Project title	**UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub (IRH), and UNDP COs in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan** **Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V** **Final Evaluation**
Project ID	Atlas Award ID: 00145439 Quantum Award ID: 00146569
Countries	Regional and Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
Region	Central Asia
Donor	Government of Finland, through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
Organization commissioning the evaluation	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Istanbul Regional Hub
Period covered by the evaluation	1 October 2022 - 30 September 2026
Evaluation time frame	1 April 2026 - 5 August 2026
Date of evaluation report	August 2026, Final
Evaluator	Arkadii Toritsyn, Ph.D.

1 Project and Evaluation Information Table

Project/outcome Information		
Project Title	Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V,	
Quantum ID	00146569	
Corporate outcome and output	Regional Programme Outcome #2 and Output 2.2 / UNDP Strategic Plan Output 1.3.	
Countries	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan	
Region	Central Asia	
Date project document signed	19 September 2022	
Project dates	**Start**	**Planned end**
	1 October 2022	30 September 2026
Total committed budget	EUR 6,800,000	
Project expenditure and commitments at the time of evaluation	EUR 6,693,960.67 as of 30 June 2026 (provisional)	
Funding source	Government of Finland, through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland	
Implementing party	UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub. UNDP Country Offices in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan implemented the respective country components under delegated authority	
Evaluation Information		
Evaluation type (project/ outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)	Project Evaluation	
Final/midterm review/ other	Final Evaluation	
Period under evaluation:	**Start**	**End**
	1 October 2022	30 September 2026
Evaluators	Arkadii Toritsyn, Ph.D.	
Evaluator email address	artoritsyn@rogers.com	
Evaluation dates	**Start**	**Completion**
	1 April 2026	5 August 2026

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the UNDP. The author remains solely responsible for any errors in this report.

Acknowledgements

The evaluator wishes to thank all those who contributed to this evaluation. Particular appreciation is extended to Dilshod Akbarov and colleagues from the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub for their guidance, responsiveness and support throughout the process. The evaluator is especially grateful to Emil Iusupov, Farrukh Zakirov and Philippe Chabot, together with the wider UNDP Country Office and Project teams in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, for responding to numerous requests, facilitating access to documentation, organizing an extensive programme of meetings and providing invaluable substantive and logistical support during the country missions. Special thanks are also extended to the colleagues who accompanied the evaluator during field visits and helped ensure meaningful engagement with institutions, enterprises, producers and communities.

Sincere thanks are extended to government counterparts, institutional partners, implementing organizations and all Project beneficiaries who generously shared their time, experience and perspectives. The evaluator is especially grateful to the entrepreneurs, producers, farmers, artisans and other micro-level participants who welcomed the evaluation and spoke openly about their personal and business journeys. Their resilience, initiative and commitment to improving their enterprises, livelihoods and communities were deeply impressive. The evaluator wishes them every success in continuing to build on the progress and opportunities supported through the Project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Project and Evaluation Information Table 1
Acknowledgements 3
List of acronyms and abbreviations 5
2 Executive summary 7
2.1 Project Overview 7
2.2 Evaluation purpose and methodology 7
2.3 Key findings, conclusions, and priority recommendations 8
3 Introduction 12
3.1 Purpose of the evaluation 12
3.2 Key evaluation questions 12
3.3 Primary users and audience 13
3.4 Intervention being evaluated 13
3.5 Structure of the report 14
4 Project Description and Background Context 14
4.1 Project objectives, components, strategy and main problem it addresses 14
4.2 Theory of Change (including macro–meso–micro linkages) 14
4.3 Implementation arrangements and stakeholders 16
4.4 Resources and cross-cutting issues (gender, Leave No One Behind (LNOB)) 17
4.5 Development context 17
5 Evaluation Scope and Methodology 18
5.1 Scope and objectives 18
5.2 Evaluation approach and methods 19
5.3 Data analysis 21
6 Findings 22
6.1 Design 22
6.2 Implementation 25
6.3 Results 26
7 Conclusions 55
8 Lessons Learned 57
9 Recommendations 59
10 Annexes 66
Annex 10.1 Evaluation Terms of Reference 66
Annex 10.2 Evaluation matrix 77
Annex 10.3 Assessment of Achievement against Final Results Framework Targets 83
Annex 10.4 Evaluation mission itinerary 94
Annex 10.5 Interview protocols and indicative question framework 102
Annex 10.6 List of persons interviewed, gender disaggregated 109
Annex 10.7 Online surveys of meso- and micro-level stakeholders and beneficiaries 115
Annex 10.8 Literature reviewed 127
Annex 10.9 Signed UNEG Code of Conduct for the Evaluator 131

List of acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym	Full Title
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfT	Aid for Trade
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
B2B	Business-to-Business
B2G	Business-to-Government
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme
CATI	Central Asian Trade Intelligence Portal
CAWG	Central Asian Working Group on Export Promotion of Agricultural Products
CCI	Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEN2	Gender Equality Marker 2
GEN3	Gender Equality Marker 3
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFI	International Financial Institution
IR	Inception Report
IRH	Istanbul Regional Hub
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITC	International Trade Centre
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KATO	Kyrgyz Association of Tour Operators
KII	Key Informant Interview
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

Acronym	Full Title
MEDT	Ministry for Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
MIIT	Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade of Uzbekistan
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OVOP	One Village One Product
QA	Quality Assurance
RBM	Results-Based Management
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SES	UNDP Social and Environmental Standards
SESP	UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
TIKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TSI	Trade Support Institution
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
VC	Value Chain
WTO	World Trade Organization

2 Executive summary

2.1 Project Overview

The Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V Project is a regional initiative financed by the Government of Finland and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Istanbul Regional Hub (IRH), together with UNDP Country Offices (COs) in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Implemented from October 2022 to September 2026 with a budget of approximately EUR 6.8 million, Phase V built on UNDP's Aid for Trade engagement in Central Asia since 2009.

