

ENHANCING GENDER EQUALITY AND MAINSTREAMING IN AFGHANISTAN (EGEMA) PROJECT QUARTER THREE PROGRESS REPORT (Jan – December 2024)



Figure 1 Women MSMEs at EXPO (Women Market) in UNDP, as part of anti GBV campaign; 05 December 2024

DONOR LOGOS



PROJECT INFORMATION									
ATLAS Award and Output IDs: Quantum ID	<i>Project ID: 00091070</i> <i>Outputs: 00096511</i>								
Duration:	01 January - 31 December in 2024								
UNSDCF (TEF) Outcome:	<i>UNSFA Outcome:</i> <i>SP OUTCOME 1 -</i> <i>Structural transformation accelerated, particularly green, inclusive, and digital transitions.</i>								
Transitional Country Programme Strategy (TCPS) Outcome and Outputs:	<i>Output 1.3. Essential physical infrastructure constructed, rehabilitated, repaired, and maintained to ensure access to services and livelihoods.</i> <i>Output 3.4 Gender Equality and Women's Rights promoted.</i>								
Total Project Budget:	\$ 762,554								
Annual Budget:	\$ 762,554 <table border="1"> <tr> <th>Donor</th><th>Annual Budget USA</th></tr> <tr> <td>TRAC 1</td><td>\$591,260</td></tr> <tr> <td>TRAC 2</td><td>124000</td></tr> <tr> <td>EU</td><td>\$ 47,294</td></tr> </table>	Donor	Annual Budget USA	TRAC 1	\$591,260	TRAC 2	124000	EU	\$ 47,294
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TRAC 1	\$591,260								
TRAC 2	124000								
EU	\$ 47,294								
Annual Expenditure	726,564.85								
Cumulative Expenditure	<i>This is expenditure against the total project budget</i>								
Donors:	European Union UNDP TRAC 01 UNDP Trac 02								
Project Locations:	<i>Balkh</i> <i>Jalalabad</i> <i>Bamiyan</i> <i>Kabul</i> <i>Hirat</i> <i>Kandahar</i> <i>Ghazni</i> <i>Kunduz</i>								
Implementing Partner:	UNDP								
Responsible Parties:	<i>Afghan Youth Service Organization - AYSO</i>								
Project Manager:	<i>Nilofar Sultani, Project Manager and Gender specialist</i> <i>Email address: nilofar.sultani@undp.org</i>								

ACRONYMS

EGEMA	Enhancing Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in Afghanistan
DfA	De Facto Authorities
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HP	Harmful Practice
RUNOS	Recipient UN Organizations
SI	Spotlight Initiatives
SHSEA	Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
WRA	Women's Rights Advocate
CDC	Community Development Council
CPD	Country Program Document
CPRF	Country Program Result Framework
IWD	International Women's Day
ARGO	Afghanistan Rehabilitation and Growth Organization
FGO	Focus Group Discussion
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
WRA	Women's Rights Advocates
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
AWP	Annual Work Plan
KII	Key Information Interviews
WHO	World Health Organization
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Missions in Afghanistan
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
IDI	In-Depth Interviews
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
CBARD	Community-Based Agriculture and Rural Development
NFM	Monitoring Support to Novel Financing for Sustaining Essential Service Delivery Project
LITTACA	Livelihoods Promotion in the Tajik-Afghan Cross-border Area
AYSO	Afghan Youth Service Organization
WPS	Women Peace and Security Team

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Enhancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (EGEMA)** project, categorized as a **GEN 3 initiative**, serves as a flagship initiative of UNDP Afghanistan, with the primary objective of fostering **gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE)**. In 2024, the project achieved remarkable progress in multiple domains, including education, professional development, advocacy, and economic empowerment.

Since 2019, EGEMA has supported 155 women in tertiary education, with 90 students studying in Kazakhstan during the program and the remaining 65 students studying in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. As of 2024, 43 students continue their education in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, while 12 students await visa approvals in Afghanistan. Among the program's graduates, one secured an **International UN Volunteer (IUNV) position in Iran**, and another obtained a **National UNV (NUNV) role in Bamyan**, signifying the program's success in enhancing professional opportunities for Afghan women.

In 2024, UNDP Afghanistan established a significant two-year partnership with the European Union through the "We-Engage" initiative, valued at **\$1.95 million**. This initiative empowers Afghan women who have completed tertiary education in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. By providing them with targeted skills development, mentoring, coaching, and assignments as International and National UN Volunteers, the initiative offers these women a pathway to develop their professional skills, gain hands-on work experience, and enhance their long-term employment prospects. Funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP Afghanistan in collaboration with the UN Volunteers (UNV) Programme, this initiative aligns with the overarching goals of economic and professional empowerment for Afghan women.

The year also saw significant achievements in advocacy and awareness campaigns. EGEMA organized three large-scale events: the **International Women's Day (March 8)** celebration, the **International Youth Day (IYD)**, and an **anti-GBV campaign**. The International Women's Day celebration featured an art exhibition titled "Unveiling Voices," held in partnership with the Asia Green Hut Organization (AGHO), a women-led NGO. The exhibition showcased the artwork of 25 Afghan women artists who highlighted the challenges faced by women in Afghanistan. The Anti-GBV campaign included a Women's Market Expo held inside the UN compound, where 49 women-led MSMEs from 16 provinces displayed their products, ranging from handicrafts to agricultural goods, and established connections with buyers and exporters. These initiatives engaged over 680 individuals and highlighted the importance of gender equality, women's safety, and sustainable economic empowerment.

This quarter, EGEMA supported 14 women through the UNDP Afghanistan Young Women Professional Program, equipping them with valuable experience and job opportunities as National Youth Volunteers (NUNVs). Additionally, three new NUNVs joined UNDP Afghanistan in administrative roles, contributing to gender parity, which now stands at 24% within the Country Office.

To build capacity and foster partnerships, EGEMA collaborated with the Afghan Youth Services Organization (AYSO) to conduct systematic training sessions on **gender mainstreaming** for 50 women-focused NGOs. These sessions, held in Kabul, Herat, Mazar, and Kandahar, benefited over 100

participants by equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to engage in meaningful policy dialogues and strengthen their collaboration with other organizations. Additionally, 40 Afghan women entrepreneurs in Bamyan received **cash grants** to enhance their businesses. Professional development initiatives were another area of focus.

