handbook for more information.

reporting. Country programmes have the flexibility to identify programme specific indicators to report on at national level. As described above, the Spotlight technical team realised during the first year of the programme that the global quantitative indicators were insufficient to measure the achievement of results. The RUNOs and PCU discussed and agreed on a number of additional qualitative indicators with IPs. UNICEF, for example, contributed quality indicators (based on the Drexel university methodology on C4D). These are, however, not yet officially introduced in the programme documents and were not made available to the evaluation team.

Are data for the chosen indicators accessible and have data been collected for all indicators?
The performance data for 2020 as entered in the global platform conveys that data are mostly accessible and have been collected. Data were missing for one outcome indicator under Outcome 3 and for one output indicator under Outcome 4.

While analysing the performance data, we noted for outcome indicator 3.1 and 4.1 that the exact same number had been inserted for the defined targets and achieved results. While this is theoretically possible, it is rather likely that the targets had been defined after the results had been assessed which is not a good M&E practice.

Key findings:
- The technical team with support from partners has invested extensive efforts to unpack the ToCs for each pillar and to establish a coherent intervention logic between activities, outputs and outcomes. Despite these achievements, the Kyrgyzstan programme still lacks an overarching ToC with associated assumptions. The assumptions documented at the Planning Retreat held in February 2021 can serve as a foundation for identifying critical assumptions for the different result levels of the ToC.
- Some key informants questioned the extent of innovative methods and approaches incorporated in the programme design. All these methods are potentially powerful for supporting social norm change. Combining a relatively high number of different innovative approaches, however, make the delivery of the programme both demanding and complex. This might lead to an overstretch for the implementing teams in light of the challenging context (Covid-19, shrinking space for CSOs, high turnover in government).
- The selected global quantitative global indicators have been complemented with qualitative indicators. These are, however, not yet introduced in the programme documents. By end of year 1, the data for almost all quantitative indicators were available.

Recommendations
- Develop an overarching ToC and associate critical assumptions for each result level. These assumptions should be monitored by the PCU on a regular basis (RCO, RUNOs with support from partners).
- In the design process for Phase 2, organise a learning session to discuss the potential need to downscale the complexity of the programme. This should include a mapping of

the different innovative methods and tools incorporated in the Phase 1 design to discuss their return of investment and results, also from a perspective of partners (RCO[11]).

- To ensure a more harmonized understanding of the programme, it is recommended to develop concise and simple communication material to summarize the programme in local languages (RCO).
- It is recommended to check the availability of data for all quantitative indicators by end of 2021 (RCO).

6A. BEFORE COVID-19: Have all relevant circumstances and risks been taken into account to update the intervention logic? If there are delays, how important are they and what are the consequences? What are the reasons for these delays and to what extent have appropriate corrective measures been implemented? To what extent has the planning been revised accordingly? **6B. AFTER COVID-19: What are the consequences of COVID 19? To what extent have appropriate corrective measures been implemented? To what extent has the planning been revised accordingly?**	☒ Very Good – Good ☐ Problems ☐ Serious deficiencies

Before COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic broke out soon after the start of the programme. The first COVID-19 case was reported on the 18th of March and a state of emergency was declared on March 24th. There was, thus, no significant pre-COVID period for the Kyrgyzstan programme.

Overall, relevant risks and circumstances have been considered in the programme design. The risk register for the Kyrgyzstan programme uses four types of risk categories: contextual, programmatic, operational and fiduciary risks. For each identified risk, mitigatory measures have been defined. A risk management report was annexed to the 2020 country report which provides detailed updates on the different mitigation measures implemented. The list of contextual risks includes disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic (which is treated under section 6B) as well as political instability which has been associated with the risk of inadequate national buy-in. These three risks have had a strong impact on the programme and have resulted in extensive mitigation measures. The high turnover of the Vice Prime Minister position, for example, has required continuous networking and engagement of new government representatives which has been ensured by the RC with support from RUNO country representatives.

The risk 'resistance from family, community, traditional and religious leaders (returning to conservative values/ideas)' has been properly assessed as very high. Its impact on the programme merits closer monitoring. Key informants (CSOs, government) observed that the programme approach uses the same interventions for population groups with progressive attitudes as for more conservative, traditionalist or religious groups. There seems to be low buy-in from the latter. In addition, the evaluator learnt during data collection that there are stakeholders associated with the programme who showcase behaviour or attitudes which are in contradiction

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[11] The entity or entities listed in parathesis after the recommendations are those responsible for their implementation.

with their responsibility to promote and protect the rights of girls and women (see also question 7). This shows that deeply rooted societal values tend to have a stronger impact on behaviour than newly acquired information on women's rights which has been passed down through trainings or other types of workshops.

In the category of programmatic risks, four risks were identified: (a) programme not fully funded, (b) lack of technical and financial resources, (c) funding and services not sustainable and (d) acquired capacity and knowledge not translated into transformative actions. While it is too early to gauge the impact of the last two risks, effective mitigative measures have been put in place or are being discussed to deal with the first two risks. To fill the gap in technical expertise on GBV, the Spotlight Coordinator, for example, has planned to bring in additional technical support from another country.

In the category of operational risks, two risks have been identified. The risk of "high staff turnover" was rated as unlikely and has not been an issue to date. There are few equally competitive employers in the country and the problems of being overloaded and of not being sufficiently appreciated (as described under evaluation question 4) has not been a reason for resignation. The second risk related to the underperformance of IPs has been managed by each RUNO. The same applies to the risk listed under fiduciary risks.

After COVID-19

The challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic were multifold. With the start of the lockdown measures, access to communities was limited due to movement and contact restrictions. Most community level activities and team workshops had to be postponed until the late in the summer of 2021. The government prioritised the COVID-19 response measures and were often not available to the programme. Its workforce was also greatly reduced as many civil servants contracted the virus and became ill. At the same time, a sharp increase of the incidence of VAWG was observed. The movement and contact restrictions also increased the economic vulnerability of households, and in particular, of adolescent girls and women.

The programme demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness to the volatile situation. A Rapid Gender Assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on women and men, including on vulnerable groups, was conducted jointly with CSO partners. The findings from the assessment were used to ensure that activities were carried out in alignment with the LNOB principle. The programme team shared the findings of the Assessment with the Vice-Prime-Minister (VPM) and members of selected line ministries. Shortly after the Disaster Response Coordination Unit structure was established with its gender-based violence sub-sector working group, the Spotlight Initiative team assessed its opportunities and developed its own COVID-19 response plan. It repurposed and reprogrammed around $200k USD to tailor the interventions to the needs of women and girls in the context of the pandemic while ensuring a link with Spotlight Initiative's objectives. The measures listed in the plan are aligned to the overall Essential Service Package (DRCU) response plan. The EUD is part of the DRCU and the gender-based violence sub-sector working group and has taken an active part in jointly discussing and developing a response to the pandemic.

As part of the DRCU response plan, the Spotlight Initiative in partnership with the MLSD and CSOs developed, introduced, and endorsed a set of multisector approach mechanisms to SGBV in

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emergency situations, improved the quality of online support and hotline services for GBV survivors, created safe spaces for women and girls and established rapid response mobile groups for GBV cases. These interventions were only partially funded by the Spotlight Initiative and were complemented through funding contributions from other donors (e.g., UNFPA received aid from UK Aid for two temporary shelters in Bishkek and Osh).

Where possible, interventions and meetings were adapted and switched to online formats. According to key informants (RCO, RUNOs, IPs), this resulted in a less conducive working environment and had a disengaging impact on some stakeholders. The sessions for the Oxford Scenario Planning, for instance, was facilitated by an international expert in a virtual setting with the objective of supporting the development of the new National Gender Equality Strategy. These sessions were attended by the members of the interagency working group. According to key informants from civil society and RUNOs, the format of these sessions was not accessible to all. Overall, the results of the exercise were not perceived to be satisfactory.

Onsite activities were fully resumed in summer 2021 when vendors, grantees and IPs went to the 12 municipalities and started to implement their project activities. There was a joint launch of actions at the level of each province (oblasts) in which over 190 stakeholders participated. In the beginning, there was limited coordination across CSOs at community and municipality level. In September 2021, the Spotlight technical team organised a special meeting for IPs from Pillar 3 and 6 to improve the coordination of their actions and to create a calendar of events.

Because of the pandemic, the time span for implementing activities has been much shorter than originally planned. The density of activities is high, and IPs and vendors reported strong pressure to deliver within the agreed timelines. This has not only been a frustrating experience for CSOs, but also for the communities, which had to accommodate and support the roll out of a high number of activities in a short period of time.

Key findings:

- The Kyrgyzstan programme has identified relevant contextual, programmatic, operational, and fiduciary risks and mitigation measures. The risk related to resistance from communities and conservative members of the society require further mitigation measures that need to be integrated in the intervention logic.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has led to substantial delays. Activities in the municipalities could only be started in late summer 2021. To catch up on the delays, CSO partners are requested to deliver their activities in a much shorter timeframe than originally planned. This has been frustrating and exhausting for them. It has also been difficult for communities to accommodate a high density of activities in short periods of time. As changes in attitudes and behaviour take time, this 'overload' of activities might negatively impact the ability of partners and communities to process transformative change.

Recommendations:

8. To strengthen the management of the risk related to resistance from family, community, traditional and religious leaders, we recommend establishing a community feedback mechanism which enables right holders, in particular marginalized and vulnerable groups, to share their concerns (PCU, UNICEF, UNFPA).
9. Conduct a rapid feedback exercise with IPs and communities to explore the impact of the high density of activities since September and develop mitigative measures, if indicated (PCU, RUNOs).

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EFFECTIVENESS

7. To what extent has progress towards output targets been achieved? Is the quality of the outputs satisfactory?

☒ Unable to asses

7.1. Achievement of results against the approved workplan

According to the global performance monitoring data provided to the MTA by the Spotlight Secretariat, the Kyrgyzstan programme monitors and reports against 29 output indicators and 11 outcome indicators. At the time of the MTA, only the monitoring data for December 2020 were provided (see also the section on limitations). As neither the quality assured performance data nor the interim annual report were available for 2021 at the time of the evaluation[12], the current implementation progress could not be assessed by the evaluation team.

For the first year of the programme, the available performance data for 2020 is limited. The targets were set at 'zero' for three of the outcome indicators, 21 output indicators as well as several further sub-indicators. There was, thus, no target and no progress, for most of the output indicators and some of the outcome indicators or sub-indicators. Where targets had been defined, they were mostly met or exceeded except for a few sub-indicators.

Overall, we can conclude that the available information is insufficient to assess results against the approved workplan, which is not surprising given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the programme delivery (see question 6) and additional constraints experienced in 2020. Without updated performance monitoring data for the second programme year, the first part of the evaluation question cannot be answered.

7.2 Is the quality of outputs satisfactory?

Due to the lack of available data on the quality of outputs for 2021, it was difficult to find sufficient evidence for the triangulation of information. To respond to this evaluation question, data on the quality of outputs were collected in interviews and during the document review. As the MTA was limited to KIIs at the national level and a two-day visit to two municipalities, the available evidence needs to further be explored through a more extensive assessment exercise. There were quality concerns in the following areas:

- Both CSOs and government partners have limited understanding or wrong perceptions about the concept of 'do no harm' and about the 'survivor centred approach'. During KIIs, service providers were unclear about what 'do-no-harm' or a survivor centred approach meant and reported to be unsure how to operationalise these concepts in their work. While the Spotlight Initiative has invested strongly in improving guidelines and protocols for assistance to GBV survivors, it will be important to follow up to what extent they have been disseminated, understood and applied by service providers.