The Project sought to promote inclusive and sustainable growth by strengthening productive capacities, trade-related institutions, enterprise competitiveness, green and employment-rich value chains, and regional cooperation. Its three components covered regional cooperation and integration into regional and global value chains; an enabling environment for economic resilience, private-sector development, digitalization and e-commerce; and job creation, competitiveness and gender responsiveness in selected green value chains.

Support was delivered at four interconnected levels. Regional activities generated shared knowledge, technical networks, standards expertise and trade-intelligence tools. Macro-level support addressed policies and regulations; meso-level assistance strengthened trade-support institutions; and micro-level support targeted micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), producers, processors, cooperatives and entrepreneurs, with particular attention to women, youth, rural populations and persons with disabilities.

2.2 Evaluation purpose and methodology

The final evaluation assessed the Project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, early impact and cross-cutting results. It examined performance across the regional, macro, meso and micro levels; regional added value; adaptive management and value for money; institutionalization and prospects for replication and scale; and contributions to gender equality, women's economic empowerment, Leave No One Behind (LNOB), disability inclusion, human rights and environmental sustainability.

The principal users are the Government of Finland, the Project Board, UNDP IRH, participating UNDP COs, national ministries and institutions, and the Evaluation Reference Group. The evaluation is intended to support accountability, inform Project closure and transition, guide the management response and provide evidence for future UNDP Aid for Trade programming, partnerships and resource mobilization.

The evaluation applied a theory-based, contribution-focused and mixed-methods approach consistent with UNDP guidance and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards. Evidence was drawn from a structured documentary review; 70 interview and consultation sessions involving 122 named participants; field visits in all three countries; two purposive online surveys comprising 137 enterprise and value-chain respondents and 35 institutional respondents; and case-based analysis of selected policy, institutional, value-chain and enterprise results.

Because observed changes were also influenced by government action, institutional capacity, other partners, private investment and market conditions, the evaluation assessed UNDP's plausible contribution rather than attributing results exclusively to the Project. The surveys were supplementary, self-reported and not statistically representative. Other limitations included uneven country timelines, incomplete longitudinal evidence, limited expenditure disaggregation and the difficulty of assessing sustained effects before closure. These were mitigated through triangulation, source verification, follow-up validation and calibrated distinctions among delivery, adoption, institutional use, initial commercial outcomes and likely durability.

2.3 Key findings, conclusions, and priority recommendations

Overall, the evaluation found Phase V to be a highly relevant and generally successful regional initiative that delivered strong policy, institutional and enterprise-level results. Its contribution was clearest where macro-, meso- and micro-level support formed a coherent pathway. Sustained commercial outcomes, regional institutionalization and scale remained more conditional on financing, markets, institutional incentives and political-economy conditions.

Design and intervention logic. The regional–macro–meso–micro model was strategically appropriate because trade and enterprise constraints could not be addressed through isolated policy advice, institutional strengthening or enterprise support. It worked best where interventions at different levels addressed related constraints and connected policy and institutional change with enterprise use and market engagement. The main limitation was that intermediate pathways, assumptions and measures of adoption, progression to commercial outcomes and durability were not always defined sufficiently.

Relevance. Phase V was highly relevant to national and regional priorities concerning economic diversification, export competitiveness, standards, productive capacity, digitalization, green growth and women's economic empowerment. Adaptive implementation strengthened responsiveness to government and stakeholder priorities, although individual interventions could not always address the full set of interdependent constraints affecting value-chain performance, including finance, logistics, aggregation, certification, production scale and buyer demand. This did not materially weaken the assessment of high strategic relevance.

Coherence. Internal and external coherence were strong. Cooperation among UNDP IRH, COs and national partners connected regional expertise with country systems, while partnerships with the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme (CAREC), the World Trade Organization (WTO), Finnish institutions and other actors extended technical reach and largely avoided duplication. Coherence was stronger in thematic alignment and knowledge exchange than in follow-through: regional products were not always accompanied by explicit national uptake plans, responsibilities and financing, while engagement with international financial institutions (IFIs) remained exploratory.

Effectiveness. Reported performance was very strong. Of 96 indicators, 89 were assessed as achieved or exceeded, including qualified achievements; four were likely to be achieved; and three were at risk, uncertain or unlikely. The main shortfalls were concentrated in Tajikistan's micro-level component, where delayed operationalization reduced the time available for results to mature. Some indicator definitions and verification arrangements, particularly for employment, sales, exports and institutional use, require cautious interpretation.

At the macro level, Project expertise contributed to nationally owned processes concerning export development, customs facilitation, tourism, green economy, standards, responsible business conduct and trade-support measures. At the meso level, it strengthened the tools and service capacity of export agencies, chambers, standards and certification bodies, tourism institutions and business associations.

At the micro level, it generated tangible improvements in production, processing, storage, product quality, resource efficiency, certification readiness, business planning, digital promotion and market engagement. Results were strongest where government demand, institutional mandates or a clear business case supported practical uptake.

Enterprise capabilities, productive capacity and market readiness were documented more consistently across the portfolio than longer-term commercial outcomes. The Project also generated selected increases in sales, market entry, export transactions and employment, but evidence of the persistence and repeatability of these gains, particularly repeat sales, sustained exports and employment durability was less systematic and could not yet be established across all supported enterprises. This partly reflected the relatively late maturation of several interventions, particularly in Tajikistan, as well as limitations in longitudinal monitoring. Effectiveness was also shaped by factors outside the Project's direct control or mandate, including government approval processes, institutional restructuring, access to finance, certification and logistics costs, infrastructure, production scale and aggregation, external market-access restrictions, buyer demand and climate-related risks. The Project adapted through revised activities, partnerships, resource reallocation and extended implementation, but could not independently resolve these structural constraints.