The project also sponsored 30 booths for female entrepreneurs at the **Ganjina Afghanistan Exhibition** in Bamyan, where women showcased their products, including handicrafts, dairy products, honey, and dried fruits, to a broad audience of buyers and traders.

EGEMA further demonstrated its commitment to organizational development by conducting a **three-day workshop** in December 2024 for 36 National UN Volunteers (NUNVs), including 29 women and 7 men, focusing on leadership, strategic thinking, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and data management. This training, informed by a Training Needs Assessment conducted in October 2024, addressed critical skill gaps and equip participants with essential tools for effective program delivery. To ensure compliance with international standards, EGEMA developed the **Country Office Gender Equality Strategy (GES)** and conducted four **Gender and PSEA training sessions**, engaging 123 participants (76 men and 43 women) from UNDP staff and responsible parties. Additionally, the project disseminated PSEA awareness posters in Dari, Pashto, and English, outlining key standards and reporting procedures to combat sexual exploitation and abuse.

As part of its efforts to measure impact and ensure accountability, EGEMA initiated a **final project evaluation**, engaging both international and national consultants. This evaluation aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of the project's outcomes, with the final report scheduled for completion in January 2025. Collectively, these accomplishments underscore EGEMA's dedication to advancing gender equality and empowering Afghan women as part of a new phase of EGEMA for the year 2025. The project has established a strong foundation for sustainable development and meaningful change in Afghanistan by fostering education, professional growth, economic opportunities, and institutional capacity

The project faced challenges such as rigid societal norms, restrictions by de facto authorities, logistical difficulties in training and cash disbursement, and ensuring women's participation in events across provinces. Innovative approaches, including online training, staggered sessions, and support for Mahram costs, helped overcome these barriers. Moving forward, the focus will be on strengthening partnerships, expanding safe spaces for women's engagement, and leveraging agreements like the EU-Afghanistan CO initiative to create sustainable employment opportunities for women graduates. The total expenditure for this fiscal year was about USD 726,564.85.

II. SITUATION BACKGROUND

Following the and precipitated by the regime change in 2021, the Afghan economy is grappling with a protracted decline caused by the cessation of international budget support, weakening demand in non-agricultural sectors, climatic shocks, exodus of skilled labor, high trade, and fiscal deficits. Over 80 percent of Afghans do not have the purchasing power to consume food worth more than the

national poverty line of AFN 2,268 (USD 29) per person per month. The Enhancing Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in Afghanistan (EGEMA)-2 Project is a significant initiative of UNDP Afghanistan that aims to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through various means such as advocacy, capacity building, and strategic and innovative support. The project aims to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment because the gender situation in Afghanistan is worse in almost all sectors and in all stages in the Afghan socio-economic context, which starts from women's rights to speak, gather, work, study, and travel. Patterns of Discrimination Targeted Towards Afghan Women by De Facto Authority (DfA) issuing decrees imposed on women and the recent one which is The PVPV law and its implementation, which is gender apartheid.

How the project made positive changes to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE):

- The project was crucial in promoting gender equality and empowering women by facilitating their higher education in Central Asian countries like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Through robust south-south cooperation, it served as a vital link between Afghan women and host universities, equipping them with essential information, guiding them through the selection process, and effectively addressing any challenges within the project's scope. Twenty-five students were selected in Kyrgyzstan for phase 2. Of these, 14 attended physical classes, and 7 students who attended online classes graduated last year. Four bachelor students are still studying in Kyrgyzstan and will graduate in March 2027. In Uzbekistan, 30 students were selected for phase 2. Only 16 students are physically present and will graduate in December 2024, while 12 are waiting for their visas. The other 2 students studied online and will graduate in December 2024. In Kazakhstan, 23 students are physically present and continuing their studies. Others graduated in the previous years. Importantly, the project went beyond academic support. It also played a significant role in helping students secure employment opportunities upon their return, ensuring a sustainable impact on their lives and the community. For example, one of the returnee students was hired as a UNV specialist in CHR, and another student got an IUNV position in Iran CO and is now working there.
- As part of the New EU agreement for KKKU students a new initiative was signed between UNDP and EU to empower Afghan women supported under the EU-funded KKKU Project by providing one-year International and National UN Volunteer (IUNV and NUNV) assignments. Targeting graduates from higher education institutions in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, the program enhances skills, fosters work experience and promotes long-term employment across sectors such as gender equality, healthcare, engineering, and IT. Amid Afghanistan's socio-economic crisis and restrictive policies limiting women's opportunities, the project offers mentorship, training, and career development support. Aiming to place 30 Afghan women in volunteer roles and achieve a 70% post-assignment employment rate, WE ENGAGE focuses on recruitment, visa facilitation, skill-building, mentoring, and regular monitoring to ensure sustainable outcomes.
- During this quarter, EGEMA supported 14 women through the UNDP Afghanistan Young Women Professional Program, providing them valuable experience and job opportunities as National Youth Volunteers (NUNVs). Three new NUNVs joined UNDP Afghanistan in various

administrative roles, contributing to increased gender parity within the Country Office, which currently stands at 24%. The Country Office is committed to maintaining and improving this parity in the coming year. To enhance the capacity of NUNVs, EGEMA conducted training courses on Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation (M&E) and several other capacity-building sessions.

- This year marked significant progress in advancing gender equality through impactful advocacy and awareness campaigns organized by EGEMA. The International Women's Day celebration, International Youth Day, and an Anti-GBV Campaign. The International Women's Day event on 08 March 2024, in partnership with the Asia Green Hut Organization (AGHO), showcased the resilience and creativity of Afghan women through the "Unveiling Voices" art exhibition, featuring works from 25 Afghan women artists that shed light on the challenges they face. The International Youth Day celebration will be held on 12 August 2024 in the UNDP Country Office and seven regional offices. The event aimed to promote awareness of UNDP's impactful initiatives for women, girls, and youth empowerment while providing a platform for young voices to be heard.

The Anti-GBV Campaign (26 Nov- 10 Dec) included a Women's Market Expo within the UN compound, where 49 women-led MSMEs from 16 provinces displayed various products, fostering connections with buyers and exporters. Engaging over 680 participants, these initiatives not only celebrated the potential of Afghan women but also underscored the critical importance of gender equality, women's safety, and sustainable economic empowerment. These events demonstrated EGEMA's commitment to driving positive change and empowering women across Afghanistan.