- During the community visits, we learnt about three examples in which local actors associated with the Spotlight Initiative were not able to deal appropriately with their responsibility to promote and protect the rights of girls and women. It is likely that their

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[12] For the MTAs in all countries only quality assured data from the global platform are included in the analysis.

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behaviour impacted negatively on individual girls and women and their families in these communities[13]. This indicates that in the context of a strongly patriarchal regime, more time and efforts need to be invested in training and monitoring the work of local actors to ensure that they have sufficient knowledge on basic human rights and GBV issues.

- Another potential quality concern relates to the reach of marginalised groups. While the programme is based on an inclusive design with the ambition to fully implement the LNOB commitment, the data for relevant indicators under Outcome 4 only disaggregate by girls and women. It is unclear to what extent marginalised groups are reached by the programme. The lack of specific activities targeting the most marginalised was also highlighted by key informants who reported, for instance, the lack of inclusion of migrant families in awareness raising activities on domestic violence.

- Innovation and transformation were branded as important parts of the Spotlight Initiative communications, which used a wealth of innovative methodologies to support change. Feedback from CSOs and government representatives about these innovations, however, was not enthusiastic. They were not convinced of the usefulness of the Oxford Scenario Planning for the development of the National Gender Equality Strategy, for example, and highlighted that not all participants had the technical modalities at their disposition to participate and that they found it difficult to understand the approach. In their view, the results of the methodology were not impressive. The new strategy is thought to lack innovative elements and to repeat elements from the former strategy. A review of the two strategy documents showed that they indeed follow the same structure and use the same four priority areas with similar actions. The only new elements that we identified in the new strategy were the mainstreaming of climate change and the ambition to make an increased use of technology. The process was also reported to be too lengthy.

- The quality of some of the outputs were affected by ineffective sequencing of activities. It was planned, for instance, to begin interventions under Pillar 6 with a mapping of local activist groups to identify new grassroot advocates for women's rights. The results of this mapping were to be used to inform further interventions under this pillar. The mapping, however, was only conducted in fall 2021 when some of the activities which it was supposed to inform had already been started.

Key findings:

● The achievement of results against the approved workplan could not be assessed due to the outdated nature of quality assured performance data. As per the reporting requirements, the 2021 performance data is only due in February 2022 and could not be analyzed as part of this MTA.

● KII and FGD indicated potential quality gaps in the application of certain approaches and concepts (positive deviance champions, Oxford Scenario Planning, do no harm and survivor centred interventions). The quality for some outputs were also reported to be negatively impacted by lack of internal communication between implementing actors and ineffective sequencing of activities. The lack of disaggregation criteria for some of

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[13] These cases were reported in more detail to the UN for follow up and further investigation.

the quantitative indicators to capture changes among marginalised groups was also assessed as a quality gap in the implementation of the LNOB principle.

Recommendations:

10. Design specific interventions and include relevant disaggregation criteria for indicators (e.g., for persons with disabilities, persons with a migration background) under Pillar 3 and 4 to ensure the effective reach of marginalised population groups by the Spotlight Initiative (RCO).

11. Increase and strengthen internal and external communication as well as coordination among implementing actors of all Pillars by making the existing platform (where quarterly action plans and progress updates are shared accessible to all partners on a quarterly basis. Apart from Pillar meetings, there should also be bi-annual meetings of all partners (RCO, RUNOs).

12. To close the gaps in terms of coordination and communication, we suggest making the existing platform (on which quarterly action plans and progress updates are currently uploaded and shared) accessible to all IPs for updates and information sharing. A summary progress report should be extracted from the platform by the PCU and made available to all IPs and RUNOs on a quarterly basis. We also propose to re-introduce quarterly pillar working sessions including IPs (led by UN pillar leads) and to set up quarterly coordination meetings at municipality level (RCO, RUNOs).

8. Are the outputs still likely to lead to the expected outcomes? To what extent has progress towards the outcome targets been achieved?	☐ Very Good – Good
	☒ Problems
	☐ Serious deficiencies

Progress against the approved workplan by outcome area

As described under the previous evaluation question, the available performance data were limited and did not allow for the assessment of current progress towards outputs in quantitative terms. To respond to this evaluation question in a qualitative manner, we analysed the 2020 annual report, the 2020/2021 progress report, the M&E framework and revised pathways of change for each Pillar as well as KIIs.

According to the interviewed key informants, the delivery of the work plan was by and large on track. For community level activities, implementing partners reported high pressure to implement their interventions on time as most activities could only commence in Summer 2021.

The programme has contributed to important achievements albeit the short implementation period. Under Pillar 1, one key achievement has been the establishment of a Council on Women's Rights and Prevention of GBV under the Parliament chaired by the Vice Speaker and comprised of members of parliament and representatives of women rights' CSOs. The Council has hold several meetings to drive the law-making process for EVAWG. To date, three amendments to laws

have been adopted to improve the prevention of VAWG and to improve state protection mechanisms. These are significant results, in particular in consideration of the short implementation period. The amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code (article 504), for instance, providing for increased survivors' safety as well as the detention of up to 48 hours for perpetrators of domestic violence as well as the amendment to the law on alimony represent sustainable improvements in Kyrgystztan's legal framework for EVAWG.

> *"We managed to champion within the Parliament and also a number of civil society organizations to make some important legal amendments which have been already adopted by the Parliament. So, the legislation has changed and improved. So, for example, the government has adopted a new law on alimony. Alimony, as you know, is a critical and legal issues for women in the country. […]. So we have managed to adopt a new piece of legislation which strengthen the particularly enforcement mechanism for women. So this was a big success." (key informant, RUNO)*

Further amendments have been developed with support from the Spotlight Initiative and have been submitted for approval. The programme has also provided extensive technical support to the participatory development of the new National Gender Equality Strategy (NGDS). Under Pillar 2 and 3, the capacity of different groups of state servants, civil society and community stakeholders in EVAWG has been strengthened. The development of a Unified Instruction algorithm for a multi-sectoral response mechanism to GBV cases has also been supported. Furthermore, digital tools were developed or improved to be harnessed for the prevention of VAWG and for improving the assistance to survivors of GBV. Under Pillar 4, the Spotlight Initiative contributed to improving guidelines and SOPs for legal support to GBV survivors, to strengthening the state capacity in providing coordinated assistance to survivors of violence and in generating evidence on the impact of the pandemic on girls and women and on the access to essential services of GBV survivors. Under Pillar 5, the capacity to collect and analyse disaggregated data on VAWG has been strengthened. Under Pillar 6, different interventions to strengthen civil society and the women's movement have been delivered. The key achievements and obstacles for each pillar are mapped out in detail in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Key achievements and obstacles per Pillar		
Pillars	**Key interventions and achievements**	**Issues arising / obstacles to address in Phase II**
Outcome 1	- Technical support for the development of the new National Gender Equality Strategy (NGDS) for 2021 – 2030. As a result, the NGDS and the National Action Plan for 2021 – 2021 have been finalised, but not yet adopted by the government. - Support for a review of the national legislation on gender equality and VAWG. The review was presented to the relevant government stakeholders - Support to a review of court practices on child marriage and the implementation of the relevant article of the criminal code	- The high turnover of civil servants made it challenging to sustain the results from GALS. It was decided to increase the number of people that go through GALS training to mitigate the effects of turnover. We recommend to assess after a year of GALS training how and to what extent the new skills have been applied by trainees. - Many Members of Parliament were not familiar with civil society participation in policy processes and were not sensitive to gender issues. This was addressed through dialogue and capacity

	during court cases. The report was widely discussed. - A draft law on amendments to the labour code was published with the aim of decreasing sexual harassment in the workplace in 2020. It was not yet adopted at the time of the MTA. - Adopted amendment to reinforce women's legal rights to alimony - Adopted amendment to allow law enforcement entities to detain perpetrators of VAWG up to 48 hours in detention centres. - Amendment for State-Guaranteed Legal Aid (SGLA) for GBV survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking and asylum seekers. - Establishment of a permanent council on women's rights and the prevention of GBV. The council developed a workplan for 2021 and has already held three meetings.	strengthening. Considering the high staff turnover of government staff, it will be important to continue to plan for awareness raising and capacity building on civic engagement. The same applies to gender responsiveness. - The inventory of legislation is still ongoing, and it has been challenging to ensure that some of the draft amendments will not be lost from sight. The RUNOs collaborated, for instance, with selected members of parliament on the introduction of measures to address sexual harassment in the workplace in the Labour Code. An amendment to the Labour Code was developed, but it took over a year to submit the amendment to the parliament commission and it is still unclear whether the current parliament will discuss it before it will be replaced by new a one. The development of the new National Gender Equality Strategy (NGES) and its National Action Plan (NAP) faced similar challenges. Governmental representatives were actively involved in the interagency working group and the MLSD reported the progress to the CEDAW committee in October. The two documents, however, are still not officially submitted and are, thus, pending for approval. The presence of IPs and RUNOs in the working group has been a great asset in lobbying for the adoption of draft amendments and in monitoring the implementation of adopted amendments. We recommend to maintain these lobbying efforts for pending law amendments and to discuss progress and joint action during quarterly meetings of Pillar 1.
Outcome 2	- 111 hotline operators[14] and 40 public servants trained on a harmonised approach to working with GBV survivors - 42 education experts were trained on anti-discrimination and gender methodologies to improve the gender responsiveness of school materials.	- The #117 hotline for GBV survivors has been put on hold due to structural changes in the Government. After the completion of the restructuring of the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Migration, it is planned to be relaunched. This might require follow up and continued technical support from

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[14] This hotline is designated for children.

	- Increased capacity of interagency group members to work with adaptive leadership and positive deviance approaches for developing the NGDS - Development of the Unified Instruction algorithm for a multi-sectoral response mechanism to GBV cases - Update of the mobile application 'my community police officer' to add new functions to improve reporting modalities of GBV cases. - In February 2021, a hotline was established specifically for survivors of domestic violence ("117"). There have been a number of publications about this in the republican media. The national partner, the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Welfare, also publicly spoke about the hotline. At the time of the MTA, however, it was not operational.	the Spotlight Initiative which we recommend to plan for.
Outcome 3	- A mapping of harmful social norms, attitudes and practices associated with VAWG was completed. - 60 leaders were trained and supported to implement the Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) as positive deviance champions. - Launch of the review of the nationwide 'Bus of Solidarity' initiative. As part of this review, employees of the MHSD and MoJ participated in awareness raising sessions on gender transformative approaches. - Training of selected media representatives as well as support to self-assessments for 14 media organisations. - Development and release of the mobile game "Spring in Bishkek" to contribute to decreasing the practice of Ala- Kachuu, the abduction of girls and young women for the purpose of forced marriage. To date, the game was downloaded over 150,000 times by users of all ages from Central Asia and Russia. - 376 social pedagogues were trained on how to assist children at risk of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.	- The lockdown measures enforced during the period of national emergency and the consecutive increase of GBV made it challenging to implement activities as planned. - Service providers have insufficient understanding of the survivor centred approach and do-no-harm principles. The same applies to the trained champions of positive deviance. We recommend to disseminate learning material on the two approaches and to explore whether additional training sessions for service providers and champions of positive deviance will be required.
Outcome 4	- Presentation of the results a rapid gender assessment on the impact of the pandemic to the government. - Mapping of essential services for GBV survivors completed.	- During the pandemic lockdown, the municipal crisis centre was established in Bishkek. It is the first and only state-run crisis centre. It currently lacks resources to operate effectively. It is