Efficiency. Financial delivery was strong: expenditure and commitments reached approximately EUR 6.69 million by 30 June 2026, or 98.5 percent of the budget. Resource reallocation and the no-cost extension were reasonable responses to implementation delays and differences in absorptive capacity. A lean management architecture, active Project Board oversight, competitive beneficiary selection, strengthened field monitoring and extensive use of national expertise supported delivery and accountability. Value for money was generally credible. Financial reporting and oversight followed the approved Project architecture, while the Project was not designed to generate detailed comparative cost-and-results data across intervention types or delivery modalities. The evaluation therefore did not impose a retrospective cost-effectiveness framework; the level of cost disaggregation available limited only a more granular comparison of relative cost-effectiveness.

Sustainability. Prospects are positive but conditional. Continuation is most credible where policies and methodologies have entered national programmes and routine institutional work, services have formal mandates and financing, and enterprises have co-invested and incorporated supported assets and practices into their business strategies. Prospects are less certain for platforms, databases, networks and mentorship arrangements dependent on recurrent budgets, specialist staff or external facilitation. The durability and scale of commercial gains will continue to depend on finance, certification, logistics, infrastructure, market demand, climate conditions and buyer relationships, while continued use of many supported assets, skills, technologies and production practices appears more directly supported by beneficiary ownership, co-investment and their integration into ongoing business operations. Evidence of likely continuation was stronger than evidence of replication and scale.

Early impact. Credible early institutional impact was evident where Project-supported recommendations, methodologies and services entered approved programmes, operational procedures and regular institutional work. Enterprise-level effects included improved productive capacity, quality, resource efficiency, market readiness and selected commercial results. Regional public goods strengthened standards expertise, professional networks and nationally retained trade-analysis capacity. Wider effects on sustained exports, employment, income, fiscal revenue and structural transformation remain longer-term contribution pathways dependent on government implementation, private investment, finance, infrastructure and market response.

Cross-cutting areas. Gender equality was among the Project's stronger dimensions. Women-focused mentorship, enterprise support, digital skills, productive assistance and market exposure strengthened women's capabilities, confidence, networks and decision-making, substantively supporting the Gender Equality Marker 2 (GEN2) classification. The Project also extended opportunities to rural producers, youth and selected persons with disabilities, although disability inclusion and accessibility were less systematic. Environmental sustainability was integrated through green value chains, renewable energy, resource efficiency and sustainable tourism. However, environmental outcomes were not consistently quantified, and documentation showing how project-level Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) commitments were translated into some downstream implementation and monitoring instruments was uneven.

Conclusions. Phase V was a highly relevant and generally successful Project that strengthened trade-related policies and institutions, improved enterprise capabilities and expanded opportunities for women, rural producers and smaller firms. UNDP's distinctive contribution lay in working across policy, institutions and enterprises and connecting international expertise with national priorities and local implementation realities.

The Project confirmed the value of the macro–meso–micro model as a means of contributing to higher-level change where support at different levels addressed related constraints. Strong delivery generated credible policy, institutional and enterprise-level changes and selected commercial results. At Project closure, however, the persistence, wider institutionalization and scale of these effects could not yet be established consistently. Their further development depends both on areas that future programming can strengthen, including clearer results pathways, focused enterprise/value-chain support, transition arrangements and stronger financing partnerships and on factors beyond the Project's direct control, including government implementation, private investment, infrastructure and market conditions.

Phase V leaves UNDP with a strong foundation for continued engagement in trade-led development in Central Asia. Future support should be more strategically focused, particularly for resource-intensive enterprise/value-chain support, use enterprise experience more systematically to inform institutional and policy change, and engage government, financing and private-sector partners capable of addressing the structural constraints required for sustained impact and scale.

Summary of Evaluation Ratings

Evaluation criterion	Rating	Summary rationale
Relevance	Highly Satisfactory	Strong strategic alignment and adaptive response to changing national and regional priorities.
Coherence	Satisfactory	Regional-country linkages and external partnerships were complementary, but uptake arrangements and IFI links were uneven.
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	Strong delivery produced credible policy, institutional and enterprise changes and selected commercial outcomes, while the depth of institutionalization and evidence of longer-term commercial sustainability were more uneven.
Efficiency	Satisfactory	High financial delivery and effective adaptive management, with expenditure reporting and oversight aligned with UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP) requirements and the donor-agreed reporting framework. Value for money was generally credible; more granular comparative cost-effectiveness analysis was not an approved monitoring

		requirement and could not be undertaken from the available level of cost disaggregation.
Sustainability	Moderately Likely	Ownership, institutional embedding and co-investment support continuation, while financing, staffing, market and regional conditions constrain durability and scale.
Overall outcome/ performance	Satisfactory	The Project achieved substantial results; evidence of sustained commercial outcomes, regional institutionalization and wider scale remained more conditional.

Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and overall outcome/performance use the six-point UNDP performance scale; sustainability uses the four-point likelihood scale.

Priority Recommendations

#	Evaluation Recommendation	Responsible Party	Priority	Timeline
1	Concentrate enterprise and value-chain support on a limited number of evidence-selected pathways with clear links from policy and institutional support to sustainable commercial results.	UNDP IRH and UNDP COs, with national institutions and private-sector partners	High	To inform future programming and resource mobilization; operational arrangements to be established during the design of any approved support
2	Use enterprise-level experience and pilots to inform institutional and policy change.	UNDP IRH and participating COs, working with national counterparts	High	Build into programme design and operationalize within the first 6–12 months
3	Explore strategic financing partnerships that connect UNDP Aid for Trade support with larger reform and investment pathways.	UNDP IRH and participating COs, working with national counterparts, relevant IFIs and other financing partners	Medium	Explore during future programme design and resource mobilization; develop selected partnership opportunities within the first 6–12 months of any approved support
4	Embed women's economic empowerment in trade institutions and use mentorship to translate opportunities into commercial progress.	UNDP IRH and participating COs, working with relevant government institutions, trade- and business-support organizations, women's business organizations and private-sector partners	High	Agree institutional responsibilities during programme design and operationalize them within the first 6–12 months of any approved support
5	Strengthen proportionate value-for-money assessment in future Aid for Trade programming.	UNDP IRH and participating COs, working with project teams, national counterparts and implementing partners	Medium	Consider during project formulation and resource allocation, and review periodically during implementation

3 Introduction

3.1 Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and cross-cutting results of the **UNDP Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V Project**, implemented from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2026 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Istanbul Regional Hub (IRH), in collaboration with UNDP Country Offices (COs) in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with funding from the Government of Finland.