- The UNDP EGEMA project, in collaboration with the Afghan Youth Services Organization (AYSO), achieved a significant milestone in advancing gender equality by conducting advocacy events and capacity-building sessions with women-focused NGOs and CSOs. These efforts empowered over 100 women from 50 women-focused organizations across Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif with gender mainstreaming knowledge and skills. This initiative strengthened the capacity of women-led organizations and amplified their role in promoting gender equality and addressing critical issues affecting women in their communities.
- EGEMA project supported the cost of 30 booths for 30 entrepreneurs to participate in the Ganjina Afghanistan Exhibition, held in Bamyan province in coordination with the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce.
- UNDP Afghanistan also conducted several batches of training on gender dynamics and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) for some UN staff and partners) project representatives.
- As part of ongoing efforts to promote Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and ensure compliance with international standards, the UNDP Country Office has printed PSEA posters in Dari, Pashtu, and English.

In summary, all interventions were designed for and by women. Despite challenges posed by Afghanistan's lack of an enabling environment, the project, with the support of its partners, managed to overcome obstacles and find solutions, including repurposing activities to meet evolving needs.

III. PROGRESS towards RESULTS

3.1 Contribution to Transitional Country Programme Strategy (TCPS) Results

TCPS Outcome 1: Outcome 1. By the end of 2025, more people in Afghanistan, particularly the most marginalized, can equitably access essential services that meet minimum quality standards & 1.2.1 Number of people reached with information and psychosocial support, child protection, and sexual exploitation and abuse response services with UN support [UNSFSA Indicator 1.5.1 and 1.5.3]

output indicator: 1.3.3 Number of people benefitting from (accessing) education services with UNDP support [UNSFSA Indicator 1.2.1]

TCPS Outcome 2: By the end of 2025, more people in Afghanistan will benefit from an increasingly stable, inclusive, and employment-rich economy, with greater equality of economic opportunities and more resilient livelihoods, increased food production, and improved natural resources management.

TCPS Outcome 3: By the end of 2025, more people in Afghanistan can participate in an increasingly socially cohesive, gender equal, and inclusive society, where the rule of law and human rights are progressively upheld, and more people can fully, equally, and safely participate in governance and decision-making & Output Indicator 3.4.1 Number of women who are aware of their rights on gender equality and women's rights through awareness programmes with UNDP support.

Output Indicator 3.4.2 Number of partnerships with women-led organizations, businesses and other bodies and networks that advance women's leadership and participation and gender equality.

Summary of achievement based on CP Outcome targets

CP Outcome Indicator	CPD Target (202 24)	Achieved Value to date (202 24)	Summary achievement (provide gender disaggregation)	Status [Delayed, Ongoing, Completed]
Indicator 1			Black font, un-bolded	Blue font, un-bolded
Indicator 2			Black font, un-bolded	Blue font, un-bolded
Overall status				Blue font, bolded

Output Level Results:

UNDP TCPS 2024-2025 Outcome:	Output Statement	Outcome Indicators	Annual Targets (2024) as per AWP	Annual Achievements	Status [Delayed, Ongoing, Completed]
Outcome 1. By the end of 2025, more people in Afghanistan, particularly the most marginalized, can equitably access essential services that meet minimum quality standards	Output 1.2. Relevant providers and stakeholders have strengthened capacities to increase access to and improve the provision of preventive, mitigating, and responsive protection services —to the most vulnerable.	Output Indicator 1.2.1 Number of people reached with information and psychosocial support, child protection, and sexual exploitation and abuse response services with UN support [UNSFA Indicator 1.5.1 and 1.5.3]	100 Personal (UNDP and RPs)	123 Personals(43 female and 76 male)	Completed In Q4 there was another event “The Gender and Human right day” which was conducted as part of training to RPs and staff. There were participants(55 male and 30 female) from RPs of UNDP and UNDP staff.

	Output 1.3. Essential physical infrastructure constructed, rehabilitated, repaired, and maintained to ensure access to services and livelihoods. achievements. This is also a long-term intervention.	Output Indicator 1.3.3 Number of people benefitting from (accessing) education services with UNDP support [UNSFA Indicator 1.2.1]	100 students	100 completed	Completed
Outcome 3: By the end of 2025, more people in Afghanistan can participate in an increasingly socially cohesive, gender equal, and inclusive society, where the rule of law and human rights are progressively upheld, and more people can fully, equally, and safely participate in governance and decision-making.	Output 3.4 Gender Equality and Women's Rights promoted.	Output Indicator 3.4.1 Number of women who are aware of their rights on gender equality and women's rights through awareness programmes with UNDP support.	NA	680 individuals (55% women) gained awareness of UNDP's initiatives for empowering women, girls, and youth through platforms like International Women's Day, International Youth Day, and the Anti-GBV campaign in different regions of Afghanistan.	Completed

	Output 3.4 Gender Equality and Women's Rights promoted	Output Indicator 3.4.2 Number of partnership s with women-led organization s, businesses and other bodies and networks that advance women's leadership and participatio n and gender equality.	50 Women led- women focused NGOs/ CSOs	EGEMA with support of the RP (AYSO) completed the trainings for 100 Plus women from 50 Women focused NGOs in four provinces : Kabul , Herat , Kandahar and Mazar sharif. Additionally , The cash grant given for 40 women entrepreneurs in CHR -Bamyan.	Completed

EGEMA project has contributed to three outcomes of the traditional country programme (TCPS 2024-2025):

- The EGEMA project significantly contributed to **TCPS outcome one** by facilitating the graduation of 49 Afghan women from various higher education programs, encompassing Bachelor, Master, and Technical, Vocational, Education, and Training (TVET) programmes during Phase one and one student will be graduated March 2025. In Phase Two, 51 students completed their studies. Of these graduates, 16 returned to Afghanistan, with 5 securing employment at UNDP Afghanistan and 1 student working with other UN agencies. Meanwhile, 1 student has been hired as a NUNV in the CHR, and the others have hired as IUNV in UNDP Iran. While 10 are actively seeking job opportunities. The remaining students have pursued further studies in Europe and America, availing scholarships, or have embarked on skilled migrations.