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	- Guidelines on standards for legal support to GBV survivors developed. - Review and update of SOPs for juvenile inspectors and community police officers. - Emergency Mobile GBV Groups set up which brings together the police, health and social public servants. They were trained to assist survivors in emergency situations, including the Covid-19 lockdown.	recommended to provide support to this centre to transform it in a successful pilot model that could be replicated in other municipalities. It is also recommended to plan to support the institutional capacity of the crisis centres during Phase 2. - The SOP for psychosocial support for social workers and members of mobile teams (approved in 2021) were not known among the key informants interviewed. We suggest to disseminate them among service providers.
Outcome 5	- Strengthened capacity of key stakeholders to collect and analyse data on VAWG in alignment with international standards. - Development of a 'Victim's Card' to enable the GPO to gather and analyse disaggregated data on GBV survivors.	- With the introduction of the new versions of the "Unified Register of Crimes" and the "Unified Register of Offenses", there is need to further improve the work of the GPO on VAWG data in line with international standards. The data should be made operatively accessible to all relevant state structures, working on prevention of and protection against VAWG, as well as the UN and civil society stakeholders so they can analyse them, for example, to inform project design components or advocacy initiatives.
Outcome 6	- Focus group discussions with unconventional actors to better understand their perceptions and on how to engage them in the work on EVAWG. - Development of the concept of zero tolerance to violence. - Support to the national Women's movement "UNiTE against violence". - Support to three proposals of digital solutions to EVAWG after the roll out of a youth-targeted online hackathon. - 60 girls at risk for GBV attended digital skills training.	- The CSO community remains fractured regarding their actions on EVAWG. There are CSOs which are perceived as promoting Western values, CSOs with attachment to traditional values and CSOs which support government positions. In light of this context, the Spotlight Initiative has brought activists of different backgrounds together to work jointly for a more targeted response. The key informant interviews and the expectation mapping report illustrated, however, that fractured approaches persist and that feminist and LGBTQI organisations do not feel included. We recommend to explore new ways of working with these CSOs which currently perceive to be insufficiently represented (radical feminists and LGBTQI organisations).

Key informants (RUNOs, CSOs, RCO) stated that the activities for certain outputs were insufficient to reach the output targets. This was reported, for example, for output 3.1.[15], which has two planned activities (Activity 3.1.1: *Review of schoolbooks [primary-tertiary] with the inclusion of SGBVG and child marriage concepts and methodologies* and Activity 3.1.2: *Integrate gender transformative modules into the teacher training program focusing on gender-equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours*). These activities do not include comprehensive sexuality education, which is part of the output[16]. In the Pathway of Change sessions, participants highlighted that the work on women's and girls' sexuality is very challenging in the cultural context of Kyrgyzstan. They felt that the inclusion of reproductive health was feasible, but not the other concepts comprised under comprehensive sexuality education according to international standards. Another example is output 1.2.[17] for which two activities were also planned. One of them, (Activity 1.2.2: *Support to the creation of a working group to introduce amendments to the Budget Code of KR aimed at allocation of funds for prevention of GBV NAPs and region's development plans)* is meant to achieve indicator 1.2.2 (*Number of key government officials with strengthened capacities to draft and cost action plans on ending VAWG and accompanying M&E frameworks, within the last year*). The technical team discussed these matters with the Global Spotlight Initiative Secretariat, and it was agreed to accept this as a limitation of the programme.

Promising practices

Under the Spotlight Initiative, a promising practice is defined as having 'demonstrated a high degree of success in its single setting, and the possibility of replication in the same setting is guaranteed. It has generated some quantitative data showing positive outcomes over a period of time. A promising practice has the potential to become a good practice, but it doesn't yet have enough research or replication to support wider adoption or upscaling. As such, a promising practice incorporates a process of continuous learning and improvement'. We analysed the three promising practices described in the 2020 annual report. None of them has been evaluated so far and key informants had mixed perceptions about their level of promise. Some of the UN key informants highlighted their innovative and transformative nature while other UN key informants as well as key informants from the government and civil society emphasized challenges and concerns regarding their implementation and results.

The first promising practice is the participatory revision of the concept of the 'Bus of Solidarity' (BoS). The BoS' original objective was to aid citizens in remote areas to solve legal issues through a team of lawyers who travel by bus to different sites to provide legal advice. The initiative was started with support of UNDP in 2015 and the revision of the concept aimed at making it more gender-responsive and to build up the capacity of the participating lawyers and social workers on EVAWG, including the use of the Gender Action Learning System (GALS). Implementation started in 2020. As a process result, the Ministry of Justice took ownership of the action which was

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[15] The output is defined as follows: *National and/or sub-national evidence-based programmes are developed to promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours, including on Comprehensive Sexuality Education in line with international standard for in an out of school settings.*

[16] Output definitions are globally standardized for the Spotlight Initiative.

[17] The output reads: *National and/or sub-national partners are better able to develop evidence-based national and/or sub-national action plans on ending SGBV in line with international HR standards with M&E frameworks, increase financing and allocate appropriate budgets for their implementation, including for those groups facing intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination.*

considered a positive output achievement. It was expected that reaching survivors of GBV in need for legal support, however, would be a challenge. In 2021, the number of identified GBV survivors supported by the BoS was indeed very small. In the oblast of Osh, for instance, among 1386 clients there were only four which were related to GBV. They were identified because they consulted the BoS for non-GBV related legal advice (e.g., pension or other state benefits entitlements). To tackle this challenge, the programme aims to increase collaboration with local actors who will support the referral of GBV survivors to the BoS teams. It is also important to highlight, however, that the services provided by the BoS contribute to decreasing women's vulnerability to GBV. While there are not yet many consultations to support GBV survivors, the BoS has provided legal advice to numerous women who seek advice for issues related to family law (alimony, divorce, child custody, inheritance), pensions and benefits as well as issues related to provision of a land plot and registration of documents for land. These issues – if not solved – contribute to maintain societal structures which discriminate against women.

Another point of concern reported by key informants was the lack of follow up activities to monitor the extent to which the supported GBV survivors required further support. There has been, however, an agreement between the Spotlight Initiative and the MoJ that the latter will conduct quarterly monitoring of all GBV cases identified during the interventions of the BoS. Key informants also reported that some of the service providers working on the BoS were inexperienced and lacked the skills and professionalism to provide legal advice to GBV survivors in a sensitive and professional manner. The was confirmed by the MoJ. Some of the trained lawyers and social workers had to be replaced on a short notice by local authorities. The lack of available qualified staff at state level was described as the root cause.

"It cannot be said that intergovernmental interventions during BoS visits are consistently at the proper level. There are cases when one of the state services do not provide their own employees for the BoS services because they are either busy, sick or someone is on vacation. There are often problems to find employees from SRS[18] or the state notary service; these bodies simply do not have enough personnel. And another problem is that sometimes state agencies send employees who have just started to work and do not have work experience so they cannot provide quality consultations. We also raised this issue with the government agencies concerned. We recommended to send either experienced staff, or at least those who participated last year in BoS consultations. Because it's hard with young employees, they don't know how to do the work, they can't provide consultations." (key informant, government)

The second promising practice was the integration of the Oxford Scenario Planning and adaptive leadership in the process for developing the National Gender Equality Strategy (NGES). According to the annual report, it encouraged transformative and innovative thinking and succeeded in bridging the information gap between stakeholders at national and regional level. It also allowed to engage many experts from various backgrounds. The practice was positively received by some stakeholders, but negatively by others (see evaluation question 7). Key informants from CSOs and the RCO reported doubts about the efficiency and effectiveness of the approach used. They felt that it was cumbersome and not useful for capacity strengthening.

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[18] State Register Service

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At the time of the MTA, the NGES had not yet been adopted by the government. This also applies to the National Action Plan (NAP) which was originally designed for the period 2021 – 2023.

The third promising practice was the development and release of a mobile game app entitled "Spring in Bishkek". The game guides users through virtual scenarios to save a 17-year-old girl who has been abducted for forced marriage. It was designed after consultations with adolescent boys and girls in the target communities. Its uptake has surpassed expectations. To date, over 150,000 users (~ 80% female) have downloaded the game. User ratings are high and there has been anecdotal evidence from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan on how it empowered two girls to end attempts of abductions for forced marriage. In the google play app store, the game received an average of five stars (the highest positive rating) and many positive comments regarding its relevance and content from Russian Speakers in and outside Kyrgyzstan[19],[20]. The interviewed beneficiaries were knowledgeable about the game and had played it, but without reading the informative comments on the harmful traditional practice. They also felt that the characters' behaviour was unlikely and too removed from their sociocultural context. Their opinion on the game is difficult to corroborate with the overwhelmingly positive rating of the game and comments in the google play App Store. Some of the UN key informants also expressed critical views about the gamification of VAWG and were not convinced that it was the appropriate approach.

Key findings:
- The delivery of the workplan was reported to be by and large on track. Key informants identified a few gaps in the intervention logic. Some of the planned activities seem insufficient to achieve the output targets. This has been discussed by the Spotlight team and the Global Secretariat and accepted as a limitation.
- The programme has achieved important progress and achievements, in particular under Pillar 1.
- The promising practices described in the 2020 annual report were negatively appreciated by some key informants. There is need to assess their effectiveness and unintended impacts to gauge to what extent they deliver as expected and can be validated as promising practices.

Recommendations:
13. Assess the outputs and outcomes of the three promising practices to understand the extent to which they deliver the intended results (RCO, independent consultant). As per the definition of promising practices, quantitative data that show positive outcomes over a period of time should be available to showcase the potential of promising practices.
14. Recommendations to tackle specific challenges are available in Table 3 (in the right column).

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[19] See https://rightscolab.org/case_study/spring-in-bishkek/ for more information

[20] It was out of scope for this MTA to analyze the content of the multitude of comments on Appstores/ playmarkets.

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9A. Do the government, implementing partners or RUNOs have sufficient capacity (financial, human resources, institutional) to ensure that implementation is going according to plan? 9B. Are there any obstacles/bottlenecks/outstanding issues on the partners' or government side that are limiting the successful implementation and results achievement of the Initiative?	☐ Very Good – Good ☒ Problems ☐ Serious deficiencies

Budget execution

The budget analysis is based on the financial data from quarter 3 of the current year (2021). The data were extracted from the MPTF Gateway in October 2021.[21] The analysed data were still under revision from the global Secretariat and several anomalies (such as the overspent by UNODC) were still being investigated. As per the quarter 3 data, the budget delivery (expenditure and commitments) was at 70% for all RUNOs combined (see Figure 1 below). UN Women and UNICEF had relatively low expenditure/commitment rates at 56% and 59% respectively.