The Project is a regional UNDP initiative with a budget of approximately EUR 6.8 million and represents the latest phase of a longer Aid for Trade engagement that began in 2009. It seeks to support inclusive and sustainable growth by strengthening productive capacities, value-chain upgrading, regional cooperation, trade-support institutions, and the participation of firms and producers in regional and global markets.

In line with the Terms of Reference (ToR) in Annex 10.1, the evaluation examines the Project's integrated macro–meso–micro model, covering policy and enabling-environment support, trade-support institutions and service providers, and enterprises, producers and value-chain actors. It assesses contributions to outcome-level change, regional added value, institutional and market-facing capacities, gender equality, inclusion and sustainability. Serving both accountability and learning, the evaluation provides evidence for UNDP, national counterparts, the Government of Finland and other stakeholders on achievements, areas of stronger and weaker performance, and priorities for future programming.

3.2 Key evaluation questions

The evaluation is guided by key questions aligned with the ToR, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)- Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria and the Project's revised Theory of Change (ToC). Where evidence permits, the evaluation also considered how Phase V built on earlier phases of the Aid for Trade initiative, while recognizing that the evidence base for assessing cumulative contribution since 2009 is limited and will therefore be treated cautiously. The key evaluation questions are:

- **Relevance and coherence:** To what extent did the Project respond to national trade, productive-capacity, competitiveness and inclusive-growth priorities, while aligning with UNDP, SDG, Finnish development and partner frameworks?
- **Intervention logic and regional added value:** To what extent did the regional and macro–meso–micro design provide a coherent framework for addressing trade and value-chain constraints, and what did the regional component achieve beyond country-level interventions?
- **Effectiveness and contribution to results:** To what extent did the Project achieve its outputs and contribute plausibly to policy and institutional change, stronger trade-support services, (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise) MSME competitiveness, market access, value-chain upgrading, employment, livelihoods and inclusive participation in trade?
- **Continuity with earlier phases:** Where evidence is available, how did Phase V build on tools, partnerships, platforms, institutional relationships and lessons from earlier phases, and how did this affect current results and sustainability?
- **Efficiency and adaptive management:** To what extent did management, coordination, partnerships, monitoring and resource use support timely, adaptive and cost-effective delivery across regional and country components?

- **Sustainability and scale:** To what extent are supported capacities, services, tools, partnerships, policy contributions and enterprise-level changes likely to continue, and what conditions affect their institutionalization, replication or scale?
- **Gender equality, inclusion and environmental sustainability:** To what extent did the Project advance women's economic empowerment, youth and disability inclusion, human rights, LNOB and environmental sustainability through more equitable access to resources, services, markets and decision-making?
- **Monitoring, learning and future programming:** To what extent were the results framework, data, targets, disaggregation, risk management and learning systems adequate, and what lessons and innovations should inform future Aid for Trade programming in Central Asia.

3.3 Primary users and audience

The primary users of the evaluation are the Government of Finland, the Project Board, UNDP IRH, the Project Management / Inclusive Growth Team, UNDP COs in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, national ministries and agencies, and the Evaluation Reference Group. These users are expected to use the report for accountability, strategic decision-making, management response, future programming, resource allocation, possible follow-on or scale-up support, transition planning, and institutional learning. For Finland, the evaluation will inform the strategic value and future direction of its support. For UNDP and national counterparts, it will provide evidence on results, regional value-added, sustainability, implementation performance and lessons for future Aid for Trade programming.

The wider audience includes trade support institutions, export promotion agencies, chambers of commerce, standards and certification bodies, business associations, MSMEs, producers, processors, cooperatives, women entrepreneurs, youth, persons with disabilities, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)/ Non-governmental Organization (NGOs), implementing partners, service providers and other development partners. These stakeholders are important both as sources of evidence and as users of findings for learning, validation, service improvement, partnership development and possible replication of good practices.

The evaluator sought to make the report accessible and useful to its diverse audience. It is organized around clear evaluation criteria, concise findings, evidence-based conclusions and actionable recommendations, with detailed methodological materials and stakeholder mapping provided in the annexes. Technical concepts and evidence limitations are explained where necessary, and recommendations are directed to those best placed to act.

3.4 Intervention being evaluated

The evaluation covers the UNDP Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V Project, financed by the Government of Finland and implemented by the UNDP IRH and COs in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. **Phase V is assessed as an integrated, multi-country and multi-level intervention rather than as a set of separate country activities**. The scope includes the regional and three country components and examines how support across the regional, macro, meso and micro levels interacted. This encompasses regional cooperation, policy and enabling-environment support, trade-support institutions and services, and assistance to MSMEs, producers and value-chain actors.

The evaluation covers the implementation period from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2026. Earlier phases are considered only where credible evidence shows that prior support, institutional relationships, tools or platforms influenced the relevance, effectiveness or sustainability of Phase V.

3.5 Structure of the report

The report is organized into ten sections. Sections 1 and 2 contain the opening pages and Executive Summary. Section 3 introduces the evaluation, including its purpose, users, key questions and scope. Section 4 describes the Project's context, design, components, ToC, implementation arrangements, stakeholders, resources and cross-cutting priorities. Section 5 presents the evaluation scope and methodology, including criteria, methods, data sources, limitations and ethical considerations. Section 6 sets out the findings across the evaluation criteria, regional added value and cross-cutting issues. Sections 7, 8 and 9 present the conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. Section 10 contains the supporting annexes, including the ToR, mission itinerary, stakeholder list, bibliography, evaluation matrix, data-collection tools and survey results.

