



Knowledge Management and Capacity Development in Russia-UNDP Partnership, Phase III

Regional Project Narrative and Financial Progress Report (January-June 2025)

Project title:	Knowledge Management and Capacity Development in Russia-UNDP Partnership, Phase III (KM project)
Quantum Project ID:	00129411
Implementing partner:	UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS
Gender marker:	GEN2
Project budget:	Total: \$2,850,000 TFD: \$2,500,000
Cofinancing attracted since project start:	<i>Parallel cofinancing:</i> UNDP COs parallel funding (estimated): \$26,000
Project start and end date:	1 January 2022 – 31 December 2026 (initially until 31 Dec 2025; extended by the project board on 19 May 2025)
Reporting Period:	January – June 2025
Date of the last Project Board meeting:	5-19 May 2025 (online)
SDGs supported by the project:	SDG 17 'Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development'
Project Manager	Natalia Voronkova, natalia.voronkova@undp.org , https://expertsfordevelopment.ru/

1. KEY ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Activity 1. Provision of on-demand Russian expertise for specific development issues

1.1. Russian Experts on Demand programme (EoD programme)

The KM project contributed to the advancement of such key issues as:

- **environmental and biodiversity protection, combating climate change and its impact** – protecting avifauna and species to enhance biodiversity and combatting desertification through Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) integration into national programmes in *Turkmenistan*;
- **regional development and tourism** – the revitalization of public spaces to promote regional development and tourism in *Kyrgyzstan*;
- **sustainable finance** – development of guidelines on government green bonds to promote energy conservation in *Belarus*;



The Russian expert conducts consultations with the Belarusian State Institute of Standardization and Certification on the development of standards in the field of artificial intelligence, Belarus, June 2025

- **innovations, IT and digital economy** – mobile application development and establishing a standardization framework and institutional mechanisms for AI-based systems in *Belarus*;
- **statistics** – enhancing statistical capacity related to passenger and cargo transportation in *Turkmenistan*;
- **gender mainstreaming** – implementation of the gender equality strategy for the Aral Sea Basin project in *Turkmenistan*;
- **digital healthcare** – digital health information systems and services to ensure better access to healthcare and laboratory services in *Kyrgyzstan*;



The Russian expert at the roundtable on improving statistics on trade and transport organized for the State Committee of Turkmenistan on Statistics, Ashgabat, August 2024. The assignment on statistics improvement was completed in May 2025.

- **public administration** – building capacities of representatives from state structures of Batken oblast to enhance their management skills and ability to make complex managerial decisions in *Kyrgyzstan*;
- **trade facilitation** – aligning national policies and frameworks with international maritime conventions, following *Kyrgyzstan's* accession to the International Maritime Organization;
- **sustainable economic growth and decent work** – strengthening institutional and regulatory environment for financial markets development in *Turkmenistan*; and enhancing youth employment opportunities and entrepreneurial activities by promoting freelancing in *Tajikistan*.

Statistics on the EoD programme in 2025

Number of applications received	Approved	Completed	Currently implemented	To be launched	Applicants – UNDP offices	Number of consultants
26	21	5 launched in 2025; 10 initiated in 2024	8	8	Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and IRH Regional project	22

The number of experts registered in the Database has increased by **5%**, while the number of women has increased by **4%**.

The information on the EoD implementation is presented in Annexes as follows:

Annex 1 - The full list of EoD assignments and their status of implementation,

Annex 2 - Consultants' Performance Evaluation Forms Statistics.