Figure 1. Budget vs expenditure (2020 to Q3 2021)
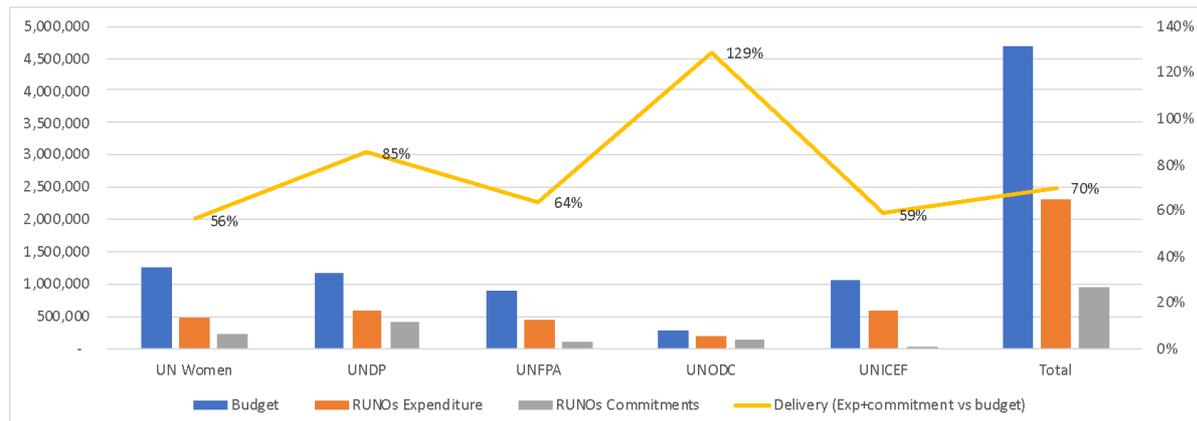
Absorption capacity and other obstacles limiting successful implementation of programme
Government

The central government is affiliated with all actions at national level. The Ministry of Justice, for example, has been the leading partner on the BoS. The programme also supported the Ministry of Labour and Social Development in the development of the Covid response plan through financial and technical support. The Ministry of Internal Affairs received assistance for the set-up of mobile emergency GBV support groups.

Half of the online survey participants consider the capacity of the national government to be either poor or very poor. The perceptions are more positive for local governments for which only 6 out of 24 respondents rated the capacity to be poor or very poor. The results from the online survey on the low national government capacity was corroborated by key informants from the government itself as well as CSOs and RUNOs. The representative of one ministry, for

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[21] The MTA reports only use data from global platforms which have been validated by the Secretariat. These might differ from the monitoring data used at country level. The extracted data represents the status as of October 2021.

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example, stated that their workforce was insufficient and that the available personnel lacked technical capacity for being an effective partner to the RUNOs for the Spotlight Initiative.

Key informants from the UN and RCO also felt that the previous government, which had been in place during the design stage, was better capacitated than the current government. The capacity decreased in the past two years as a result of high staff turnover and low institutional memory. This was also associated with low levels of interest and sometimes resistance from the government to engage on the topic of GBV. Key informants reported that some institutions, like the Office of the General Prosecutor, demonstrated adverse attitudes toward collaborating with the programme. This was not the case during the design stage.

"The prosecutors are not as willing as they should be. And this is a pity because, considering the new constitution, the Office of the General Prosecutor is a critical institution, also for legal reform issues. But we are facing a lot of resistance. They delay us to a point that the team is even proposing not to work with them in the next phase." (Key informant, RUNO)

It was also observed that government representatives were much faster to respond and to bring in their expertise when consulted on topics that are more aligned with their personal interests and political opportunities. Their low capacity is, thus, also intertwined with their low level of motivation or reluctance to work on GBV (see also question 4).

The Spotlight Initiative has strongly invested in building relationships with government representatives at the Prime Minister's office and its line ministries. This helped to ensure that new government staff are briefed about the programme and about the governmental commitments on their participation and contributions.

Civil society and implementing partners

Overall, there was a positive appreciation of the institutional and technical capacity of national CSOs and women's rights organisations among online survey respondents. The majority (21 out of 25 participants) rated their capacity as either good or excellent while the remaining four participants assessed their capacity as fair. The results were a bit more mixed for grassroot organisations for which the capacity was rated as fair by 11 participants while 15 respondents considered it to be good or excellent. Only five of the online survey respondents considered the absorption capacity of national CSOs to be a substantial problem. For grassroot and women movement organisations, there were only two participants who estimated that there were substantial issues related to their absorption capacity.

Key informant interviews provided a more nuanced picture. The participants of the FGDs with the Spotlight Technical Team felt that the programme assumed that CSOs have strong motivation, values and capacity to work on EVAWG. This assumption, however, was perceived as being untrue for most CSOs partners. To ensure that activities were executed, RUNOs reported that they had to invest extensive amounts of their time to explain technical matters and financial requirements. Some of the IPs had to be granted no-cost extensions of up to eight months to fulfil their commitments. It was also observed that most CSOs partners held conservative views on women's rights. As one UN agency country representative stated during the expectation mapping, the *"biggest bottleneck is not the lack of knowledge or skills among*

CSOs or expert communities, but the lack of proper attitude and behaviour, therefore we need to support a behaviour change communication" (source: expectation mapping report).

CSOs, on the other hand, perceived that some activities were insufficiently prepared. National government representatives, for example, were difficult to motivate to participate in activities that CSOs were accountable for, such as the gender audits (see also question 4). According to UN key informants, this was due to high turnover and reshuffling of government departments. The RUNOs were obliged to invest substantial time and efforts to negotiate with government stakeholders. In addition, they reached out to the EUD for support which supported the negotiations with certain state institutions.

They also criticised the extensive UN requirements for tendering which were perceived to be unrealistic and not adapted to the institutional capacity of most CSOs in Kyrgyzstan. In their view, the programme should have built in an extensive institutional and technical capacity strengthening of CSOs partners. Key informants from CSOs also stated that there was insufficient internal communication and coordination of the programme. They reported that they have not been well informed about the interventions delivered and results achieved by other partners.

RUNOs

The institutional and technical capacity of RUNOs was rated as either good or excellent by 21 out of 26 online survey respondents. The remaining five participants perceived the capacity to be fair. There was no consensus, on the other hand, regarding the adequacy of RUNO staffing among the online survey respondents; 15 out of 26 respondents perceived that staffing was sufficient whereas the remaining participants reported it to be insufficient. In KIIs, UN managers felt that the staffing was adequate whereas some of the technical team members reported it to be insufficient.

As stated under evaluation question 4, the RUNO pillar leads were described as being highly skilled in their respective areas. The technical expertise was reported to be of high value to the programme. Notwithstanding, the Technical Team reported a gap on gender expertise in specific areas. They suggested to add an international gender expert to the team to provide targeted support to certain interventions and monitoring mechanisms. It was also stated by key informants (RUNO, RCO) that the programme requires a full-time communication specialist.

Key findings:
- According to the Q3 financial data, the programme has achieved a budget delivery (expenditure and commitments) of 70% for all RUNOs combined. As anomalies in the analysed data were still being investigated at the time of the MTA, no further conclusion can be drawn.
- The volatile political environment characterised by high turnover in government institutions has decreased the technical capacity and institutional memory of the government. It was described as low by all key informants.
- CSO partners demonstrated lower technical and financial capacity than expected by the RUNOs. Some were also described as conservative regarding women's rights and empowerment. CSOs, on the other hand, criticised the demanding UN requirements and

insufficient institutional and technical capacity strengthening to support them in their work. They also perceived an overall lack of coordination and internal communication mechanisms, which made it challenging for them to know what others were doing. CSOs and RUNOs seem to have different expectations on their partnership which has led to frustration on both sides.

- The technical expertise of RUNOs was generally rated as high. There were different perceptions on whether the available workforce was sufficient. A gap in gender expertise for specific areas in the Technical Team and the need for a full-time communications specialist was highlighted.

Recommendations:

15. As recommended under question 4, we propose to develop a set of briefing kits which includes an overview on the Spotlight Initiative and a summary of agreed government commitments and responsibilities as well as the role of CSOs. The kits should be made available to government and CSO partners and can be used to brief new state representatives on the Spotlight Initiative (RCO, RUNOs).

16. As recommended under Question 7, we suggest making the existing information management platform (on which quarterly action plans and progress updates are currently uploaded and shared) accessible to all IPs for updates and information sharing. A summary progress report should be extracted from the platform by the PCU and made available to all IPs and RUNOs on a quarterly basis. We also propose to re-introduce quarterly pillar working sessions including IPs (led by UN pillar leads) and to set up quarterly coordination meetings at municipality level (RCO, RUNOs).

17. To monitor the risk related to conservative attitudes of CSO partners on women's rights and women's empowerment, we recommend to add it to the risk register and identify mitigative measures to address potential consequences of their attitudes (RCO, RUNOs).

18. To strengthen the programme internal and external communication capacity of the RCO, it is recommended to include a full-time communication specialist for Phase 2 (RCO, RUNOs).

19. Conduct a participatory capacity assessment with all CSO partners to integrate tailored capacity strengthening interventions in the design of Phase 2 (RCO, RUNOs).

10. Are the chosen implementation mechanisms (incl. choice of implementation modalities, entities and contractual arrangements) adequate for achieving the expected results?	☒ Very Good – Good
	☐ Problems
	☐ Serious deficiencies

Chosen implementation mechanism

The programme budget (not including management costs) is split into five delivery mechanisms: 58% of the budget are transferred to CSOs, 15% are payments to individual consultants, 18% are payments to a consultancy company, 6% are designated to the government and 3% are classified as "other". The requirement of the Spotlight Initiative to channel 50 to 70 percent of CSO funding to national and grassroot organisations has, thus, been met. The proportion of payments for consultancy services is high compared to other programmes.

The RUNOs operate according to their own internal procedures. For working with CSOs, the UN National Implementation Modality (NIM) is applied. Funds are disbursed to implementing partners once activities have been completed and narrative reports have been sent to the RUNOs. These reports feed into the programme reports. New disbursements to partners are initiated once their reports are approved. CSOs partners are contracted as either vendors, IPs or grantees.

At the time of the evaluation, 31 CSOs were contracted; 19 as vendors, 15 as IPs and 1 as a grantee. A few of them are engaged in multiple contract modalities and have signed contracts both as vendors and IPs. From the perspective of the interviewed CSOs, the contract modality does not make a difference to the partnership and their way of working. A common perception among CSOs is that they are hired to execute interventions for individual RUNOs under the umbrella of the Spotlight Initiative.

All but two of the CSOs were classified in the category "women-led/ women's rights organisation or feminist CSO". There was no information for one of the IPs on this category. The majority of the CSOs (23) were categorised as National CSOs, seven as grassroot organisations and one as an international organisation. One of the national CSOs (and the largest funding recipient among the CSOs) was incorrectly classified as a grassroot organisation, which brings the actual number of supported grassroot organisations down to six. Of the amount awarded to CSOs, 10% was disbursed to local and grassroot organisations, 3% to the international organisation and the remaining proportion to the National CSOs.

The budget allocated to the government is executed through the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) which means that the UN agency implement the activities directly without channelling the funding through the partner institution.[22] Considering the volatile political environment, the use of the DIM for government funding seems to be an appropriate choice.

Staffing levels for Spotlight and Management Cost

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[22] https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPChapter.aspx?TermID=f3136f23-5ced-45d8-89a0-c7b6b56b5229

The ceiling for programme management cost is set at 18% of the overall budget for the Spotlight Initiative at the global level. In Kyrgyzstan, the management costs are 17% according to the final budget approved by the global operational steering committee. The number of UN staff contributing to the programme delivery is considerable. Each of the RUNOs recovers costs for both programmatic and operational support under the programme, which is a good practice.

The approved CPD budget lists funding for 40 UN staff (see Annex 6). According to the approved annual work plan, however, only 23 staff are either fully or partially funded by the Spotlight Initiative which seems reasonable for a programme of this size.