4 Project Description and Background Context

4.1 Project objectives, components, strategy and main problem it addresses

The Project addresses the underutilization of productive capacities and trade potential in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Key constraints include limited economic diversification, weak firm and value-chain competitiveness, barriers to standards and certification, uneven access to market intelligence and business services, low digital and e-commerce readiness, and limited integration into regional and global markets. These challenges particularly affect MSMEs, rural producers and other value-chain actors and are compounded by external shocks and the need for greener, more resilient and inclusive growth.

The Project seeks to promote inclusive and sustainable growth by strengthening productive capacities, trade-related institutions, enterprise competitiveness, green and employment-rich value chains, and regional cooperation. Its strategy combines mutually reinforcing interventions at the regional, macro, meso and micro levels, based on the premise that trade constraints cannot be addressed through isolated policy reform or enterprise support. The Project has three components:

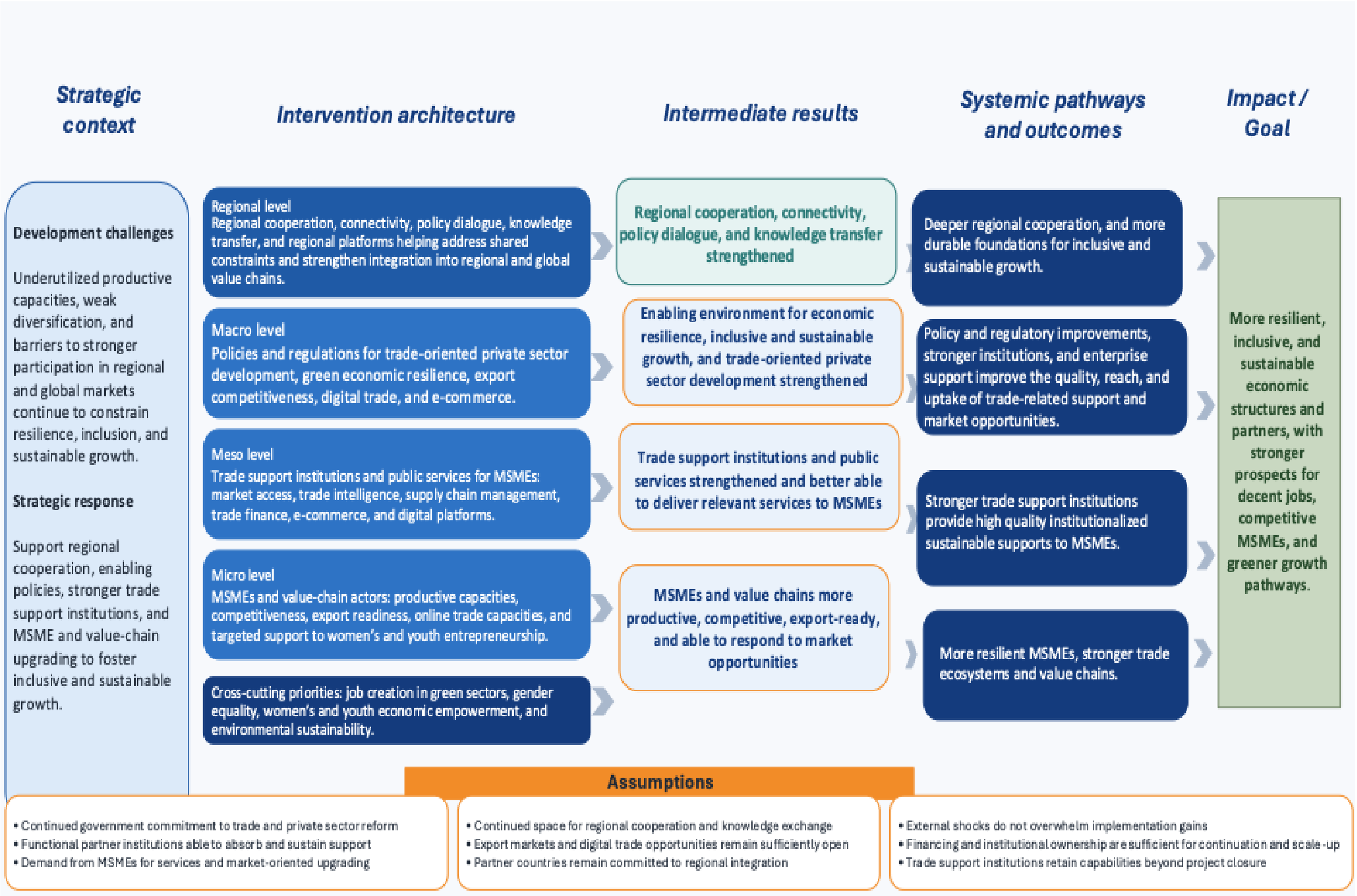
1. regional cooperation, connectivity and integration into regional and global value chains;
2. an enabling environment for economic resilience and inclusive and sustainable growth, including private-sector development, green resilience, digitalization and e-commerce; and
3. job creation and improved efficiency, competitiveness and gender responsiveness in selected green value chains.

Institutional beneficiaries include government bodies, local authorities, trade-support and export-promotion institutions, chambers, standards and certification bodies, and business associations. Enterprise-level beneficiaries include MSMEs, producers, processors, cooperatives and entrepreneurs, with particular attention to women, youth, rural populations and persons with disabilities who face additional barriers to accessing skills, services, finance, technology, networks and markets.

4.2 Theory of Change (including macro–meso–micro linkages)

The Project's ToC, summarized in Figure 1, explains how the Project support is expected to contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth in Central Asia by linking interventions at the regional, macro, meso and micro levels. For the purposes of this evaluation, the ToC is used as an analytical framework to understand the Project's intervention logic, expected results and contribution pathways. The detailed assessment of the quality, plausibility and implementation of the ToC is presented later in the findings section.