3.2 Progress towards Project Outputs

Project Outputs	Output Indicator	Annual Target (2024)	Quarter Value Achieved (2024)	Status: [Completed, Ongoing, Delayed, To be initiated, Not implemented]
Output 2: (Output ID: 00096511) Nationally Educated Gender Experts for advocacy and employment in the private sector/civil society organizations to promote the advancement of women and gender equality at national and sub-national levels are available. Output Gender Marker -3	2.3.1) # of women benefitting from (accessing) education services with UNDP support through strategic partnership.	2.3.) 100	2.3.) 100	Completed
	2.8.1) Number of staff/personnel are trained on Gender awareness and the preventions of sexual exploitation and abuse from UNDP and Responsible Parties of UNDP.	2.8.1) 100	2.8.1) 123 (43 Female, 76 Male)	Completed: There were many attendees in the training from RPs as the were encourage to know about the topic on gender and Human right
	2.9.1a) Number of women who are aware of their rights on gender equality and women's rights through awareness programmes on gender equality and GBV prevention and response.	2.9.1) 500	2.9.1a) 399 in Q2 and 232 in Q3	In progress: Plans are undertaken to conduct an exhibition for anti-GBV (16 days of activism)
	2.9.1.b) Number of women-led organizations NGOs supported to enhanced their capacity on gender mainstreaming and GBV risk mitigations skills.	2.9.1) 100	2.9.1) 100 plus women from 50 women focused NGOs	Completed
	2.9.2) Number of Afghan Women Have Been Supported under Young Professional Programme as NUNVs.	2.9.2) 15	2.9.2) 13	Completed

Activity 2.3 UNDP Kazakhstan support for Afghan women's economic empowerment

This activity was led by UNDP Kazakhstan, supported by UNDP CO in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

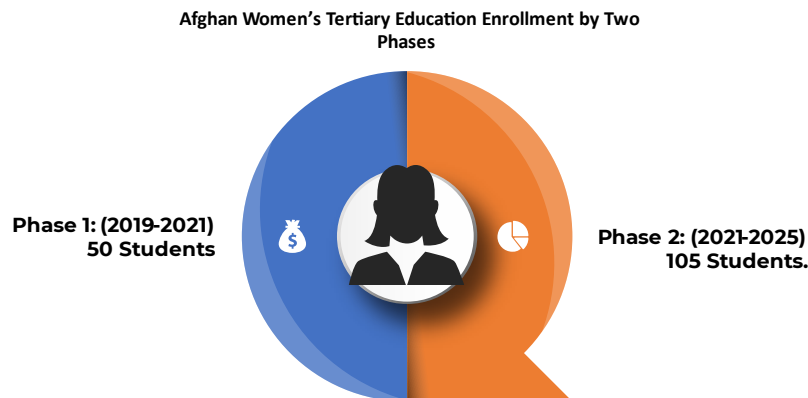
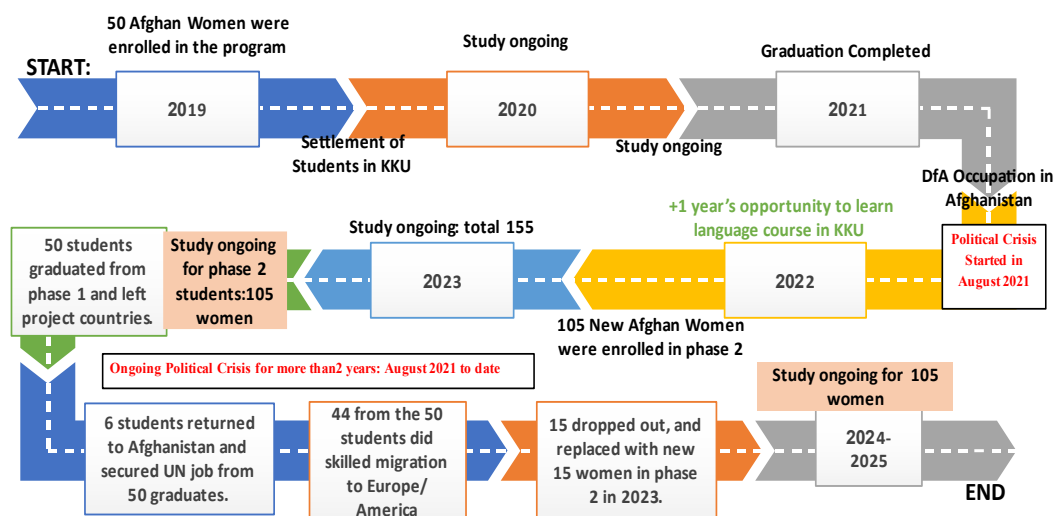


Figure 2- Afghan Women's Economic Empowerment Project

From 2019 to date, 155 students have been enrolled in two phases to pursue tertiary education, including TVET programs at the universities in KUU, supported by the EU. In Phase one 48 students have graduated from host universities two students who study TVET Finance will graduate next year February 2025. Most of the graduated students migrated to Europe, America, and Canada to further study. From Phase two, 52 students graduated from TVET and master's degree. Among these students, 22 students went to Spain for study into two parts. First part graduated last year and the second part they will graduate soon. The remaining students got another scholarship in Kazakhstan to achieve their 2nd master's degree. 16 BA and 5 TVET students are to graduate in 2025 and 2026 from Kazakhstan, 4 BA students are to graduate in 2027 from Kyrgyzstan, 18 TVET students were graduate in December 2024, and 12 students are still waiting for their visas of Uzbekistan. Eighteen students came back to Afghanistan, and 5 students have been working with UNDP in Afghanistan. One student has been hired at CHR as a Business Development Specialist. One of these students was hired as NOB staff at UNIDO. The other student got IUNV at UNDP Iran. Among the total, 100 Afghan women completed their higher education, 70 from Kazakhstan, 21 from Kyrgyzstan. and 9 from Uzbekistan from phase one, from phase two 18 students were graduated in December 2024 All of them have successfully managed improved livelihoods and job opportunities. The figure below presents Afghan Women's Journey to Pursue Higher Education.

Tertiary Education Support for Afghan Women in KKU supported by EU



Activity Result 2.8.1: Capacity building of staff and partners on Gender awareness, SHSEA and economic empowerment:

Training for the personnel of UNDP and Responsible Parties of UNDP to increase awareness of gender concepts and prevent SEAH:

UNDP CO conducted a series of “The Gender and PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) training for responsible parties and UNDP Staff aimed to enhance awareness and understanding of gender dynamics and promote the implementation of policies and practices to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse training” within our organization. In this year, a total of 123 personnel (43 female and 76 male), both from UNDP and RPs, receive these training

The gender mainstreaming section of the training ensures that programming and decision-making consider individuals' differing needs, priorities, and experiences based on their gender. It aims to address gender inequalities by recognizing and addressing power imbalances and discrimination. In Q4 as part of anti GBV plan of CO , a capacity building session conducted on Human Right, Gender and PSEA for 30 female and 55 male of UNDP and RPs on 10th of December which increased the target of previously 100 staff to 100 Pluses by receiving the training on Human right , Gender and PSEA.