Key findings:

- The programme applies adequate implementation mechanisms for the Kyrgyzstan programme (NIM for CSOs and DIM for government funding).
- There are three type of contract modalities used for CSO partners (vendors, IPs and grantees). The CSOs have not experienced that the contract modality makes a difference in their partnership with the RUNO and they do not seem to impact on their way of working.
- The management costs for the Spotlight Initiative are at 17% which is below the threshold of 18% set for country programmes. The number of staff fully and partially funded by the programme is reasonable for a programme of this size (as per the latest work plan).

Recommendations:

20. As proposed under evaluation question 3, it is recommended that RUNOs explore mechanisms such as women's funds to enable more grassroots organisations to become eligible as IPs. The Phase 2 proposal should outline how the Kyrgyzstan programme will implement the Global Grassroot Action Plan and increase the number of small, sub-national CSOs that will contribute to implementing the Spotlight Initiative (RCO, RUNOs).

11A. How effectively is the Initiative managed? **11B. How effectively is the Programme managed? Are the governance and management mechanisms for the Initiative at national level adequate and functioning as planned? Do partner government and other partners (please consider CSO and EU Delegation) in the country effectively participate in these mechanisms?**	☐ Very Good – Good ☒ Problems ☐ Serious deficiencies

Support from the Global Secretariat

According to key informants (RUNOs, RCO) the technical support from the Global Secretariat has been valuable to them. The Secretariat was described as "highly responsive". That stated, and although the guidelines provided were considered helpful, the team encountered many challenges in day-to-day operations for which they expected more detailed recommendations. This applied to matters related to integrated programming as required by the UNDS reform. There was only very limited guidance, for example, on how to implement joint procurement in a reality of different operational procedures or on how streamline communications from RUNOs to the

government. The role of the technical coherence officer was also not sufficiently explained. In the area of communications, additional guidance would have been appreciated on how to move from traditional UN agency visibility communication to a joint Communication for Development (C4D) approach.

Technical team members as well as members of CS-NRG expressed critical views on some of the activities organised by the global Secretariat. It was mentioned, for example, that the format of learning sessions on best and promising practices were not conducive to developing the capacity of country teams and partners. In their view, there was too much emphasis on showcasing success ("boasting") instead of analysing how challenges were overcome to make promising or best practices successful.

Governance mechanism

National Steering Committee (NSC)

The NSC was formed in March 2020 in close collaboration with Office of the Vice-Prime-Minister (VPM). Its original membership consisted of 26 individuals (representatives of Parliament, deputy ministers/directors, representatives from UN, EUD, media and civil society organisations). It is co-chaired by the Vice-Prime-Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic for Social Issues and the UN RC. Civil society represent at least 20% of the NSC's membership.

Due to the Covid-19 contact restrictions in 2020, the first meeting of the NSC was replaced by an online questionnaire which was conducted from March to April 2020. It contained questions on the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the NSC, a draft Joint Work Plan for 2020 to 2021, and an outline of the geographic footprint of the programme. The overarching responsibilities for the NSC are aligned with global guidelines. As a result of the online consultation, all programme documents were accepted and approved by the NSC. No further consultation or exchange was organised in 2020, at first due to the Covid-19 pandemic and later due to political turmoil.

Due to the high turnover that occurred after the parliamentary elections in 2020 and the following Referendum on the Constitution and the presidential elections in January 2021, the membership of the NSC changed significantly. For the government, 10 out of 13 representatives changed and some of the new members occupied a lower level in the hierarchy of their institution. The first meeting of the NSC was organised in 2021 using a mixed online/offline format. The agenda included a discussion on the annual 2020 report and the progress of programme implementation as well as the approval of the Annual Workplan (AWP) (with budget). Albeit adaptation and additional information provided by the PCU, The format of the AWP[23] was incomprehensible to the government representatives which are accustomed to state budgeting template. Despite the limited accessibility of the presented budget, it was approved without discussion. The focal point from the Office of the President provided specific feedback on the need to work with a less complex template that is more accessible to external stakeholders. In general, the session was short (45 minutes) and formal in its approach.

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[23] The AWP uses a template provided by the global Secretariat.

Over half of the online survey respondents (15 out of 27) were not familiar with the work of the NSC. For those familiar with the programme, 2 respondents rated its work as poor, 7 as fair, 2 as good and one as excellent.

Management of the Programme

For programme coordination purposes, the following structures have been put in place:

- The PCU which includes the Spotlight Coordinator, a Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Specialist, a Technical Coherence Specialist, and Communications Specialist (50%). Only the Spotlight Coordinator and the M&E specialist are based in the RCO.
- Each RUNO that leads on a pillar has appointed a pillar lead staff. The pillar lead works closely with the PCU and is responsible for ensuring that all RUNOs deliver coherent and coordinated interventions under the respective pillar. Their task is also to ensure effective coordination with the other pillar leads to avoid siloes. The pillar leads also act as focal points for the Spotlight Initiative in their RUNO. In addition, each RUNO except UNDP has an Operations Focal Point as the main contact for operational issues.
- There is also the Spotlight Initiative Communications Team responsible for steering the communication agenda of the programme. It is coordinated by the PCU Communication Specialist. Its other members are the RUNO Communication Focal Points.
- The Technical Team is composed of the PCU and the pillar leads. It meets on a monthly basis.

The technical team has become the main coordination mechanism for steering and implementing the programme at the technical level. The programme also used to have regular pillar meetings, but these were replaced by needs-based ad hoc meetings to ease the workload of the technical team. It was also observed that problem solving was more effective at the level of the Technical Team. At UN Senior management level, the RC associates the Spotlight Coordinator to relevant meetings with UN Country Team Representatives to ensure that updates on and challenges regarding the Spotlight Initiative are shared and discussed at this level.

The design of the programme also included a Government Technical Working Group (GTWG), a consultative body representing governmental agencies. It was established during the design phase and is co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Development and the UN Women Representative in Kyrgyzstan. The GTWG is composed of 27 members and has representatives from the government, UN, EUD and civil society. Apart from the CPD, we did not find any mention of the GTWG in the document review. In the 2020 annual report, it is still part of the acronym list, but is not mentioned anywhere in the report. Key informants from the PCU reported that it was discontinued after the design phase because of the high rotation of government representatives.

At the time of the evaluation, the programme did not seem to have a coordination mechanism for regular meetings with partners. Ad hoc meetings took place such as the expectation mapping. One meeting was also held with partners of Pillar 3 and 6. There were also many individual meetings between RUNOs and their respective partners. However, the absence of an established coordination mechanisms with partners is a critical gap for the Kyrgyzstan programme and explains why CSOs report a lack of internal communication and coordination, as discussed under

previous evaluation questions. There was also no evidence for a regular coordination mechanism at the level of the 12 municipalities.

The Civil Society National Reference Group (CS-NRG)

The Civil Society Interim Reference Group (CSIRG) was established in October 2019 to support the programme design process. According to the annual 2020 report, it was "instrumental in providing advice, comments, and inputs during programme design and development". It was replaced by the permanent Civil Society National Reference Group (CS-NRG) in November 2020. The members were selected in a competitive process from different groups and fields of expertise to ensure diversity and the representation of voices from marginalised groups. Applications were scarce and calls for applications had to be repeated several times. In the annual 2020 report, the female/male ratio was reported as 11 to 1, and seven of the 12 members were IPs. A key informant from the PCU reported that the current composition of the NS-CRG consists of 14 members, including one man. At the initial meeting, a bimonthly meeting structure was agreed. To keep CS-NRG members up to date, the PCU shares their monthly work plans with them. The interviewed representatives of the CS-NRG had different perspectives on the relevance of the structure. One key informant reported that the structure was relevant and of high technical expertise. The other three key informants were not clear about the role of the CS-NRG apart from being available for consultations on an ad-hoc basis.

Key findings:

- The NSC has only exchanged on two occasions due to the pandemic, political turmoil and turnover in government ministries. Most of the government representatives of the NSC were replaced by newcomers in 2021. As long as the high fluctuation of staff in government institutions continues, the large size and composition of the NSC will negatively impact the relevance and efficiency of the governance structure. There is also need to ensure that the format of budget presentation is accessible to all participants.

- While effective internal coordination structures have been set up at UN level, there are no coordination mechanisms that bring implementing partners together on a regular basis to discuss progress and challenges. This is a critical gap that needs to be addressed to provide IPs and government partners with regular spaces for contributing to steering the action.

- The CS-NRG is represented in the NSC and is kept informed by the PCU about the programme, but the structure has not yet harnessed its full potential. As men play a critical role in women's empowerment and in decreasing GBV, their under-representation in the group might be a disadvantage in technical discussions. The interviewed CS-NRG members reported lack of clarity about their role, and they are not yet part of any of the internal coordination mechanisms.

Recommendations:

21. In the design process for Phase 2, it is recommended to revise the composition of the NSC with the objective of having a more agile and nimble structure. The number of its members should be decreased. We suggest to reduce members from both the UN and the government. The RC and two RUNOs for example, could represent the UN. The government should have three to four strategic representatives. The ministries not

represented in the NSC can be part of the GTWG (see recommendation below). Meetings should take place at least on a bi-annual basis (RCO).

22. The coordination mechanisms of the programme need to be more inclusive of national partners. It is recommended to revive the GTWG. The experience from technical committees in other countries (e.g. El Salvador) could serve as helpful examples. As recommended under question 7 and 9, we also propose to re-introduce quarterly pillar working sessions including IPs (led by UN pillar leads) and to set up quarterly coordination meetings at municipality level (RCO, RUNOs).

23. To ensure that the budget presented to the NSC is accessible to all stakeholders, we recommend to prepare and apply a simplified version of the budget template which is adapted for on-screen presentations (PCU with support from the Secretariat).

24. The CS-NRG needs to be supported in understanding its role and in playing a more active role in terms of providing technical guidance. It is recommended to invite two representatives of the structure to the Technical Team meetings and to also associate specific CS-NRG members to the pillar working groups to harness their expertise. It can be considered to downscale the meeting frequency of the CS-NRG to every second month instead of monthly meetings. We recommend a peer exchange of the PCU with the Malawi programme PCU to learn from their experience on the participation of the CS-NRG in technical coordination meetings (RCO).

12. Are the chosen implementation and coordination mechanisms (a "new way of working", in line with UN Reform) contributing to efficiency?	☐ Very Good – Good
	☒ Problems
	☐ Serious deficiencies

Set-up and working of UN Team (RCO and RUNOs)

The set-up of the PCU, the RUNO pillar leads, focal points and the Technical Team is described under the previous evaluation question. Among online survey respondents, there was strong agreement that the PCU ensured effective coordination between the RUNOs (24 out of 25 respondents). Key informants from RUNOs confirmed that a strong work relationship with the PMU has been buit.

> *" I think the working relationship is very good. I mean, it's day to day communication and very practical. So in that sense, they are close to us. We are working together. We are implementing together." (FGD, RUNOs)*

Interviewees from RUNOs and the RCO highlighted also, however, that the PCU faced substantial difficulties. First, their unit is a new structure in the UN system and it has been challenging to define their role in operational terms and to convey their mandate to their RUNO colleagues. Second, there have been challenges in understanding and making effective use of the technical coherence role. According to RUNOs, this function has not yet been helpful for ensure coherence

across pillars. Third, the dispersed location[24] of the PCU members has been a barrier and did not allow for effective teamwork, in particular in the area of communications. These difficulties have led to tensions and conflicts in meetings. One key informant (RUNO) stated that this put the PCU *"under terrible pressure".*

> *"The PCU in the RCO feels difficult, this is a new unit. They are a unique structure. Due to the 'virtual nature' of the inclusion of [technical] coherence and communication specialists, the unit could not work at its full strength." (Key informant, RUNO)*

> *"It is better for us [the pillar leads] to connect and collaborate with each other. […] The technical coherence function was not productive. Their [PCU] suggestions and recommendations are usually not relevant. Their capacity needs to be built." (FGD, RUNOs)*

Most of the online survey participants (21 out of the 24 respondents who filled out this question) reported that the RUNOs work well together. At the same time, however, 15 out of 25 respondents felt that RUNOs continue to operate in siloes. One online survey respondent commented, for example, that *"Each RUNO is mostly concerned about its own activities/deliveries etc."* This was corroborated by external stakeholders as documented in the expectation mapping exercise report. Government and CSO stakeholders stated that RUNOs continue to pursue their interventions individually. In their view, the RUNOs way of working has not yet changed under the Spotlight Initiative. Considering the mostly virtual and relatively short collaboration with partners, this finding is, however, not surprising.