Figure 1: Revised ToC: Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V



As shown in Figure 1, **the Project logic is based on the assumption that trade-related constraints in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan cannot be addressed through enterprise support, institutional strengthening or policy reform in isolation**. At the regional level, the Project was expected to support cooperation, connectivity, policy dialogue, knowledge exchange and regional platforms that address shared barriers to trade and value-chain integration. At the macro level, activities were expected to contribute to improved policy and regulatory frameworks for trade-oriented private sector development, green economic resilience, trade digitalization and e-commerce. At the meso level, support to trade support institutions, export promotion bodies, business associations, public service providers and standards-related institutions was expected to improve the quality and availability of services for MSMEs. At the micro level, direct support to MSMEs, producers, processors, cooperatives and value-chain actors was expected to strengthen productive capacities, competitiveness, export readiness, digital trade capacities and market access.

The ToC assumes that these levels reinforce one another. Improved policies and regulatory conditions are expected to create a more enabling environment for trade and private sector development. Stronger trade support institutions are expected to provide more relevant and accessible services to firms and producers. Better-supported MSMEs and value-chain actors are expected to improve business practices, production quality, standards compliance, digital readiness, market linkages and resilience. The regional dimension is expected to add value by facilitating shared learning, common approaches, market intelligence and cooperation on issues that are difficult to address through country-level interventions alone.

The expected results include strengthened regional economic cooperation and knowledge exchange; improved policy and regulatory frameworks; stronger public and trade support services for MSMEs; improved productive capacities, competitiveness and export readiness of MSMEs and value-chain actors; increased access to markets, including through digital trade and e-commerce; and expanded employment and income opportunities, including decent green jobs and opportunities for women and youth. The results framework includes indicators related to enterprise support, job creation, women-owned and women-led enterprises, export performance, value-chain participation, market access and enabling conditions for trade and private sector development.

At a higher level, the Project was expected to contribute to stronger integration of participating countries into regional and global value chains, more competitive and resilient MSMEs and value-chain actors, improved policy and institutional frameworks for trade-oriented private sector development, and more inclusive, sustainable and gender-responsive economic structures. These contributions were expected to support broader national and regional priorities related to economic diversification, export competitiveness, green growth, employment generation, women's economic empowerment and sustainable development.

The ToC rests on several key assumptions. These include continued government commitment to trade-oriented private sector development and regional cooperation; sufficient institutional capacity and ownership among national partners and trade support institutions; willingness and ability of MSMEs and value-chain actors to adopt improved practices, standards and digital tools; availability of market opportunities for supported products and services; effective coordination between regional and country components; and adequate integration of gender equality, youth inclusion, environmental sustainability and Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principles into implementation.

4.3 Implementation arrangements and stakeholders

The Project was implemented as a regional UNDP intervention covering Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with a regional component coordinated through the UNDP IRH and country-level activities delivered through UNDP COs and national partners. The original Project Document set the implementation period from 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2025. The Project was subsequently amended through a no-cost extension process, with UNDP requesting an extension until 30 September 2026 to allow completion of outstanding activities under the national components in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as the regional component. The extension was endorsed by the Project Board on 3 June 2025 and accompanied by 2026 Annual Work Plans and a revised results framework. **At the time of the evaluation, the Project was therefore in its final implementation and transition phase**, making the evaluation particularly relevant for assessing results achieved, sustainability prospects, closure requirements, and lessons for any follow-on or scale-up support.

The geographic coverage combined regional activities with country-level interventions. At the regional level, the Project supported cooperation, policy dialogue, knowledge exchange, regional platforms and connectivity measures relevant to integration into regional and global value chains. At the country level, implementation focused on Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, including national-level policy and institutional support and subnational engagement with MSMEs, producers, processors, cooperatives, business associations and value-chain actors. The evaluation therefore treats the Project as an integrated regional-country intervention and assesses both country-specific results and the added value of the regional layer.

The Project's implementation architecture was led by UNDP, with the IRH responsible for overall regional coordination and the UNDP COs supporting implementation of national components, stakeholder engagement and coordination with national counterparts. The Government of Finland served as the sole donor and strategic development partner. The Project Board provided overall governance and oversight, including strategic guidance, review of progress, risks and implementation issues, and endorsement of key adjustments such as the no-cost extension. National ministries, agencies and local authorities were key macro-level counterparts; trade support institutions, export promotion bodies, chambers, standards and certification bodies and business associations were key meso-level partners and beneficiaries; and MSMEs, producers, processors, cooperatives, entrepreneurs, women-led enterprises, youth and rural value-chain actors were the principal micro-level beneficiaries.

4.4 Resources and cross-cutting issues (gender, Leave No One Behind (LNOB))

The Project had a budget of EUR 6.8 million, fully financed by the Government of Finland. Regional coordination was provided by the UNDP IRH, while CO teams in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan managed implementation, stakeholder engagement and operational follow-up. The staffing model combined regional management and quality assurance with national coordination, technical expertise, administrative support, consultants, implementing partners and specialized service providers.[i] This structure supported delivery across the regional, macro, meso and micro levels while retaining substantial national expertise. [ii]

Gender equality and inclusion were integral to the Project's design. The Project carried a Gender Equality Marker (GEN) 2 marker and committed at least 15 percent of its budget to women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. Its LNOB approach focused on women entrepreneurs and workers, youth, rural populations, persons with disabilities and civil society organizations, particularly where these groups faced barriers to skills, services, finance, technology, networks and markets. The evaluation was informed by the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025 and, where relevant, by the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.[iii] These frameworks were applied as analytical lenses rather than as separate compliance assessments. The evaluation therefore examined equitable access, non-discrimination, participation and voice, accessibility, agency and institutional responsiveness, including whether supported opportunities and benefits reached groups facing intersecting barriers.

Environmental sustainability was addressed through support for green value chains, resource-efficient technologies, sustainable production practices, green employment and more resilient business models. The extent to which these commitments were translated into implementation and results is assessed in the cross-cutting findings.

4.5 Development context

Aid for Trade Phase V was implemented in a complex political, economic, social and institutional context. Across Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the Project responded to persistent constraints in productive capacity, competitiveness, market access, standards compliance, trade support services, digital readiness and integration into regional and global value chains. [iv] These constraints were compounded by landlocked geography, high trade and logistics costs, dependence on transit routes, and uneven institutional capacities across countries.

