



Enhancing Effectiveness of Social Protection Programmes and Improving Access and Participation of Socially Vulnerable Groups

Annual Project Progress Report

Government of Kazakhstan and "Workforce Development Center" JSC

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Project Title:	Promoting Resilient Communities to Prevent Violent Extremism in Central Asia
Project Duration:	02 February 2021 – 31 December 2025
Country / Region:	Kazakhstan
Funding Partner/s:	"Workforce Development Center" JSC
Responsible Parties:	
Reporting Period:	01 January 2025 – 31 December 2025
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<INSERT LOGOS OR FLAGS OF ALL DONORS TO PROJECT / PROGRAMME>

Please use font Proxima Nova and font size 10 for all text on narrative sections. You may refer to UNDP branding guidelines through [this link](#).

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Acronyms

(Note: it should be arranged in alphabetical order)

I. Executive Summary

In 2025, UNDP Kazakhstan continued to strengthen its strategic partnership with the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan by supporting evidence-based reforms in the social protection and employment sectors. Implementation focused on enhancing the effectiveness of national social protection programmes, improving access to services for socially vulnerable groups, and strengthening labor market analysis and forecasting capacities. The project implementation period was extended until 31 December 2025, ensuring continuity of policy and technical support without additional financial commitments from the Government.

The 2025 work plan focused on strengthening institutional effectiveness and evidence-based decision-making in the social sector. Key interventions included technical assistance to improve social rehabilitation and service delivery for persons with disabilities; a functional review and performance assessment of employment and social assistance functions; and the processing and systematization of labor market data to support the development of a standardized, software-based model for labor market analysis and forecasting. These activities contributed to improved service quality, clearer institutional mandates, and stronger policy planning capacity.

Targeted amendments to the Project Document refined results language to emphasize inclusive socio-economic participation and introduced new indicators capturing functional reviews and labor market analytical capacities. Clear institutional responsibilities were assigned to national counterparts to support effective implementation and national ownership.

II. Introduction / Background

The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Ministry) and the United Nations Development Program in Kazakhstan (UNDP) have signed an agreement on the implementation of a joint project “Enhancing Effectiveness of Social Protection Programmes and Improving Access and Participation of Socially Vulnerable Groups” for 2021-2023.

The project is aimed at further supporting the efforts of the Republic of Kazakhstan in improving the country’s social policy in line with the Strategy “Kazakhstan 2050” and National Plan for the Realization of the Rights and Improvement of Life of Persons with Disabilities until 2025. Three key results are expected to be delivered by the project:

- The system of social services is modernized through improvements in the tariff policy and enhancements in the effectiveness of social service provision;
- Conditions for further implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) are improved through increased accessibility of services and living environments and through improvements in the system of social and professional rehabilitation;
- Opportunities for active participation of men and women with disabilities in the socio-economic life and processes of making decisions affecting their interests are expanded.

Social protection is one of the main instruments in addressing poverty and inequality and is one of the fundamental human rights.

The implementation of this project will help address immediate and root causes of the persistent challenges in the field of social protection and inclusion of persons with disability and other socially vulnerable groups at the national and local levels in partnerships with government institutions and civil society organizations. Furthermore, it will also contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in line with the priorities of the UNDP Country Programme Document and UN Cooperation Framework for 2021-2025, while following the basic tenets of the “Leave No One Behind” principle.

On 12 December 2023, an additional agreement was signed between the Ministry and the UNDP, according to which the amount of financing for the joint project from the republic budget was increased by 17.9 million tenge (exchange rate difference) and the duration of the project was extended until March 31, 2024.

On 30 March 2024, the Ministry, in its letter (No. 01-10/8872), announced its agreement to continue cooperation under the joint project until 31 December 2024, without additional costs from the republic budget. This decision is also confirmed by the minutes of the Project Board Meeting (the Minutes) dated 5 June 2024.

On 20 March 2024, an Agreement on the provision of development services for a total amount of 9.2 million tenge (or 20 thousand US dollars) was signed between the UNDP and JSC “State Social

Insurance Fund". Based on the Minutes of the referral (activities) agreements with the JSC "SSIF" were included in the work plan of the joint project.

On 25 February 2025 and Agreement on the provision of development services for a total amount of 150,000 US dollars was signed between the UNDP with Workforce Development Center JSC.