> *"They [the RUNOs] do not have an integrated approach in their work, it is more fragmented and superficial." (Leader, source: expectation mapping report).*

> *"UN agencies continue doing what they would have been doing without the Spotlight programme, what is the added value of Spotlight Initiative? This part is not well thought through." (CSO representative, source: expectation mapping report).*

Did the new delivery mechanisms lead to increased efficiency?

Both, the online survey respondents and key informants described substantial challenges in relation to the implementation of joint operational processes. The different operational procedures of RUNOs make it very work intensive to deliver actions in an integrated manner. Joint procurement processes, for instance, were piloted, but implementation was reported to be cumbersome as the back-office procedures of each RUNO is different. Consequently, it increased their workload instead of increasing efficiency. This finding was also corroborated by the expectation mapping report, which states that RUNOs *"are under pressure from the UN bureaucracy, with timelines and planning not being sufficiently coordinated"[25]*. This has been described as a frustrating and disappointing experience for both partners as well as the external gender experts associated with the programme.

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[24] The Spotlight Coordinator and the M&E specialist are based at the RCO while the communication specialist is based at UNICEF and the technical coherence specialist is based at UN Women.

[25] Source: expectation mapping report.

While we did not find evidence that the integrated programming approach led to increased efficiency, there were examples about how it has contributed has to an increased interagency collaboration of the UN on GBV. This in turn was reported to positively impact the interagency collaboration of the government within the sector. Key informants (RUNOs, CSOs) observed, for example, that RUNOs were apprehensive of engaging in GBV programming prior to the Spotlight Initiative as part of their core mandate. This apprehensiveness has been replaced by strong commitment to the topic. The programme has helped to bring out the individual strengths of each agency which has cross-fertilised learning. The C4D approach introduced by UNICEF or UNDP's expertise in the field of policy and legislation, for example, have been assets for the programme and learning resources for the other RUNOs.

Key findings:

- The coordination mechanisms between RCO and the RUNOs have been set up but are not yet functioning as expected. The PCU has not yet reached its full potential due to its dispersed location. The technical coherence function requires further strengthening.

- Strong engagement from the RCO and RUNOs has led to an increased interagency collaboration and joint commitment of the UN on EVAWG. This is conducive for an increased effectiveness of the UN's efforts on EVAWG in the country. There were still challenges, however, to harness the new ways of working for a greater *efficiency* of operations. Considering the country context, the Covid-19 pandemic and the recent start of activities, this is not surprising.

- The different operational processes and procedures of RUNOs have made joint procurement inefficient and cumbersome for staff.

- The content of and progress in implementing the UNDS reform is not yet visible to partners (government, IPs).

Recommendations:

25. We recommend co-locating the members of the PCU in the same office for the design and implementation of Phase 2.

26. The recommendation for improving the coordination and communication structure and mechanisms (under questions 7, 9 and 11) will contribute to increase the efficiency of actions.

27. Provide capacity strengthening to the technical coherence role to harness its full potential. This could be done, for example, through an online exchange or visit to another country programme where the position has shown its merits. A staff secondment to support the PCU in Kyrgyzstan could also be an option (RCO, global Secretariat, UN Women headquarters).

28. Prepare a short communication for partners on the ambition and implementation of the UNDS reform in the Spotlight Initiative in Kyrgyzstan to make it transparent to partners what is being done (RCO).

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D. SUSTAINABILITY

13. Is sufficient capacity being built so that local actors, such as government as well as CSOs, the women's movement and groups representing women and girls that face intersecting forms of discrimination, will be able to manage the process by the end of the Initiative without continued dependence on international expertise?

☒ Very Good – Good

☐ Problems

☐ Serious deficiencies

The programme does not yet have a sustainability plan or an exit strategy. A sustainability plan will be developed as part of Phase 2. We also did not find any evidence that additional resources had been secured for the future of the Spotlight Initiative in Kyrgyzstan. In the online survey, respondents had mixed perceptions on whether sufficient expertise was being built by local actors to manage the process by the end of the programme without international expertise. Only 5 of 15 respondents[26] estimated that the central government was sufficiently capacitated; for local government structures, it was 7 out of 16. For CSOs, 15 out of 21 respondents perceived that sufficient capacity was being built. For small CSOs and women's organisations, it was 13 out of 22 participants. As described under evaluation question 9, RUNOs reported considerable institutional and technical capacity gaps for their CSOs partners. CSOs partners, on the other hand, expected more extensive institutional capacity strengthening from the initiative. They acknowledged, however, that the programme has given them access to new technologies and methodologies of work.

While sustainability planning and the further capacity strengthening of CSOs need to be a strong focus in Phase 2, it is important to recognise that some of the programme's results are a promising start for achieving sustainable changes in tackling VAWG. The following examples were highlighted by key informants:

- The establishment of GBV council in parliament was an important institutional change. It is currently a functional structure, but its continued success will depend on the newly elected members of parliament. As one key informant from the government said *"Everything still depends on personalities. If dedicated people will come, they can use it. If not, it will just be another born-dead structure".*

- The three law amendsments described under evaluation question 8 lay an important foundation for creating a legal environment favorable to EVAWG.

- The programme prepared result action plans for some of the conducted research studies. These will be translated into policy briefs for the government and awareness raising material for CSOs which will continue to be available to the civil society after the end of the programme.

- Key informants observed that the programme has made an important contribution to breaking the taboo on GBV. Survivors are less afraid to speak out and seek help and there is more understanding for their situation. This observation has not yet been confirmed by a formal evaluation.

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[26] The remaining participants selected the option 'do not know'. This same applies to the following questions.

> *"We may not have solved the problem of violence, but we 'rocked the problem'. People have lost their fear to say that they have been victims of violence". (Key informant, RUNO)*

- The topic of GBV was integrated into the curriculum for the Academy of Police and the Academy of Management.
- The programme has contributed to the set-up of communities of professionals and connected them to networks which are expected to continue to function after the end of the programme.

Key informants (EUD, government, CSOs, RUNOs, RCO) reported generally mixed feelings in relation to sustainability. There was enthusiasm about the achieved legal changes, but there was also resignation grounded in past experiences that the volatile political environment jeopardises achievements. As one key informant (RUNO) stated *"we make one step forward and then three steps backward".* While the amendment of laws is an important foundation for change, key informants highlighted that law enforcement was a much greater issue which will require more substantial attention in Phase 2.

Another important part of the sustainability puzzle of the Kyrgyzstan programme is external. While GBV-related funding opportunities have been scarce in the country, a new large-scale USAID-funded GBV programme has recently commenced with focus on protection and assistance to survivors. The programme has not yet been officially launched, but its design has been finalised. At the time of the MTA, no linkages had been established between the two programmes to ensure synergy and effective use of resources and to sustain the results of the Spotlight Initiative.

Key findings:
- No sustainability plan or exit strategy has been developed at the end of the first phase; it will be developed as part of Phase 2.
- While the Kyrgyzstan programme has made important contributions for strengthening the capacity of local partners to reduce VAWG, the instable political environment puts achievements at risk. It is out of the scope of the programme to mitigate this impact.
- The new USAID-funded GBV programme represents an opportunity for sustaining some of the results of the Spotlight Initiative, but linkages between the two programmes have not yet been established.

Recommendations:
29. During the development of the sustainability plan, it is recommended to ensure strong ownership of local actors (national CSOs and the government). To build this ownership, we propose to give members from civil society and the government a leading role in the facilitation of the development of the plan. They should also contribute to reviewing the document. The actions of the sustainability plan should be integrated in the programme work plan and need to be fully funded by the Spotlight Initiative or other confirmed funding sources (RCO).
30. Phase 2 should increase investments in capacity strengthening for national CSOs and women's organisations to ensure that these organisations have the capacity to manage activities without international expertise (RCO, RUNOs).

31. Meet with responsible entities of the new USAID-funded GBV programme and their partners with the objective to explore opportunities for linkages and synergies (RCO).

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E. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PROGRAMME DESIGN:

Main findings:

1. The programme design is well aligned to the Spotlight Initiative principles as listed in the Spotlight Initiative Fund ToRs.

2. The programme design used a consultative approach and involved all relevant segments of the government, RUNOs, civil society and other right holders who are knowledgeable on VAWG issues in the country. There were different perceptions about the quality of the consultations. The consultations met the expectations of RUNOs, the government and the EUD. CSOs on the other hand reported them to be tokenistic and superficial.

3. The technical team with support from partners has invested extensive efforts to unpack the ToCs of each pillar and to establish a coherent intervention logic between activities, outputs and outcomes. Despite these achievements, the Kyrgyzstan programme still lacks an overarching ToC with associated assumptions. The assumptions documented at the Planning Retreat held in February 2021 can serve as a foundation for identifying critical assumptions for the different result levels of the ToC.

4. Some key informants questioned the extent of innovative methods and approaches incorporated in the programme design. All these methods are potentially powerful for supporting social norm change. Combining a relatively high number of different innovative approaches, however, make the delivery of the programme both demanding and complex. This might lead to an overstretch for the implementing teams in light of the challenging context (Covid-19, shrinking space for CSOs, high turnover in government).

5. The selected global quantitative global indicators have been complemented with qualitative indicators. These are, however, not yet introduced in the programme documents. By end of year 1, the data for almost all quantitative indicators were available.

6. The Kyrgyzstan programme has identified relevant contextual, programmatic, operational, and fiduciary risks and mitigation measures. The risk related to resistance from communities and conservative members of the society require further mitigation measures that need to be integrated in the intervention logic.

7. There are mixed viewpoints on the extent to which the programme responds to the needs of its beneficiaries during implementation. Under Pillar 4, the programme's focus has been to set-up an institutional framework and procedures for assisting GBV survivors. The absence of direct technical and financial support to crisis centres and shelters in providing holistic support to GBV survivors was perceived as a gap in terms of responding to the needs of the latter.

8. There were also mixed experiences regarding the RUNOs' approaches to strengthening CSOs. While it was recognised that some RUNOs have provided effective capacity building to their IPs, it was perceived by CSOs that other RUNOs excluded CSOs from tendering.

Key informants from CSOs considered their extensive requirements inappropriate and not aligned to the programme's principle on civil society engagement.

9. National level feedback mechanisms have been put in place via the NSC and the CS-NRG. Due to the political instability and Covid-19 pandemic, they have met on an ad-hoc basis. In addition, IPs and government partners were invited to provide feedback during the expectation mapping workshop. We did not find evidence on feedback mechanisms at province or municipality level.

10. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to substantial delays. Activities in the municipalities could only be started in late summer 2021. To catch up on the delays, CSO partners are requested to deliver their activities in a much shorter timeframe than originally planned. This has been frustrating and exhausting for them. It has also been difficult for communities to accommodate a high density of activities in short periods of time. As changes in attitudes and behaviour take time, this 'overload' of activities might negatively impact the ability of partners and communities to process transformative change.

Recommendations:

a) In the design process for Phase 2, organise a learning session to discuss the potential need to downscale the complexity of the programme. This should include a mapping of the different innovative methods and tools incorporated in the Phase 1 design to discuss their return of investment and results, also from a perspective of partners (RCO[27]).

b) Develop an overarching ToC and associate critical assumptions for each result level. These assumptions should be monitored by the PCU on a regular basis (RCO, RUNOs with support from partners).

c) To strengthen the management of the risk related to resistance from family, community, traditional and religious leaders, we recommend establishing a community feedback mechanism which enables right holders, in particular marginalized and vulnerable groups, to share their concerns (PCU, UNICEF, UNFPA).

d) It is recommended to check the availability of data for all quantitative indicators by end of 2021 (RCO).

e) To ensure a more harmonized understanding of the programme, it is recommended to develop concise and simple communication material to summarize the programme in local languages (RCO).

f) There is need to ensure a more meaningful participation of CSOs in the design process for Phase 2. They should be given more space to influence the design of interventions in line with their mandates and missions. This could include, for example, to designate for each Pillar one or two CSOs to co-lead the design process with the RUNO pillar lead. It is also suggested to harness the potential of the CS-NRG to support the design process. It could be entrusted, for instance, to conduct feedback surveys among CSOs and monitor the

[27] The entity or entities listed in parathesis after the recommendations are those responsible for their implementation.

extent to which feedback and suggestions from CSOs were considered in the design decisions for Phase 2 (PCU, RUNOs, CS-NRG).

g) In line with the global grassroot action plan of the Spotlight Initiative, it is recommended that RUNOs explore mechanisms such as women funds to enable smaller and grassroots organisations to be eligible as IPs (RUNOs).

h) The degree of contribution to Outcome 4 in terms of scaling up the provision of survivor-centered essential services to all survivors needs to be strengthened. For Phase 2, it is recommended that the Kyrgyzstan programme, it should further increase support public institutions on the ground so they can increase the scope and quality of their assistance for GBV survivors (PCU, RUNOs, government, CSOs).

i) To increase accountability, we recommend to set up and implement feedback mechanisms for the community and municipality level (RUNOs).

j) Conduct a rapid feedback exercise with IPs and communities to explore the impact of the high density of activities since September and develop mitigative measures, if indicated (PCU, RUNOs).

2. GOVERNANCE:

Main findings:

1. As a result of political instability, recurrent staff turnover in government institutions and limited interest of politicians in the topic of GBV, the government has not effectively contributed to steering the action. Specific line ministries such as the Ministry of Justice have demonstrated commitment to support specific interventions.

2. CSOs reported limited ownership of the programme. In their view, they are confined to execute interventions for the UN without space to shape the programme and to influence its actions in a holistic way. As CSOs play a critical role in the design of the Spotlight Initiative, their perception to lack ownership in the programme is of concern.

3. The RUNOs and the EUD have effectively contributed to steering the action and in alignment with their role defined in the CPD.

4. The NSC has only exchanged on two occasions due to the pandemic, political turmoil and turnover in government ministries. Most of the government representatives of the NSC were replaced by newcomers in 2021. As long as the high fluctuation of staff in government institutions continues, the large size and composition of the NSC will negatively impact the relevance and efficiency of the governance structure. There is also need to ensure that the format of budget presentation is accessible to all participants.

5. While effective internal coordination structures have been set up at UN level, there are not yet coordination mechanisms that bring implementing partners together on a regular basis to discuss progress and challenges. This is a critical gap that needs to be addressed to provide IPs and government partners with regular spaces for contributing to steering the action.

6. The CS-NRG is represented in the NSC and is kept informed by the PCU about the programme, but the structure has not yet harnessed its full potential. As men play a

critical role in women's empowerment and in decreasing GBV, their under-representation in the group might be a disadvantage in technical discussions. The interviewed CS-NRG members reported lack of clarity about their role, and they are not yet part of any of the internal coordination mechanisms.

Recommendations:

a) The RCO and RUNOs have invested extensive efforts to engage government actors at all levels. As long as turnover in government agencies remains frequent, our recommendation is that the UN and EUD maintain their current level of efforts to strengthen and consolidate government commitment to the Spotlight Initiative. In view of the new political regime, we suggest to dedicate time for building relationships with the new Presidential Administration using a joint EU-UN engagement approach. To facilitate the engagement of new state representatives, it is also recommended to develop a set of briefing materials on the Spotlight Initiative, including its achievements (e.g. legislative changes) as well as government and CSO commitments and areas of collaboration (RCO, RUNOs, EUD).

b) In the design process for Phase 2, it is recommended to revise the composition of the NSC with the objective of having a more agile and nimble structure. The number of its members should be decreased. We suggest to reduce members from both the UN and the government. The RC and two RUNOs for example, could represent the UN. The government should have three to four strategic representatives. The ministries not represented in the NSC can be part of the GTWG (see recommendation below). Meetings should take place at least on a bi-annual basis (RCO).

c) To ensure that the budget presented to the NSC is accessible to all stakeholders, we recommend to prepare and apply a simplified version of the budget template which is adapted for on-screen presentations (PCU with support from the Secretariat).

d) The CS-NRG needs to be supported in understanding its role and in playing a more active role in terms of providing technical guidance. It is recommended to invite two representatives of the structure to the Technical Team meetings and to also associate specific CS-NRG members to the pillar working groups to harness their expertise. It can be considered to downscale the meeting frequency of the CS-NRG to every second month instead of monthly meetings. We recommend a peer exchange of the PCU with the Malawi programme PCU to learn from their experience on the participation of the CS-NRG in technical coordination meetings (RCO).

e) The coordination mechanisms of the programme need to be more inclusive of national partners. It is recommended to revive the GTWG. The experience from technical committees in other countries (e.g. El Salvador) could serve as helpful examples. As recommended under question 7 and 9, we also propose to re-introduce quarterly pillar working sessions including IPs (led by UN pillar leads) and to set up quarterly coordination meetings at municipality level (RCO, RUNOs).

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f) To foster ownership and meaningful participation of CSOs, it will be critical to build in extensive civil society participation in the design sessions for Phase II. This should include participatory learning exercises that allow CSOs to share their perspectives and to contribute to designing the interventions. The programme in Kyrgyzstan should also define in their Phase II proposal how they will implement the Global Grassroot Action Plan of the Spotlight Initiative (RCO, RUNOs, CSOs). It will also be critical to harness the potential of Pillar 6 to act as an incubator for a newer generation of CSOs (RCO, RUNOs).

3. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT:

Main findings:

1. The mandates, experience, and expertise of UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNICEF are well aligned with the outcomes of the Spotlight Initiatives. UNODC's mandate has a less stronger focus on EVAWG, but its expertise and experience in the prevention and response to GBV in the country have made the organisation a valuable strategic partner.

2. The distribution of pillar leads and tasks among RUNOs is coherent and grounded in their institutional capacity, partnerships and networks, experience and expertise.

3. The Kyrgyzstan programme has put in place important foundations to operationalise the UNDS reform. The leadership and commitment of the RC has been strong and played a critical role in ensuring strategic engagement of the government and in encouraging RUNO's efforts to engage in integrated programming. Coordination structures have been put in place through the PCU, pillar leads and technical team. The programme's visibility has been promoted through joint communication. The lack of accountability mechanism of the technical team to the PCU was considered to be an obstacle by some UN key informants.

4. The programme applies adequate implementation mechanisms for the Kyrgyzstan programme (NIM for CSOs and DIM for government funding).

5. There are three type of contract modalities used for CSO partners (vendors, IPs and grantees). The CSOs have not experienced that the contract modality makes a difference in their partnership with the RUNO and they do not seem to impact on their way of working.

6. The management costs for the Spotlight Initiative are at 17% which is below the threshold of 18% set for country programmes. The number of staff fully and partially funded by the programme is reasonable for a programme of this size (as per the latest work plan).

7. The coordination mechanisms between RCO and the RUNOs have been set up but are not yet functioning as expected. The PCU has not yet reached its full potential due to its dispersed location. The technical coherence function requires further strengthening.

8. Strong engagement from the RCO and RUNOs has led to an increased interagency collaboration and joint commitment of the UN on EVAWG. This is conducive for an increased effectiveness of the UN's efforts on EVAWG in the country. There were still challenges, however, to harness the new ways of working for a greater *efficiency* of operations. Considering the country context, the Covid-19 pandemic and the recent start of activities, this is not surprising.

9. The different operational processes and procedures of RUNOs have made joint procurement inefficient and cumbersome for staff.

10. The content of and progress in implementing the UNDS reform is not yet visible to partners (government, IPs).

Recommendations:

a) To increase the efficiency of operations, it is recommended to improve the accountability mechanism for RUNO personnel fully or partially funded by the programme to ensure that they dedicate sufficient working time to the programme. The Spotlight Coordinator should also be asked to provide input to the performance reviews of staff funded primarily by the programme regarding the quality of their contributions to the programme (RUNOs, RCO).

b) We recommend co-locating the members of the PCU in the same office for the design and implementation of Phase 2.

c) The recommendation for improving the coordination and communication structure and mechanisms (under questions 7, 9 and 11) will contribute to increase the efficiency of actions.

d) Provide capacity strengthening to the technical coherence role to harness its full potential. This could be done, for example, through an online exchange or visit to another country programme where the position has shown its merits. A staff secondment to support the PCU in Kyrgyzstan could also be an option (RCO, global Secretariat, UN Women headquarters).

e) Prepare a short communication for partners on the ambition and implementation of the UNDS reform in the Spotlight Initiative in Kyrgyzstan to make it transparent to partners what is being done (RCO).

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4. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS:

Main findings:
1. The achievement of results against the approved workplan could not be assessed due to the outdated nature of quality assured performance data. As per the reporting requirements, the 2021 performance data is only due in February 2022 and could not be analysed as part of this MTA.
2. The delivery of the workplan was reported to be by and large on track. Key informants identified a few gaps in the intervention logic. Some of the planned activities seem insufficient to achieve the output targets. This has been discussed by the Spotlight team and the Global Secretariat and has been accepted as a limitation.
3. The programme has achieved important progress and achievements, in particular under Pillar 1.
4. KII and FGD indicated potential quality gaps in the application of certain approaches and concepts (positive deviance champions, Oxford Scenario Planning, do no harm and survivor centred interventions). The quality for some outputs were also reported to be

negatively impacted by lack of internal communication between implementing actors and ineffective sequencing of activities. The lack of disaggregation criteria for some of the quantitative indicators to capture changes among marginalised groups was also assessed as a quality gap in the implementation of the LNOB principle.

5. The promising practices described in the 2020 annual report were negatively appreciated by some key informants. There is need to assess their effectiveness and unintended impacts to gauge to what extent they deliver as expected and can be validated as promising practices.

6. According to the Q3 financial data, the programme has achieved a budget delivery (expenditure and commitments) of 70% for all RUNOs combined. As anomalies in the analysed data were still being investigated at the time of the MTA, no further conclusion can be drawn.

7. The volatile political environment characterised by high turnover in government institutions has decreased the technical capacity and institutional memory of the government. It was described as low by all key informants.