Figure 2 Gender and PSEA Awareness session for UNDP and RPs, Qurban Ali Conference room May 2024, Kabul UNDP office



Figure 3 Gender and PSEA training on Human Rights Day 9th of December, as part of Anti GVB campaign- Qurban Ali conference room UNDP Afghanistan

As part of ongoing efforts to promote Protection from sexual exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and ensure compliance with international standards, the UNDP Country Office has printed PSEA posters in Dari, Pashtu, and English. These posters clearly define the six PSEA standards and outline the procedures for reporting misconduct cases.

The posters have been installed at the entrance gates and inside different Units of all UNDP offices, including regional offices, ensuring that staff and visitors are informed about the organization's commitment to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. This initiative contributes to raising awareness and fostering a culture of accountability and transparency throughout the UNDP offices in the country.



Figure 4PSEA stand banner in front of Qurban Ali Conference room UNDP- CO-Kabul



Figure 5PSEA Posters in three languages,Dari, Pashtu, and English in front of the main entrance gate UNDP Office- Kabul

Activity Result 2.8.2: Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan for Afghanistan UNDP CO developed

The gender consultant for the development of the Gender Strategy and action plan for implementation:

A CO Gender Strategy was finalized by the Women Peace and Security team in UNDP during this year and launched on 15 December 2024. EGEMA hired an international consultant to draft the strategy; however, only a few sections from the draft written by the International consultant were used for the final Strategy for Afghanistan CO.

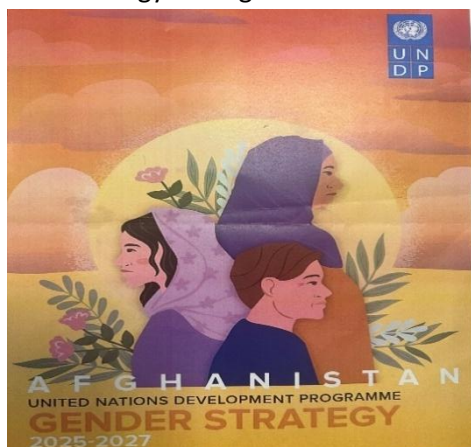


Figure 6The Cover page of Gender Strategy 2025- 2027

2.9.1.b) Number of women-led organizations NGOs supported to enhanced their capacity on gender mainstreaming and GBV risk mitigations skills.

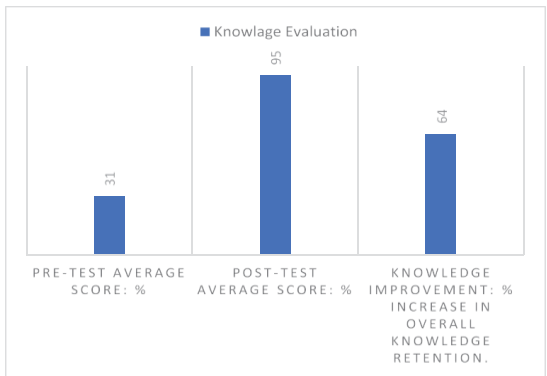
Gender mainstreaming capacity building for women-led NGOs/CSOs

During this quarter, UNDP's EGEMA- RP, Afghan Youth Services Organization (AYSO), conducted a pivotal five-day training in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, and Mazar Sharif in 2024 to empower women leaders in Afghanistan. The training brought together 100 women from 50 women-focused NGOs, providing them with essential knowledge and skills in gender equality, project management, and organizational sustainability. This initiative is part of the EGEMA project, which focuses on strengthening the capacity of Afghan civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs to foster greater gender inclusivity and improve their operational effectiveness. By equipping these women leaders with practical tools and strategies, EGEM contributes to the sustainable development of local organizations and the broader empowerment of women in the region and the community.



Figure 7Capacity Building Training of Women Focused NGOs in Herat Province, Oct 2024

The training provided remarkable outcomes in enhancing the participants' knowledge and skills. Post-training follow-ups showed a 62 percent increase in knowledge among all participants from four provinces, which helps them thrive in their respective fields by applying gender equality tools and working with women in the communities.



Cash grant support to women entrepreneurs for business development:

As part of its efforts to support Gender Equality (GE) and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE), the EGEMA project, with the support of AYSO, which is a woman-focused NGO, and RP of UNDP, provided cash grants to 40 Afghan women entrepreneurs in Bamyan province, Central Highland region. These women, who face significant challenges, including limited market access, low technical skills, and difficulty scaling their businesses, used the grants to improve their existing operations, invest in new ventures, and enhance their products or services. This financial aid resulted in increased revenue, job creation, and greater long-term sustainability for their businesses, significantly contributing to women's economic empowerment in the region.



Figure 8 Introductory meeting with some women entrepreneurs in Bamyan for Cash grant 26 August 2024

Activity Result 2.9: Advocacy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, preventing gender-based violence:

Young Women Profession Programme NUNVs- training cost and other logistic support:

This initiative has supported 14 Afghan women, enabling them to gain practical work experience at UNDP across various programme and operational units, including field offices. Additionally, 14 UNVs have been employed as part of the "Young Women Professional Programme," which aims to enhance their professional skills. The project primarily focuses on providing management support. This initiative has a direct impact on enhancing women's human and economic agency.

This year, NUNVs joined UNDP Afghanistan in different capacities, such as:

1. Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant at LITACA Project
2. M and E Associate at PQA unit
3. Administration Assistant at Procurement unit
4. Administration Assistant at Admin unit
5. Administration Assistant at Global Fund

2.8.1.d) Capacity building of Afghan women through AWER (Afghan Women Economic Resilience) Digital Event

Capacity Building Training for UNVs in UNDP CO

As part of the EGEMA project's 2024 Annual Work Plan, a three-day capacity-building training was conducted for National UN Volunteers (NUNVs) in collaboration with the UNV office in Kabul and with the participation of UNVs from Bamyan and Mazar-e-Sharif. The training was designed based on a comprehensive Training Needs Assessment (TNA), which identified Leadership and Management with Strategic Thinking skills, Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), and Data Visualization as critical areas for development.