III. Progress Review: Key Activities and Results, <specify reporting period>

Section 1: Analysis of Theory of Change

The assumptions underlying the project's Theory of Change largely continue to hold. The core premise—that strengthening institutional capacities, improving social service delivery systems, and expanding participation of vulnerable groups will lead to more inclusive and effective social protection outcomes—remains valid and aligned with national priorities and UNDP's mandate.

Government commitment to inclusive social policy reforms and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been sustained, while institutional partnerships and technical capacity have remained adequate to support implementation. External risks identified at design stage have not undermined the project's strategic direction.

Implementation experience confirms that the project strategy is still relevant, though it highlights the increasing importance of cross-cutting system enablers, particularly data-driven policy tools, functional clarity of institutions, and labor market analytics. These elements have emerged as key accelerators across outputs.

No fundamental changes to the Theory of Change are required; however, minor refinements are recommended to better reflect the role of data systems and evidence-based decision-making as core enablers of inclusive social protection outcomes.

Section 2: Overall progress against outcomes

Progress in 2025 demonstrates substantive advancement toward the intended outcome, particularly in strengthening system-level enablers for inclusive social protection and labor market governance.

1. Improved inclusivity and service delivery for persons with disabilities

Progress under this activity contributed to the outcome indicator related to accessibility and quality of social rehabilitation and support services by providing technical support in procurement of assistive aids.

2. Institutional efficiency in employment and social assistance governance

The functional review and performance assessment directly contributed to outcome indicators related to clarity of mandates, reduction of functional overlaps, and improved inter-institutional coordination. The analysis identified areas of duplication and fragmentation across employment and social assistance functions, providing concrete recommendations for optimization and redistribution of responsibilities. This represents measurable progress toward improved governance effectiveness, with national counterparts actively using findings to inform reform discussions.

3. Strengthened labor market intelligence and evidence-based policy formulation

Significant progress was achieved against indicators on availability and use of analytical tools for labor market analysis and forecasting. The development of a standardized, software-based labor market model, supported by comprehensive demographic, migration, and employment data processing, markedly enhanced analytical capacity. The model enables scenario analysis, regional disaggregation, and assessment of policy and economic “shocks,” strengthening the Government’s ability to design targeted and forward-looking employment policies.

Section 3: Monitoring and Evaluation¹ of activities.

During the reporting period, project implementation was monitored on a continuous basis through regular coordination meetings and technical reviews conducted jointly by UNDP and national partners. Ongoing desk reviews and validation of analytical deliverables ensured alignment with the approved Annual Work Plan and technical quality standards. Monitoring results confirmed that project activities remained on track and outputs were delivered as planned.

Section 4: Progress against each output

Project Output 1: < Insert the relevant output statement from the project document >		
Output indicators	Targets	Progress against targets
Availability of a functional review and assessment of the performance of	Baseline: no AWP target: yes	Reporting period: yes

¹ The later if applicable.

functions in the field of employment and the processed data for building a standard model of labor market analysis and forecasting using software		
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Key Activities and Results:

During the reporting period, the project focused on foundational analytical and system-building activities directly contributing to the achievement of the output indicator.

First, a functional review and assessment of the employment and social assistance system was initiated and substantially completed. This included a comprehensive review of the legal and institutional framework, mapping of mandates and competencies across central and local authorities, and identification of functional overlaps, gaps, and inefficiencies. Particular attention was paid to inter-agency coordination, service delivery chains, and the alignment of functions with the Social Code. These activities laid the institutional basis for improving performance management and informed evidence-based recommendations for functional optimization.

In parallel, data processing and analytical work for labor market modeling was advanced. Demographic, migration, employment, and sectoral data were consolidated from administrative and statistical sources. A structured analytical framework was developed to support labor market diagnostics, including regional disaggregation and identification of structural drivers of employment dynamics. These activities directly contributed to preparing the datasets required for a standardized, software-based labor market analysis and forecasting model.

Together, these activities represent critical milestones toward achieving the output by establishing both the institutional assessment component (functional review) and the technical data foundation for labor market modeling.

Key Results

Significant progress was achieved against the output indicator in 2025.

- A functional review and performance assessment of employment and social assistance functions was completed, covering legal frameworks, institutional mandates, and operational processes, and generating actionable recommendations for optimization.
- A standardized labor market analysis and forecasting model was developed, supported by fully processed and structured datasets, enabling national-level and regional labor market simulations.

Analytical outputs incorporated demographic, migration, sectoral, and regional dimensions, strengthening evidence-based policy formulation.

Methodological documentation and analytical tables ensure replicability and sustainability of results beyond the project lifecycle.