8. CSO partners demonstrated lower technical and financial capacity than expected by the RUNOs. CSOs criticised the demanding UN requirements and insufficient institutional and technical capacity strengthening to support them in their work. They also perceived an overall lack of coordination and internal communication mechanisms, which made it challenging for them to know what others were doing. CSOs and RUNOs seem to have different expectations on their partnership which has led to frustration on both sides.

9. The technical expertise of RUNOs was generally rated as high. There were different perceptions on whether the available workforce was sufficient. A gap in gender expertise for specific areas in the Technical Team and the need for a full-time communications specialist was highlighted.

10. No sustainability plan or exit strategy has been developed at the end of the first phase; it will be developed as part of Phase 2.

11. While the Kyrgyzstan programme has made important contributions for strengthening the capacity of local partners to reduce VAWG, the instable political environment puts achievements at risk. It is out of the scope of the programme to mitigate this impact.

12. The new USAID-funded GBV programme represents an opportunity for sustaining some of the results of the Spotlight Initiative, but linkages between the two programmes have not yet been established.

Recommendations:

a) Design specific interventions and include relevant disaggregation criteria for indicators (e.g., for persons with disabilities, persons with a migration background) under Pillar 3 and 4 to ensure the effective reach of marginalised population groups by the Spotlight Initiative (RCO).

b) To close the gaps in terms of coordination and communication, we suggest making the existing platform (on which quarterly action plans and progress updates are currently uploaded and shared) accessible to all IPs for updates and information sharing. A

summary progress report should be extracted from the platform by the PCU and made available to all IPs and RUNOs on a quarterly basis. We also propose to re-introduce quarterly pillar working sessions including IPs (led by UN pillar leads) and to set up quarterly coordination meetings at municipality level (RCO, RUNOs).

c) Assess the outputs and outcomes of the three promising practices to understand the extent to which they deliver the intended results (RCO, independent consultant). As per the definition of promising practices, quantitative data that show positive outcomes over a period of time should be available to showcase the potential of promising practices.

d) Develop a set of briefing kits which includes an overview on the Spotlight Initiative and a summary of agreed government commitments and responsibilities as well as the role of CSOs. The kits should be made available to government and CSO partners and can be used to brief new state representatives on the Spotlight Initiative (RCO, RUNOs).

e) To strengthen the programme internal and external communication capacity of the RCO, it is recommended to include a full-time communication specialist for Phase 2 (RCO, RUNOs).

f) To monitor the risk related to conservative attitudes of CSO partners on women's rights and women's empowerment, we recommend to add it to the risk register and identify mitigative measures to address potential consequences of their attitudes (RCO, RUNOs).

g) Conduct a participatory capacity assessment with all CSO partners to integrate tailored capacity strengthening interventions in the design of Phase 2 (RCO, RUNOs).

h) During the development of the sustainability plan, it is recommended to ensure strong ownership of local actors (national CSOs and the government). To build this ownership, we propose to give members from civil society and the government a leading role in the facilitation of the development of the plan. They should also contribute to reviewing the document. The actions of the sustainability plan should be integrated in the programme work plan and need to be fully funded by the Spotlight Initiative or other confirmed funding sources (RCO).

i) Phase 2 should increase investments in capacity strengthening for national CSOs and women's organisations to ensure that these organisations have the capacity to manage activities without international expertise (RCO, RUNOs).

j) Meet with responsible entities of the new USAID-funded GBV programme and their partners with the objective to explore opportunities for linkages and synergies (RCO).

F. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Spotlight programme documents (essential documents)	Availability
Country Programming document as approved by OSC	yes
Country Budget as approved by the OSC (may also include revised budget)	yes
Spotlight Country Programme Snapshot	yes
Inception report	yes
Annual report 2020	yes
Annex A Country Report (included in the Annual Report)	yes
Annex B Country Report (risk management)	yes
Annex C CSO engagement report	yes
Annex D Promising or good practices reporting	yes
Annex E Annual workplan 2020	yes
Ad hoc (2nd Tranche) report (may also include provisional narrative report – 2 pager)	yes
Spotlight Initiative financial information on the MPTF Gateway	yes
Knowledge management workplan	yes
National CSO Reference Group workplan	no
CSO Reference Group Bios	no
Communication workplan	yes
Stories directly from the Calendar	yes
Other documents	
Results on the implementation of the Spotlight Initiative annual workplan for 2020 and the programme interim results for 2021	
Spotlight Initiative Kyrgyzstan: The process of elaboration of pathways of change and unpacking of ToCs, outcomes, outputs and indicators. Concept Note. Draft. September 2020	
Esengul, C. Spotlight Initiative Country Program in the Kyrgyz Republic. Analytical Report on Expectations Mapping (Draft as of September 6, 2021)	
Notes from Pillar 1 PoC discussions	
Notes from Pillar 2 PoC discussions	
Notes from Pillar 3 PoC discussions	
Notes from Pillar 4 PoC discussions	
Notes from Pillar 5 PoC discussions	
Notes from Pillar 6 PoC discussions	
Pathways of Change all pillars Feb 2021	
Table F – Programme management risk matrix	
Minutes of the meeting of the CS-NRG, MAY 28, 2021	
Report on the meeting of the CS-NRG members, SEPTEMBER 2nd, 2021 BISHKEK	
Risks mitigation strategy and action plan, developed based on findings of Expectations Mapping exercise	
Risk management report. Reporting Period: -1 January 2020– 31 December 2020	
NOTES: Spotlight Technical Team Meeting, September 14, 2021; November 4, 2021	
The list of CSNRG members with contact details	
Spotlight IPs list with contacts	
BoS - lists of participants, lists of beneficiaries	

Gender Assessment of Justice and Law enforcement institutions. Report on Gender Audit.
Ethnographic review report. (Mapping of social norms)
Final report on mapping of missing civil society groups working to eradicate VAWG in Naryn, Osh and Chui oblasts
Judicial practice monitoring report on the application of article 178 (prevention of child marriage) of the criminal code of the Kyrgyz Republic
10 Report on Mapping of Basic Service Providers for Women and Girls –survivors of Domestic Violence
Results of the study "Men and Gender Equality (IMAGES)" in 12 pilot municipalities and villages of Chui, Osh and Naryn oblasts
Traditionalist Mapping Report Brief (based on the report of the NGO "Aigine")
The process of elaboration of pathways of change and unpacking of ToCs, outcomes, outputs and indicators. Concept note. Draft as of Sep 8th, 2020
Report on the results of the pre-testing and post-testing on the GALS methodology
Report on the results of the final conference under the UNDP component "Implementation of the new concept of the Solidarity Bus to eradicate violence against women and girls, including its monitoring and evaluation"

ANNEX 2: LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Stakeholder group	Institution / organisation	Name	Position
Government partners - national level	Parliament	Aida Kasymalieva	MP, Deputy Speaker
	Ministry of Education and Science of the KR	Gulshan Abdyldaeva	Head of dept.
	NSC	Zhyldyz Rahmanova	Head of dept.
	Ministry of labor, socail provision and migration (former MLSD, now MLSPM)	Egemnazarova Jazgul	Specialist
	Ministry of Justice	Asel Abakirova	specialist
	Ministry of Internal affairs	Elmira Isakova	Deputy head of international cooperation department
	Ministry of labor, socail provision and migration (former MLSD, now MLSPM)	Gulmira Omoeva	Head of dept.
Government partners, subnational level	Kara-Suu rayon state administration	Nurlan Kochkorbaev	Head of social dept.
	Osh city police	Zamir Baltabaev,	Juvenile officer
	local council, Zhany Pahta ayil okmoty	Gulmairam Egemberdieva	member of council, social pedagogy
	Zhany Pahta, police	Zhyrgalbek Niyazaliev	Juvenile Police Officer
European Delegation	EUD in Bishkek (formerly)	Nicola Scaramuzzo	Ex Acting Head of Cooperation Section
	EUD in Bishkek	Stylianos Dendrinos	Macro-economist/ Public Finance Management Programme Officer
UN	UN RCO	M. Ozonnia Ojielo	United Nations Resident Coordinator
	UN RCO	Samara Papieva	Programme Coordinator
	UN RCO	Lira Duishebaeva	Coherence Specialist
	UN RCO	Rakiia Abdurasulova	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
	UN RCO	Aiperi Alymbekova	Communication Specialist
	Technical team, UN Women	Aijarkyn Kozhobekova	Pillar leads (6)
	Technical team, UN Women	Anara Aitkurmanova	
	Technical team, UNDP	Nurai Mamytova	Pillar lead (1, 2)
	Technical team, UNICEF	Zhypargul Turmamatova	Pillar lead (3)
	Technical team, UNODC	Zhypar Rakisheva	
	Technical team, UNODC	Olga Tkachenko	
	Technical team, UNFPA	Nazira Satyvaldiyeva	Pillar lead (4)
	Technical team, UNFPA	Kanykei Ergeshova	Pillar lead (5)
	IOM, associated agency, focal point	Jyldyz Ahmetova	

Stakeholder group	Institution / organisation	Name	
IPs - CSOs	Grazhdanskiy Soyuz Public Fund	Anna Zubenko	
	SE Ukuk	Gulnara Sheishekeeva	
	Association of Crisis Centers	Tolkun Tulekova	
	PF Mutakalim	Jamal Frontbek kyzy	

	Center of Research for Democratic Processes	Larisa Ilibesova, Evgenia Karpovich
	Open Line	Munara Beknazarova
	Child Rights Defender's League	Nazgul Turdubekova
	Bishkek Feminist Initiatives	Janna Araeva
	Europlus LLC	Alieva G.M.
	Women's Support Center	Nargiza Amanbaeva
	Dia ordo	Meri Bekeshova
	Management Academy under the President	Nurjan Dujsho kyzy
	Social Technologies Agency	Zulfia Kochorbaeva
	ECD	Gulmira Rasulova
	HuizU	Ismailova Rahima, Sania
	DIA	Avaskan Ormonova
	DIA, shelter, psychologists	2 women
	DIA, lawyer, advocate	Meerim

Stakeholder group	Name	
CSNRG members	Kyal Tilebalieva	
	Gulmira Rasulova	
	Munara Beknazarova	
	Baktygul Bosgorpoeva	
	Asel Dunganaeva	
	Gulmira Kazakunova	
	Muhayo Abduraupova	

Stakeholder group	Institution / organisation	Name
Beneficiaries	Survivors of DV, pro-bono legal aid \ temporary shelter in Osh beneficiaries, Osh city	2 women
	School girls, GALS trained girls, Kara-Suu	9 girls
	Parents of the pilot school, Kara-Suu	5 women, 1 men
	Kyrgyz Indigo, NGO	Adilet Alimkulov
	(KPNS) Domestic Violence Prevention Committee' members, Kara-Suu city – 8 participants	Mavlyuda Rasulova, social pedagogy Orozmatova Venera, member of city council, speaker Dinara Tolubaeva, Juvenile Officer Dzhumalieva Rayan, head of social dept, Mayors Office Mamasaly aka – head of aksakals court Mahmud aka – director of OPC Kalbaeva Buajar, director of pilot school Azimov Shakir – member of parents council at pilot school
	Women council's leaders and court of Aksakals head, Kara-Suu rayon (3 villages)	Kakykova Aliman, Kurshab Lolahan, Nariman Ahmadaliev Artykaly, Nariman Dilfusa Atabaeva, Kara Suu
	Social pedagogists from 2 schools – Osh province and Chuy province	3 women

ANNEX 4: STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Response to the question: "On a scale from 1 to 3, to what extent were the following stakeholders involved in the design, monitoring and implementation of the programme". The figure below uses average values.