Advisory support to UNDP COs in identifying expertise

The KM project team supported the UNDP offices in identifying suitable experts and organizations required by national partners, e.g. on:

<i>Belarus</i>	• standardization framework and institutional mechanisms for AI-based systems • development of methodologies for calculating SDG indicators • leather and footwear industry development • sustainable financing for energy efficiency
<i>IRH</i>	• companies specializing in video production of educational lessons
<i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	• e-commerce for export • methodology for Women's Entrepreneurship Index (WEI)
<i>Tajikistan</i>	• freelance market development
<i>Turkmenistan</i>	• electoral legislation and women political participation • mobile application development

1.2. Maintenance and development of the project website, including the Database of Russian experts for international development

The KM project team is consistently working on the bilingual website's design and content (<http://expertsfordevelopment.ru>) to showcase the KM project activities in an engaging manner:

- The Database is being enriched with new profiles registered (**439 experts** – 5% increase (incl. 203 women - 5% increase), compared to 417 experts in December 2024 (incl. 194 women);
- The KM project prepared and added to the website a new infographic about the UNV Full Funding Programme for Russian citizens with examples of UNV assignments (*Annex 4*) and a map presenting the geography of the programme (*Annex 5*);
- [Success story of the UN Volunteer](#) working at UNDP Belarus was added to the website;
- The KM project updated several brochures highlighting the EoD programme's overview and its key results since 2017, along with the examples of completed assignments;
- Seven news items were posted on the website to ensure the KM project visibility.

Activity 2: Provision of innovative solutions by Russian institutions to partner countries (Russian Challenge Fund)

The KM project had to reconsider and put on hold the project activity on the Russian Challenge Fund due to the revised UNDP policy on implementation of Challenge Funds as procurement modalities. The modality calls for competitive processes to ensure a fair, transparent, inclusive, and open process while selecting potential partners without any restrictions by nationality or country of registration within the framework of this mechanism. Based on this, it was suggested to shift the focus of the KM project to the Expertise on Demand modality and enhance it with the possibility to fund institutional contracts in addition to the individual ones. The suggestion was endorsed by the Project Board on 19 May 2025, and the funds were reallocated from Activity 2 to Activity 1.

Activity 3. Strengthening the Russia-UNDP Partnership by increasing collaboration with think tanks, institutions, academia, and other organizations

To facilitate knowledge exchange and raise awareness on development issues, as well as to facilitate the wide sharing of Russian expertise, the KM project supports travel of experts to present Russian knowledge and development solutions at various international forums related to SDGs outside of Russia.

In 2025, **three** experts with full or partial funding from the KM project budget shared Russian expertise in:

- public administration: Russian insights for sustainable development at the IIAS-DARPG India Conference "Next Generation Administrative Reforms: Empowering Citizens and Reaching the last Mile" (Delhi, India, 10-14 February);
- sustainable financing of energy and water projects in Central Asia: the role of Eurasian Development Bank (EDB), Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund and other institutions at the Central Asia Climate Change Conference (Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 13-15 May 2025).
- AI adoption in public-private partnerships and regulatory approach to AI at the 9th edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum (Belgrade, Serbia, 14-16 May 2025).

One of the trips was co-funded by the Moscow State University, Russia.

The approved applications for funding and travel completed are presented in *Annex 3*.

With the purpose of enhancing the possibility of Russian experts to contribute to the social-economic development of various countries the KM project facilitated submission CVs of high-professional specialist



The Russian expert (on the right) at the Central Asia Climate Change Conference held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, May 2025

to the global UNDP GPN ExpRes Roster on the EVA.ai platform. The CVs submitted are currently under vetting procedure.



UN Youth Volunteer at the FAO Planning Session, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, March 2025

3.3. Technical support to Russia-UNV Full Funding (FF) programme

The KM project team continues providing limited technical support for the facilitation of the Russia-UNV FF programme, managed by the UNV Bonn Office. As of June 2025, **21** Russian volunteers are serving under the UNV FF programme in **19** countries.

The full list of UN volunteers' host agencies and countries is presented in *Annex 6*.

3. KEY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Some lessons learned from the KM project implementation were identified as follows:

- As the KM project started to accept applications for institutional consultancy under the Experts on Demand programme, COs need guidance and advice on the application process;
- The Quantum system has undergone significant changes in 2025, complicating the registration procedure for individual consultants. The KM project team will update the instruction in line with the new UNDP format on how to register in the UNDP corporate system;
- The KM project should further encourage COs to use the global UNDP GPN ExpRes Roster on the EVA.ai platform. This platform is designed to automate and accelerate the recruitment process while offering additional opportunities to registered experts to secure consultancy with UNDP.