The tailored training program aimed to equip UN Volunteers with foundational knowledge and tools aligned with international standards and UN best practices. 36 participants (29 female and 7 male) completed the training, enhancing their capacity to apply these skills effectively in their daily work, contributing to greater efficiency and impact in their roles.



Figure 9 Final Day of Management and M&E training Kabul Star Hotel, 05 December 2024 - Kabul Afghanistan



Figure 10 A national UNV is presenting in the UNVs training on 04 December 2024, Kabul Star hotel

2.9.1a) Number of women who are aware of their rights on gender equality and women's rights through awareness programmes on gender equality and GBV prevention and response.

International Women's Day Celebration:

In March 2024, the project took a bold step to support women's participation in activities by supporting AGHO (Asia Green Hut Organization), a women-led organization in Afghanistan, to conduct an art exhibition in UNOCA for two days during International Women's Month (March 2024). 25 female artists exhibited their art. This showcase enabled women artists to showcase their work with the message of "unveiling voices" and was organized to celebrate International Women's Day (IWD). The project aimed to raise awareness about gender issues and women's rights by supporting UNDP CO and regional offices in conducting and celebrating International Women's Day (IWD) in their respective areas. Different approaches were taken in each region, such as in ER, where 32 female colleagues participated; in NR, where 117 females and 9 males participated; and in CO, where 9 females and 7 males from AGHO participated, along with 200 males and 80 females from UNDP staff. In CHR, only 50 females participated, and in CR, there were 111 females with no male participants. The total attendees for IWD in regional offices, including AGHO staff, were 65% female and 35% male.

International Youth Day celebrated in Afghanistan CO:

On 12 August 2024, as part of the EGEMA project, the UNDP Afghanistan Country Office (CO), along with seven regional offices, celebrated International Youth Day (IYD) under the theme "From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development." The event, held at the UNDP-UNOCA Compound from 2:00 to 4:00 PM, aimed to raise awareness about UNDP's impactful initiatives in empowering women, girls, and youth while providing a platform for young voices to be heard. Youth participants actively engaged in discussions and leadership activities led by Qurban Ali and in the open space before the CO office, symbolizing unity and support for youth as key agents of change.

The event was synchronized with local celebrations hosted by seven regional UNDP offices (CHR, NR, NER, CR, SR, ER, and WR), ensuring a cohesive and wide-reaching celebration. The objectives were to promote awareness of UNDP's contributions to youth and women's empowerment, empower youth to express their ideas and concerns and demonstrate unity in supporting play in shaping a sustainable future. In CO Celebration, 200 participated online and in person(region anal and Kabul)office.



Figure 11 International Youth Day Celebration 12 August 2024 in Qurban Ali Conference Room



Figure 12 International Youth Day celebration - writing messages and "Handprint Pledge" or "Handprint Mural": Coloring a hand with ink and pressing it onto a banner to symbolize unification and collective commitments.

Ganjina Exhibition in Bamyan Province July 22- 26:

Under the EGEMA project, UNDP Bamyan supported the cost of 30 booths for 30 entrepreneurs to participate in the Ganjina Afghanistan Exhibition, held in Bamyan province in coordination with the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce. This event provided a valuable opportunity for female entrepreneurs to establish market connections with major traders and to display and sell their products. The trade fair took place from July 22-26, 2024, in the center of Bamyan province.

The Ganjina Exhibition was organized in Bamyan City, close to Budha, to foster local product and market connections. Thirty women UNDP supported entrepreneurs to attend the Ganjina Exhibition held from 22-26 July. The traders and businesswomen offered artwork, dairy products, and handicrafts for sale. Many tourists, both men and women, attended the trade show and bought local products.



Figure 13 Ganjina Exhibition in Bamayn Province 22- 26 July 2024

Celebration of anti-GBV campaign:



During the Anti GBV campaign and EXPO (women's market) were organized by the EGEMA project that leveraged the global "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" campaign to promote

economic empowerment of Afghan businesswomen under the Theme: No Excuse. The initiative aimed to unite to End Violence Against Women, addressing the systematic discrimination faced by women in Afghanistan, which affects their freedom of mobility, access to work, and education opportunities. The focus was enhancing women's access to the market, addressing economic hardship, and Forster's long-term resilience and sustainability. As part of this effort, it highlights the work of Afghan women-led small and medium enterprises (SMEs). These MSMEs were initially financially supported by UNDP projects, mainly ABADIE, LITTACA, CBARD, and EGMEA, with the support of SU and JICA. The event was also partially funded by the CBARD Project. A total of 49 women presented their products from 16 provinces, and they were happy that they connected to buyers and sold a lot of their products and benefited.



Figure 14 Women Market (16 days of activism) in Compound, UNDP 04 Dec 2024

3.3 HUMAN INTEREST STORY:

A glimpse into women enterprises stories Women's Market/EXPO – UNDP

16 days Activism

Stories

1.Asma Wahab: Stitching a Path to Empowerment

In the bustling province of **Baghlan**, **30-year-old Asma Wahab** is a woman of **strength and determination**. She is not just the owner of a **tailoring workshop** but the **backbone of her family**. As the eldest child, Asma took on the responsibility of caring for her **seven family members** after losing her father to cancer.

Asma's business, which specializes in **traditional Afghan clothes, beading, and handicrafts**, has provided not just for her own family but also created **employment for over five other women**. Despite the hardships, Asma is driven to make a **better life** for those around her.

"When I started, I didn't have enough tools, which was a real challenge," she shares. However, with the help of **ABADEI** and the support from **UNDP**, Asma received the **machinery** she needed to expand her business. **"Their support has changed everything for us,"** Asma says, her eyes lighting up with gratitude. **"It allowed us to grow and hire more women. Now, I'm not just helping my family—I'm helping other women stand on their own feet."**

Asma's workshop is more than a business; it's a **community of women** learning, growing, and succeeding together. Asma is sewing a future of hope, resilience, and opportunity with every stitch.



Figure 15 The women MSME of UNDP in Women Market(EXPO) as part of anti- GBV campaign, 04 Dec, 2024 UNOCA compound

2. Bibi Maryam Safi: Crafting a Future for Afghan Women-Jalalabad

In the heart of **Jalalabad**, **29-year-old Bibi Maryam Safi** has built more than a successful business; she has created a **network of empowerment**. As the owner of "**Bibi Maryam Handicrafts**," Maryam specializes in **Salma dozi**, **beading**, and **tailoring**, producing beautiful traditional Afghan garments.