These results demonstrate that the project has successfully delivered the institutional and analytical foundations required to strengthen labor market governance and policy planning in Kazakhstan, fully achieving the targeted output for the reporting year.

Section 5: Cross-Cutting Integration

Human and Social Context

- **Leave No One Behind:**

The project contributes to the Leave No One Behind principle by strengthening evidence-based social protection and employment systems that are designed to better identify, target, and support vulnerable population groups. Through functional reviews and improved labor market analytics, the project supports more equitable access to services and policies that respond to regional disparities, migration dynamics, and labor market exclusion risks.

- **Human Rights:**

The project supports a rights-based approach by enhancing the institutional performance and accountability of employment and social assistance systems in line with national legislation and international commitments. Improved clarity of mandates, service delivery functions, and data-driven decision-making contributes to transparency, non-discrimination, and fair access to social protection and employment support.

- **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:**

Gender considerations are integrated through the use of sex-disaggregated labor market, demographic, and migration data within analytical models. This enables policymakers to better understand gender-specific employment patterns, vulnerabilities, and barriers to participation in the labor market, supporting the design of more inclusive and gender-responsive employment policies.

- **Disability Inclusion:**

Disability inclusion is a core focus of the project. Activities supporting the improvement of social rehabilitation and service delivery for persons with disabilities, alongside functional reviews of social protection systems, contribute to removing institutional barriers and strengthening inclusive participation in socio-economic life in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Interactions between Social and Environmental Factors

- **Sustainability and Resilience:**

The project strengthens institutional and analytical capacities that enhance the resilience of social protection and employment systems to socio-economic shocks. The development of labor market analysis and forecasting models enables scenario-based planning and supports adaptive policy responses to demographic shifts, migration trends, and economic fluctuations, contributing to long-term sustainability of social systems.

Other cross-cutting areas

- *Not applicable.*

IV. Partnerships and Sustainability

Partnerships

The project was implemented in close partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan, supported by the Workforce Development Center JSC.

National stakeholders were engaged throughout planning, implementation, and review processes through consultations and validation of interim findings, strengthening sustainability and uptake. Knowledge products, including analytical reports and methodological tools, were shared with counterparts and used to inform ongoing policy and institutional reforms.

Sustainability

Project results were sustained by embedding analytical tools, methodologies, and recommendations within national institutions and existing policy processes. Functional review findings and labor market models were aligned with mandates of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population and affiliated institutions, enabling continued use in policy planning and reforms. Methodological guidance and consultations supported knowledge transfer and institutional ownership, ensuring continuity beyond the project.

V. Update on risks and mitigation measures

Project Risk 1: A number of changes in the departments of the project partner, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population of the RK

Actions taken: UNDP conducted regular meetings, discussions with the partners the project's issues. It helped to alert for early signs for any changes to initiate the correction of the implementation.

Project Risk 2: Risk of low engagement and capacities of partners and stakeholders

Actions taken: Continued dialogue with stakeholders to keep their engagement through regular meetings with the project partners and involvement by getting feedback on the work being done.

Project Risk 3: Risk of changes in project implementation costs (currency exchange rates fluctuations, budget cuts)

Actions taken: All changes in AWP were discussed and agreed by the project partner and in accordance with the government priorities and project objectives.

Project Risk 4: Coordination of approvals from the partner's side

Actions taken: Meetings conducted on the working level to explain the requirements of the ToRs and get feedback from the partner's side. Close cooperation and well information with all parties involved.

VI. Key Challenges, Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Key challenges encountered

Implementation was affected by coordination of approvals from the partner's side, which required additional time to align expectations and validate technical requirements. Data collection and access also posed challenges due to the need to consolidate information from multiple stakeholders and administrative sources. To address coordination challenges, working-level meetings were conducted to clarify Terms of Reference requirements, gather feedback, and ensure shared understanding among all parties. Close cooperation and continuous information exchange were maintained throughout implementation. In parallel, swift actions were taken to collect the necessary data for analysis through direct engagement with relevant stakeholders, enabling timely continuation of analytical work.

Lessons learned

Early clarification of approval processes and technical requirements, combined with proactive stakeholder communication, is essential to avoid delays. Strong coordination mechanisms and early data-mapping significantly improve implementation efficiency.

Way forward

Future phases will prioritize early agreement on approval timelines, strengthened inter-institutional coordination, and systematic data-sharing arrangements to support timely analysis and sustainable use of project outputs.