4. FUTURE PLANS

The KM project team will:

- Further develop and maintain the expertsfordevelopment.ru website and the Database of experts for international development;
- Ensure replenishment of the Database with new highly qualified expert profiles and expansion of thematic areas;
- Further implement the EoD programme, including the new institutional modality approved by the project board in May 2025;
- Facilitate and fund presentation of Russian experts at various international events on SDG-related topics;
- Support strengthening the Russia-UNDP Partnership by increasing collaboration with think tanks, institutions, academia, and other organizations;
- Support the TFD projects' requests for relevant Russian expertise;
- Support the UNV FF programme for Russian citizens when possible;
- Work on an overview of sustainable results of the experts' assignments, success stories of experts, the article on the project activities for the UN in Russia bulletin, etc.

5. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (January-June 2025)

OUTPUT/Activities	Budgeted for the entire project, \$	Budgeted funds 2025, \$	Budget utilization & commitments, Jan-Jun 2025, \$	Delivery rate against the 2025 budget, %	Budget utilization 2022-2024, \$	Delivery rate against the entire budget, %
Activity 1: Provision of on-demand Russian expertise for specific development issues	1,850,107	615,600	141,567	23	482,951	34
Activity 2: Provision of innovative solutions by Russian institutions to partner countries (Russian Challenge Fund)	37,773	0	0	0	37,773	100
Activity 3: Strengthening Russia-UNDP Partnership by increasing collaboration with think tanks, institutions, academia, and other organizations	289,440	65,340	18,446	28	105,851	43
Activity 4: Project Management and Administrative Support	322,720	60,480	32,160	53	240,156	74
TOTAL	2,500,000	741,420	181,171*	24	866,731	35

*The project delivery as of 23 July 2025 is US\$ 265,666.

In May 2025, the virtual KM project board in writing was successfully completed, during which:

- 2024 annual project report covering the main results were presented and endorsed by the project board;
- The KM project has been extended until December 31, 2026;
- Funds were reallocated from Activity 2 to Activity 1 to increase the available budget for the Experts on Demand activity with the goal of expanding support to include institutional contracts in addition to individual contracts.

Submitted by Natalia Voronkova, Project Manager (23 July 2025) _____

6. ANNEXES

Annex 1. Completed and currently implemented EoD assignments

Completed assignments

Belarus	- Green finance for energy efficiency (March – April 2025) - Mobile application development (March – April 2025) - Standardization framework and institutional mechanisms for AI-based systems (May-July 2025)
Kyrgyzstan	- Capacity building for Batken Region state representatives in management and decision-making (November 2024 – January 2025) - Facilitate citizen-driven urban planning and develop concepts for revitalization of the public spaces within the Open Osh initiative (January – March 2025) - Development of design plans for revitalization of the public spaces within the Open Osh initiative (January – March 2025) - Support for introduction of digital health tools (September 2024 – June 2025) - Support for digital transformation in healthcare and modernisation of the laboratory information system (September 2024 – June 2025)
Turkmenistan	- Supporting the implementation of the gender equality strategy and gender mainstreaming for the Aral Sea Basin project (August 2024 – February 2025) - Improving statistics on passenger and cargo transportation (July 2024 – May 2025) - Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) integration into the National Programme for Combatting Desertification (October 2024 – January 2025) - Methodological support to LDN integration into land use planning (October 2024 – January 2025) - National- and regional-level LDN target setting (October 2024 – January 2025) - Protection of avifauna to enhance biodiversity in the Aral regions of Turkmenistan (December 2024 – July 2025) - Protection of species to enhance and protect biodiversity in the Aral regions of Turkmenistan (November 2024 – July 2025)