But for Maryam, the work is deeply personal. "**I want to provide opportunities for women in similar situations to mine**," she says. As the **mother of five children**, she is the **sole breadwinner**, working tirelessly to support her family. Her dedication to her family and business has created a **ripple effect** in her community.

Maryam employs **eight women** in her workshop and has helped others learn these valuable skills through training programs. "**I know how it feels to struggle**," she shares, "**but through this business, I can give women the chance to stand on their own two feet**."

With the support of **UNDP** and **ABADEI funding**, Maryam was able to purchase **new machinery and materials** to grow her business. "**Thanks to the support, I can do more and give more**," she reflects. Maryam is a living example of how **resilience**, **hard work**, and a little support can **change lives**.



Figure 16 The women MSME of UNDP in Women Market (EXPO) as part of anti-GBV campaign, 04 Dec, 2024 UNOCA compound

3. Zuhra Aryan: A Businesswoman and Changemaker

At 37, Zuhra Aryan is not only the proud owner of "Bano Aryan," a thriving tailoring and processing factory but also a champion for social change. **She employs 25 women and provides jobs for many more, offering them a chance to earn, learn, and support their families.**

At **37, Zuhra Aryan** is not only the proud owner of "**Bano Aryan**," a thriving tailoring and processing factory but also a **champion for social change**. She employs **25 women** and provides jobs for many more, offering them a chance to **earn, learn, and support their families**.

Zuhra's business reflects her **hard work and vision**. However, her dedication goes beyond just clothing; she is also a passionate **advocate for women's rights**. "**I want to empower women not just through employment but by teaching them how to lead their own lives and be independent,**" she explains.

Her company produces a wide range of **Afghan clothing** and **beaded products**, making her a **respected name** in the local market. However, it's the **community** she's built around her that fills her with pride. "**My team is like family to me,**" she shares. "**Together, we are making a difference.**"

Through her leadership, Zuhra proves that a woman can be both a **successful business owner** and a **changemaker**. Her story is about **passion, empowerment, and commitment** to creating a better future for Afghan women.

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Figure 17 The women MSME of UNDP in Women Market (EXPO) as part of anti-GBV campaign, 03 Dec, 2024 UNOCA compound

4. Shukria Ahmadi: A Legacy of Healing and Business-

Shukria Ahmadi's 23 years of dedication to her business, **Elham Afghan Company**, has made her a **respected figure** in **Herat**. At **50**, Shukria continues to lead her company, which specializes in **herbal treatments**, with a deep sense of purpose. "**I've always believed in the power of nature**," she says, looking at her team.

Shukria is a **mother of seven** and works alongside her husband to support their large family. Despite the challenges, she has built a **thriving business** that trains over **550 people** in herbal medicine and employs **20 workers**.

"The support I received from ABADEI helped me expand," Shukria shares. **"It allowed me to invest in more equipment, and it's been life-changing. I can now help more people, train more women, and grow my business."**

Through her work, Shukria provides for her own family and has become a **beacon of opportunity** for women looking to build a future. **"This business isn't just mine—it's for everyone who's ever dreamed of something more,"** she says, smiling with pride

Gender equality

The project has made significant efforts to promote gender mainstreaming, particularly through targeted interventions for women and girls. The project evaluated gender equality outcomes by looking at agency and relational dynamics and observed individual and collective short-term changes. As a GEN3 project that aims to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), some projects do not have a separate gender action plan. However, based on program implementation, the project's contribution to GEWE has been presented with measurable results.

Gender Milestone: Enhanced access to services for women (for women)

- EGEMA facilitated women's enhanced access to tertiary education in KUU by eliminating mobility barriers for Afghan women.

Gender Milestone: Enhanced Human Agencies of Women (human capital for women)

- EGEMA facilitated women's enhanced human agencies for 50 KUU graduates who have now been working in the UN or as skilled migrants in Europe and America.
- 14 Afghan women are supported to gain hands-on experience through the Young Women Professional Program of UNDP Afghanistan, where they have been offered a National Youth Volunteer position.
- 100 Women from 50 Women-Focused NGOs received Capacity building for one week on the basics of Marketing and Gender Action Plans, plus dialogues to implement in their communities

Gender Milestone: Enhanced Economic Agency of Women (Economic empowerment of women)

- 14 Afghan women have enhanced economic agencies, earning and supporting their families and communities.
- 40 Women entrepreneurs supported with cash grants (1000 USD) in Bamyan to promote their business.

Challenges & Way Forward:

Principled Approach

- The project utilized an evidence-based approach to tackle the challenges faced by DfA bans on women's education. This was achieved by the young women's professional program NUNV programs.
- Most of the principal approaches EGEMA considers during all phases of the project cycle are No One Left Behind and human right approaches

Partnerships

- Significant collaborations have recently been undertaken, each pivotal in advancing women's empowerment in Afghanistan.
- The first collaboration was with UNDP Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan to support 155 women pursuing higher education. This collaboration was crucial for allowing women to pursue higher education.
- The second collaboration was with RPs to conduct Gender and PSEA training, considering key staff according to their roles in reporting the complaints.
- The third collaboration was to connect with RP AYSO to conduct one week of capacity-building sessions for 100 women from 50 women-focused NGOs.

IV. PROJECT RISKS and CHALLENGES

Challenges & Way Forward:

- Discussing gender and women's rights within the community was challenging due to the rigid mindsets and restrictions imposed by the DfA. To address this issue, an innovative approach was implemented to assess the community members' mental readiness and gradually prepare them for such discussions. For instance, inviting women for gender and PSEA training at UNDP allowed them to get the training in a safe environment.
- It was challenging to start conducting the rounds of five-day training on women's leadership for 100 women from 50 NGOs, especially in Kandahar province, but the RPs were connected with DFA and also used an online method for training in Kandahar province and were able to conduct the training smoothly.
- Providing cash for 40 women who didn't have bank accounts was challenging. However, the RP, with the support of CHR staff, could organize the session at different times to avoid gathering women at one time.

- It was challenging to invite 49 women from 16 provinces to the expo, but the project covered their Maharm costs.
- The future of women who graduated from KKV countries was not clear. Fortunately, the EU project signed an agreement with Afghanistan CO to provide employment opportunities for new graduates of 2025- 2026 and provide them with IUNV positions where they would like to stay.