The context differed from earlier phases of the Aid for Trade programme because Phase V was implemented after COVID-19 and during the period affected by the war in Ukraine. COVID-19 weakened many MSMEs, disrupted supply chains, reduced liquidity, and accelerated the need for digitalization and e-commerce. The war in Ukraine further affected trade routes and logistics, making traditional shipping routes through Russia and Ukraine more costly, uncertain or unavailable for some exporters seeking access to European markets. At the same time, evolving regulatory and market requirements in the European Union (EU) and other destination markets increased the importance of standards, certification, traceability, sustainability, labelling, quality management and export readiness.

The social and institutional context also shaped implementation. MSMEs, producers, processors and cooperatives often faced limited access to finance, technology, market information, business services and certification support. Women entrepreneurs, women-led MSMEs, youth, rural populations and persons with disabilities faced additional barriers related to assets, mobility, digital access, networks and participation in market-oriented opportunities. Institutionally, responsibilities for trade, export promotion, standards, agriculture, tourism, digitalization and MSME support were spread across multiple agencies, making coordination and operational follow-through important but uneven.

Several contextual constraints affected implementation and results. The Project had a broad mandate across three countries and a regional component, while available resources were modest relative to the ambition of addressing systemic trade and private sector development challenges. Results also depended on assumptions about policy progress, institutional ownership, firm-level uptake, market access and the practical value of regional cooperation.

5 Evaluation Scope and Methodology

5.1 Scope and objectives

The evaluation served both accountability and learning purposes. It assessed the Project's performance against its ToC and results framework, including delivery of outputs, plausible contributions to outcome-level change, implementation quality, resource use, monitoring and results across the macro, meso and micro levels. It also examined what worked, what worked less well, why results varied across countries and stakeholder groups, and what lessons should inform future Aid for Trade programming in Central Asia.

The evaluation applied the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and cross-cutting results. It also considered early impact and emerging higher-level effects by assessing credible evidence of institutional uptake, enterprise application, market access, competitiveness, employment, livelihoods and inclusive participation in trade. Regional added value, adaptive management, value for money and the prospects for institutionalization, replication and scale were examined throughout. The analysis of gender equality, disability inclusion and LNOB applied a human-rights-based lens focused on equitable access, non-discrimination, participation, voice, accessibility and institutional responsiveness.[v] The detailed evaluation questions are presented in Section 3.2. They were designed to inform Project closure and transition, possible follow-on support, future regional and country programming, and resource-allocation decisions.

The evaluation covered Phase V from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2026, including country components planned through 30 June 2026 and the regional component and overall Project through 30 September 2026. Earlier Aid for Trade phases were considered only where credible evidence showed that prior tools, partnerships, platforms or institutional relationships influenced Phase V. Earlier phases were not assessed as separate interventions.

Geographically, the evaluation covered the regional component and implementation in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, including national engagement and selected subnational interventions in the locations identified in the ToR. It covered all three Project components and the principal institutional and enterprise-level target groups, including government bodies, trade-support institutions, local authorities, MSMEs, producers, processors, cooperatives, business associations, women and young entrepreneurs, persons with disabilities and civil society organizations.

5.2 Evaluation approach and methods

The evaluation used a theory-based, contribution-focused and mixed-methods design consistent with the ToR, UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, UNEG Norms and Standards, and the approved Inception Report. The revised ToC provided the principal framework for examining whether and how regional, macro, meso and micro interventions contributed to policy, institutional, enterprise and early market-level changes. Because observed results were also influenced by government action, market conditions, other development partners and private initiative, the evaluation assessed plausible contribution rather than direct attribution.[vi] Outcome-harvesting principles were used to identify expected and unexpected changes not fully captured by the formal results framework. Data collection combined:

- a structured documentary and literature review covering Project design, results, monitoring, financial and implementation records, earlier evaluations, partner documentation and relevant Aid for Trade and evaluation literature;
- semi-structured key informant interviews and joint or small-group consultations;
- field visits and direct observation;
- online surveys of micro- and meso-level stakeholders; and
- case-based evidence illustrating selected contribution pathways.

The sampling strategy was purposive and stratified rather than statistically representative. It sought balanced coverage across the three countries, the regional component, Project components, intervention levels, stakeholder categories, selected value chains and cross-cutting priorities. Selection considered stakeholders' roles in design, implementation or oversight; exposure to Project support; ability to verify reported changes; geographic coverage; and inclusion of women, youth, rural actors and persons with disabilities where feasible.

A detailed summary of evaluation coverage is presented in Table 1 below. The evaluation matrix in Annex 10.2 links the questions, judgement criteria, data sources and methods. Annex 10.4 presents the mission itinerary and sites visited; Annex 10.5 the interview framework; Annex 10.6 the gender-disaggregated list of persons consulted; Annex 10.7 the survey methodology, instruments and results; and Annex 10.8 the literature and documentation reviewed.

Table 1. Summary of evaluation coverage

Country or level	Consultations and named participants	Broad stakeholder coverage	Field locations	Survey responses
Kyrgyzstan	21 sessions; 46 participants: 28 women and 18 men	UNDP, government, trade and business institutions, implementing partners, development partners, enterprises and beneficiary groups	Bishkek; Chui; Bokonbaev, Jenish, Karakol and Mikhaylovka in Issyk-Kul	83 micro; 9 meso
Tajikistan	21 sessions; 36 participants: 8 women and 28 men	UNDP, government, business associations, implementing partners, producers, processors and enterprises	Dushanbe, Bokhtar, Muminabad, Mastchoh, Khujand, Bobojon Gafurov,	11 micro; 15 meso

Country or level	Consultations and named participants	Broad stakeholder coverage	Field locations	Survey responses
			Buston, Isfara, Asht and Kanibadam	
Uzbekistan	17 sessions; 28 participants: 12 women and 16 men	UNDP, government, export and trade-support institutions, implementing partners, business organizations and enterprises	Tashkent, Namangan, Andijan and Fergana, including surrounding locations	43 micro; 11 meso
Regional and other stakeholders	11 sessions; 12 participants: 8 women and 4 men	UNDP IRH, Government of Finland, UNECE, ITC and Finnish and international partners	Primarily online	—
Total	70 sessions; 122 named participants: 56 women and 66 men	Regional, national, institutional and enterprise levels	Three country missions and regional consultations	137 micro; 35 meso

The consultations comprised 39 individual interviews and 31 joint or small-group sessions. At least one group consultation included additional participants who were not individually recorded. Consultations were conducted in person, online or in hybrid format, primarily in English or Russian, with local-language interpretation where required.