Currently implemented assignments

Kyrgyzstan	Support in aligning Kyrgyzstan's legal and institutional frameworks with international maritime conventions following its accession to International Maritime Organization (March – December 2025)
Tajikistan	- Analysis of the freelance and outsourcing market (May – July 2025) - Fostering sustainable growth within Tajikistan's tourism industry in personnel management in the hotel business (July-August 2025) - Building capacity in strategic communication of hotel business to boost Tajik tourism (July-August 2025) - Service quality management in the hospitality industry (July-August 2025)
Turkmenistan	- Strengthening institutional and regulatory environment for financial markets development (May – July 2025) - GIS Consultant to support LDN-based land use planning and improved management of Protected Areas in Turkmenistan (June 2025 – January 2026)
IRH	Creating short video lectures for youth engagement on climate change (July-November 2025)

Approved assignments with their status of implementation

Belarus	Developing virtual tours for specially protected natural areas (institutional consultancy)	The CO has announced a tender on the global website
Kyrgyzstan	Unified platform for exchanging information on the terms of financial products and services	The scope of work is currently being discussed with national partners

	3. Methodology for developing master plans for growth points 4. Russian language teaching methodology 5. Provision of technical services for the configuration, calibration, and capacity building of lighting laboratory equipment at the Center for Standardization and Metrology 6. Development of the National Methodology for Women's Entrepreneurship Index	
Turkmenistan	7. Electoral legislation and women's political participation 8. Digital financial services: supporting mobile banking for Turkmenistan's State Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs	Launching competitions in Quantum system

Annex 2. Consultants' Performance Evaluation Forms Statistics



Summary chart of 10 completed assignments during the period of January-June 2025

Score	Technical expertise	Imagination	Initiative	Interpersonal skills	Quality of the reports submitted	Timelines of the reports submitted	Linguistic skills: RUS	Linguistic skills: ENG
Excellent	10	7	7	9	5	5	9	2
Very Good	0	3	3	1	4	4	1	0
Good	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Fair	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Unsatisfactory	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Performance evaluation scores of assignments completed during the period of January-June 2025

Excellent	1
Very good	2
Good	3
Fair	4
Unsatisfactory	5

Title of the assignment	Technical expertise	Imagination	Initiative	Interpersonal skills	Quality of the reports submitted	Timelines of the reports submitted	Linguistic skills: RUS	Linguistic skills: ENG
Green finance for energy efficiency	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	N/A
Mobile application development	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	N/A
Capacity building for Batken Region state representatives in management and decision-making	1	1	2	2	4	2	1	N/A
Facilitate citizen-driven urban planning and develop concepts for revitalization of the public spaces within the Open Osh initiative	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	N/A
Development of design plans for revitalization of the public spaces within the Open Osh initiative	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	N/A
Supporting the implementation of the gender equality strategy and gender mainstreaming for the Aral Sea Basin project	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	1
Improving statistics on passenger and cargo transportation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	N/A
LDN integration into the National Programme for Combatting Desertification	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
Methodological support to LDN integration into land use planning	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
National- and regional-level LDN target setting	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3

Annex 3. Experts' participation in knowledge-sharing international events, January – June 2025

#	Date and Place	SDG Topic	Conference	Topic of presentation
1	Delhi, India 10-14 February	SDG 16 "Peace, justice and strong institutions"	IIAS-DARPG India Conference "Next Generation Administrative Reforms: Empowering Citizens and Reaching the last Mile"	Bridging the gap: qualification & competence in public service - Russian insights for sustainable development
2	Ashgabat, Turkmenistan 13-15 May	SDG 13 "Climate action"	Central Asia Climate Change Conference	Sustainable financing of energy and water projects in Central Asia
3	Belgrade, Serbia 14-16 May	SDG 17 "Partnerships for the Goals"	9th edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum	Key risks in AI adoption in PPPs and Russian experience in regulations in AI

UNV Full Funding Programme for Russian citizens

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. Over 60 volunteers have been serving under the Russia-UNV FF programme since 2018.