3.4 Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES)

This project did not involve construction. It was designed to enhance GEWE and prevent Gender Inequality by applying targeted interventions for women.

Furthermore, beneficiaries were informed of Awaz 410 to provide any complaint/feedback about the project, partners, or UNDP. No complaints have been received so far.

V. LESSONS LEARNT

- The project can reach more beneficiaries (women) if we invite them to the office for training, events, and exhibitions.
- To conduct the advocacy event, UNDP can connect earlier for better preparation and fully support the NGO to attract more participants (women)and organize the event.
- Find out how and where to conduct advocacy events in regional offices, considering No-Harm Approaches and well-organized celebrations.
- Women-Led NGOs and CSOs can reach more women and build a network in the community. Using them to bring women for training purposes. EGEMA, the project through RP – AYSO, started working for the capacity building of women on leadership from 50 women-focused NGOs in four provinces . Kabul , Herat, Mazar Sharif, and Kandahar, and a one-time cash grant for 40 women entrepreneurs in Bamyan.

VI.

Key M&E Activity	Purpose	Key Observations and Outcomes	Stakeholders/partners involved
M&E Activity 1	The UNDP Gender Specialist and Head of the Design Unit conducted a mission to Bamyan on 25 August 2024. The mission assessed the challenges and opportunities for engaging women and promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment (WEE) in the region.	Talash Institute Training Program: During 2023, EGMA is conducting a Computer and Digital Coding Course with the support of Talash Institute in Bamyan. The aim is to support the achievement of results in enhancing human capital and human agency by increasing skills and training that enable employability and productivity for 40 women, and then 10 women will be selected for an internship programme. The mission met with representatives from the Talash Institute, which provided computer	

		training to 30 women. Of these, 10 women participated in a one-month internship program for capacity-building under the EGEMA project. This initiative carried out in 2023 in Bamyan province, was part of a broader effort to develop women as national gender experts. Key findings for computer digital programme: Women students requested the need for longer-term training. At the same time, we found the potential for scaling up this initiative, as the Institute has the required infrastructure and system for TVET activities.	
M&E Activity 2			
M&E Activity 3			

VII. FUTURE PLAN

1. Revise the project to a new project design with the Phase -2
2. Work on the new activities for supporting IUNVs as part of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan's graduate programmes for 2025- 2026.
3. Focus on the Gender Seal Certification process and its requirement for year 2025
4. Continue with the existing 13 national UNVs programme within the Core fund

IV. ANNEXES

ANNEX 2: EXPENSES BY OUTPUT¹

¹Data contained in this financial report section is an extract of UNDP financial records as of mm/dd/yyyy. The accounting period for the FY XXXX is an open period when the report is prepared, and thus the financial data provided in this report is provisional and subject to change.

Annex 2. Expenses by Project

Output ID and Description	2024 Budget (AWP)	Expenses (Jan - Mar)	Expenses (Apr - Jun)	Expenses (Jul - Sep)	Expenses (Oct - Dec)	Accumulated Expenses (Jan - Dec 2024)	Delivery Rate
Project ID: (00096511): Nationally educated Gender Experts for advocacy and employment in the public sector and civil society organizations to promote the advancement of women and gender equality at national and sub-national levels are available.	715,260	109,623	266,594	170,351	194,178	740,745	104%
Sub-total Project ID 00096511	715,260	109,623	266,594	170,351	194,178	740,745	104%
Project ID: (00129338) UNDP Kazakhstan support for Afghan women's economic empowerment.	47,294	18,211	8,414	(3,484)	8,728	31,870	67.39%
Project ID: (00096511) Women's empowerment by engaging Afghan Female Gradates through UNV youth programme (WE ENGAGE)	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.00%
Sub-total Project ID 00129338	47,294	18,211	8,414	(3,484)	8,728	31,870	67%
Grand Total	762,554	127,835	275,008	166,867	202,906	772,615	101.32%

ANNEX 3: EXPENSES BY DONOR²

The Interim Donor Report for the period January - December 2024 for Enhancing Gender Equality & Mainstreaming in Afghanistan (EGEMA)- (00096511)

Annex 2. Expenses by Donors

Donor Short Name	2024 Budget (AWP)	Expenses (Jan - Mar)	Expenses (Apr - Jun)	Expenses (Jul - Sep)	Expenses (Oct - Dec)	Accumulated Expenses (Jan - Dec 2024)	Delivery Rate
EU- (KAZ)	47,294	18,211	8,414	(3,484)	8,728	31,870	67%
EU - (WE ENGAGE)	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
UNDP TRAC I - (04000)	591,260	109,623	266,594	148,869	102,274	627,360	106%
UNDP TRAC II - (04010)	124,000	-	-	21,482	91,904	113,385	91%
Grand Total	762,554	127,835	275,008	166,867	202,906	772,615	101%

²Data contained in this financial report section is an extract of UNDP financial records as of mm/dd/yyyy. The accounting period for the FY XXXX is an open period when the report is prepared, and thus the financial data provided in this report is provisional and subject to change.

ANNEX 4: RISK LOG

Use the Risk Log in Quantum or as submitted in the approved AWP worksheet – updated for the Reporting Period in coordination with IRMU

ANNEX 5: PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

This is a quarterly report on UN Inter-agency indicators on PSEA – for reporting once PSEA training has started in Q3

Project Implementation Level

Indicators		Total	Male	Female	Data source
Indicator 4.3.A: Percentage of implementing partners assessed as having medium or full capacity based on UN Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment	Number of responsible parties				PQA and/or Project managers SEAH action plan of CO
	Number of Grantees				PQA and/or Project managers SEAH action plan of CO
	Total number of responsible parties and Grantees who have met medium and full capacity				Project Managers- SEAH action plan of CO

Indicator	Name of district	Name of village/ city	Total Target Population	Type of Reporting Channel available in this location	# of individuals who have access to that specific reporting channel	In this location, did you conduct awareness on SEA reporting and how to access assistance (Yes/No)	# of children and adults who have been attended on their rights and SEA prevention			
							Male <18 yrs:	Male >18 yrs:	Female <18 yrs:	Female > 18 yrs:
Indicator 2.1.C: Number and percentage of children and adults who have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse.										
Indicator 2.2.A. Number of sites where awareness raising campaigns/activities on how to report sexual exploitation and abuse and how to access victim/survivor-centred assistance have been reached annually.										
Indicator 2.2B: Number of children and adults engaged through awareness-raising activities and community mobilisation interventions on PSEA										