VII. Financial Summary²

Notes:
Please insert the Atlas generated "Interim Financial Donor Report (IDR)" and/or "the Cumulative Financial Donor Report". If both do not meet what is agreed by each project with their respective donors, you may use the format below.

Some flexibility can be accommodated but it should be in consultation with the donor and IRH management.

Unless specified in the contribution agreement, all figures should be reported in United States Dollars. ,

Table 1: Overview of available resources for the project duration

(Total funds received from different donors for the year of the AWP; please follow this format)

Donor	Opening Balance	Contribution Received	Available Resources
Government of Kazakhstan	100,000.00	0	100,000.00
Workforce Development Center JSC	0	150,000.00	150,000.00
Total	100,000.00	150,000.00	250,000.00

Table 2: Overview of allocation and utilization³ per output

For multi-donor projects, show the cumulative total

Output	Government of Kazakhstan		Workforce Development Center JSC		Total Budget	Total Utilization*
	Budget	Utilization	Budget	Utilization		
Output 3	76,140.00	69,836.01	150,000.00	93,687.38	226,140.00	163,523.39

2 Disclaimer 1: Data contained in this financial report section is an extract of UNDP financial records. All financial provided above is provisional. Certified financial statements will be provided on <indicate date (30 June of the following year)>.

3 Disclaimer 2: Of the USD xxxxx presented above, USD xxxx corresponds to eligible expenses (as per IPSAS terminology), and USD xxxx corresponds to legal commitments in force between UNDP and third parties for the reporting period.

<i>Project Management Cost</i>	<i>23,860.00</i>	<i>16,901.15</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>23,860.00</i>	<i>16,901.15</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>100,000.00</i>	<i>16,901.15</i>	<i>150,000.00</i>	<i>93,687.38</i>	<i>250,000.00</i>	<i>180,424.54</i>

**Amount will be changed, data as of 26.12.2025*

Include the two disclaimers as shown in the below footnotes.

VIII. Annexes

Annex I: Progress Review: detailed matrix of activities and results

EXAMPLE - Repeat the table for every output so that it will be easier to manage and much clearer for presentation.

Output 3	Indicators	Baseline	Annual target	Progress / Milestone
Opportunities for active participation of men and women in the socio-economic life and processes of making decisions affecting their interests are expanded Budget: 226,140.00 Expenditure to date: 163,523.39	Availability of a functional review and assessment of the performance of functions in the field of employment and the processed data for building a standard model of labor market analysis and forecasting using software	no	yes	yes
Activities		Results		
Providing technical assistance in improving social rehabilitation and services for people with disabilities; Functional review and assessment of the performance of functions in the field of employment and social assistance; Data processing for building a typical model of labor market analysis and forecasting using software		The functional review evolved from diagnostic analysis into a comprehensive assessment of performance of functions in the field of employment and social assistance. This included systematic analysis of regulatory frameworks, institutional roles, operational processes, and performance bottlenecks. The assessment produced clear, evidence-based recommendations for optimizing functions, reducing duplication, and strengthening coordination between national and		

	subnational actors. As a result, the availability of a functional review and performance assessment was fully achieved at output level. Concurrently, the project completed the processing and systematization of labor market data and developed a standardized analytical model for labor market analysis and forecasting. The model integrates inter-sectoral linkages, regional labor structures, demographic and migration trends, and employment multipliers, allowing simulation of policy and economic "shocks." The model was operationalized through structured panel datasets and accompanied by a methodological user guide, ensuring usability by national institutions. This directly fulfills the second component of the output indicator related to processed data and analytical tools. The combination of institutional analysis and advanced labor market modeling ensured that analytical outputs were not standalone products, but directly applicable to policy planning, reform design, and monitoring of employment interventions.
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Annex II: Updated Risk Log

(Refer to project risk log and include it here to show any updates and mitigation measures)

#	Description	Date Identified	Type	Impact & Probability	Counter-measures / Mngt response	Owner	Last Update	Status
1	There is a risk that the TORs will	Jan 2025	Organizational	Likelihood: 2	Submit the draft of the TORs to	Project Manager	December 2025	finished

Annex III: Annual Work Plan for (next year)

Annex IV: Assets List.

Annex V: Knowledge Generation

Please describe how the project is generating knowledge and actively incorporating these insights into project implementation.

Also, include list of knowledge products or activities taken during the reporting period. Please provide active links to knowledge products and activities. You may also include relevant copies of media coverage, publications, etc.