ESCAP FAO IOM RCO UNDP UNFPA UN-Habitat UNICEF
UNOCHA UNODC UNOPS UN Women WFP

60+
Russian UNVs

30+
countries and
territories

10+
UN agencies
worldwide



UNV Specialist at Lao PDR RCO

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The UNV Full Funding Programme for Russian citizens is implemented as a joint initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and UNV within the framework of the signed Memorandums of Understanding.

Source of funding

The Government of the Russian Federation has allocated \$1 million for the UNV FF Programme each year since 2018



What for

Russian volunteers work for achieving the UN SDGs. They assist projects in sustainable agriculture, clean energy, climate change, economic and social development, etc.



Where

Russian volunteers have worked in 37 countries in Africa, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.



What's after

Most of the Russian UN FF Volunteers continue working for the UN system or other international organizations after the end of UNV assignments. They work on staff and consultant positions in UN offices, including the UN HQ.

Gender of UNVs from Russia



80% FEMALE | 20% MALE

Examples of UNV assignments



Knowledge Management and Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist with UNDP, Belarus

The Russian UNV contributed to knowledge sharing and continuous learning at UNDP Belarus by leading projects on internal digital transformation, organizing an international ESG conference to foster public-private dialogue on sustainability, and conducting audits of climate and environmental projects, including one supporting ecotourism development.



Partnerships Assistant with WFP, Kyrgyzstan

The Russian volunteer supported the optimization of the National School Meals Programme in Kyrgyzstan by coordinating field visits of the parliament members, implementing PR activities, preparing reports and communication materials, as well as liaising with partners and donor countries, including Russia and Japan. Furthermore, she served on the Organising Committee for the First CIS School Meals Forum.



Coordination Officer at RCO, Jordan

In Jordan, the Russian UNV supported the UN Country Team in enhancing the UN's development efforts, aligning with SDGs and national priorities. His contributions included interagency planning, joint programming, and providing support for major events and field missions. He also contributed to supporting collaboration across UN agencies, including initiatives like the UN-EU Strategic Dialogues and the Jordan Development Partners Group.



Youth Connekt Officer with UNDP, Botswana

The Russian UNV assisted with the implementation of the YouthConnekt project, aimed at empowering young people in Botswana. The UNV facilitated the organisation of National Youth Dialogues, the first-ever Innovation Challenge and leading Corporate Social Responsibility activity in Molepolole village. Additionally, she also took an active part in renovating a local school for disabled children.



Project Management Office Analyst with UNOPS, Myanmar

The UNV contributed to strengthening sustainable programme management capacities and supported programmes focused on health, food security and livelihoods, as well as humanitarian assistance. The volunteer's responsibilities included coordination, compliance and monitoring of UNOPS-managed funds, such as the Access to Health Fund, the Livelihoods and Food Security Fund and the Nexus Response Mechanism.



To learn more about the UNV Full Funding Programme:

- [visit the UNV website](#)
- [visit the webpage of the UNV Full Funding Programme for Russian citizens](#)

Annex 5. A map presenting the geography of the UNV Full Funding Programme for Russian citizens



Annex 6. The list of currently serving UN volunteers under the Russian FF programme

No	Country or territory	UN host agency	Category
1	Belarus	UNDP	Specialist
2	Brazil	RCO	Youth
3	Congo	RCO	Specialist
4	Egypt	FAO	Youth
5	Ethiopia	FAO	Specialist
6	Fiji	UNOCHA	Youth
7	Iran	RCO	Specialist
8	Iraq	RCO	Specialist
9	Jordan	RCO	Specialist
10	Kazakhstan	FAO	Youth
11	Kyrgyzstan	UNODC	Specialist
12		WFP	Specialist
13		FAO	Youth
14	Lao PDR	RCO	Specialist
15	Mexico	RCO	Youth
16	Myanmar	UNOPS	Specialist
17	Serbia	RCO	Youth
18	Tajikistan	RCO	Youth
19		WFP	Youth
20	Thailand	FAO	Youth
21	Vietnam	RCO	Youth

UN host entities of serving volunteers

● FAO ● RCO ● UNDP ● UNOCHA ● UNODC ● UNOPS ● WFP