Two purposive online surveys were administered through Microsoft Forms in Russian and relevant local languages. The audited dataset comprised 172 responses: 137 from enterprises and other value-chain actors and 35 from institutions across the three countries. As questionnaires were distributed through several partner-managed lists and communication channels, the total number of recipients was not consistently recorded and a reliable response rate could not be calculated. Survey findings were therefore treated as supplementary, self-reported and non-representative evidence.

The core methodology remained consistent with the Inception Report, with several practical adjustments. The survey instruments were refined after inception to strengthen questions on application, institutionalization, commercial conversion, regional additionality, gender equality, inclusion and sustainability. Direct fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan concentrated on Bishkek, Chui and Issyk-Kul rather than extending to Naryn, Osh and Jalal-Abad; evidence concerning unvisited areas was obtained through documentation, surveys and wider consultations, and site-specific claims were limited accordingly. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan missions broadly covered the regions identified in the ToR. Several tentative appointments were replaced or could not be secured as mission agendas evolved, but all major stakeholder categories were represented. Formal focus groups and social-network analysis were not applied as separate methods because the dispersed sample, field schedule and available network data did not support their robust use. Smaller group and women-focused consultations, targeted interview questions and case-based evidence were used instead. Women represented 45.9 percent of named consultation participants, slightly below the indicative 50 percent target in the ToR; this was mitigated through gender-responsive tools, women-focused consultations and targeted analysis.

As the Project did not directly target human-rights institutions, the evaluation assessed human-rights principles primarily through participation, non-discrimination, accountability, accessibility, LNOB and the application of environmental and social safeguards. Gender equality, LNOB, disability inclusion, vulnerability and social inclusion were integrated into the evaluation design, tools, sampling and analysis. The evaluation sought sex-, age-, disability- and location-disaggregated evidence where feasible and included questions on access to finance, services, assets, technology, digital tools, markets, mobility, time burdens, decision-making, voice and leadership.

All consultations followed UNEG ethical standards. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, confidentiality and non-attribution were maintained, and a do-no-harm approach was applied. The signed UNEG Code of Conduct is provided in Annex 10.9.

The evaluation was conducted by an independent international evaluator, as specified in the ToR. The evaluator brought expertise in evaluation methodology, UNDP and UNEG evaluation standards, theory-based and contribution-focused evaluation, trade and private sector development, value chains, MSME competitiveness, productive capacities, regional programming and Central Asia. The assignment required English and Russian, enabling direct engagement with a broad range of stakeholders.

The main methodological limitations were the compressed timeline, the breadth of the Project across three countries and a regional component, uneven evidence across result levels, and the difficulty of attributing higher-level outcomes in a complex trade and private sector development environment. Evidence was stronger on design, implementation, outputs and early effects than on long-term institutionalization, sustained market performance or structural transformation. The cumulative assessment since 2009 was also constrained by uneven documentation and limited stakeholder memory across earlier phases. These limitations were mitigated through a ToC-based and contribution-focused design, purposive sampling, triangulation across documentary, interview, survey and field-based evidence, follow-up validation where needed, and transparent calibration of claims. The evaluation distinguishes between verified outputs, observed use, plausible contribution, emerging higher-level effects and longer-term impacts that require further evidence.

5.3 Data analysis

Evidence from the documentary and literature review, interviews, group consultations, surveys, field observations and case material was organized against the evaluation matrix, ToC, evaluation criteria, country, Project component, stakeholder category and regional–macro–meso–micro level. Qualitative evidence was coded thematically, quantitative and survey data were analysed descriptively, and comparisons across countries, stakeholder groups and intervention types were used to identify convergence, divergence and contextual variation.

The accuracy and consistency of Project data were examined through source-level verification and triangulation. Consolidated IRH reporting was cross-checked against CO records and, where available, implementing-partner reports, consultant deliverables, beneficiary lists, field-monitoring records, financial data and stakeholder testimony. This analysis identified differences in definitions, reporting periods and aggregation, reduced the risk of double counting and distinguished independently observed or corroborated results from results reported primarily through Project implementation channels.

Effectiveness analysis compared reported performance against baselines and annual and final targets for all 96 Project indicators. The complete indicator-level assessment is provided in Annex 10.3. Target achievement was tested against documentary, interview, survey and field evidence, and the analysis distinguished delivery and reach from institutional adoption, service use, enterprise application, commercial conversion and durability. Results were qualified where definitions or verification arrangements were inconsistent, particularly for employment, sales, exports and other commercial outcomes. Higher-level changes were assessed as plausible contributions rather than inferred directly from output delivery or numerical target achievement.

Efficiency analysis examined financial delivery, budget revisions, staffing and expertise, management and coordination arrangements, responsible-party modalities, and the relationship

between resources and results. It considered the USD 600,000 reallocation from Tajikistan, the use of national relative to international expertise, and whether more resource-intensive delivery arrangements generated credible institutional, enterprise or regional value. Value for money was assessed proportionately through evidence on expenditure, delivery, additionality, uptake, sustainability and feasible delivery alternatives. A retrospective cost-per-outcome or formal cost-effectiveness model was not imposed because the Project was not designed to generate the data required for such analysis.

Contribution pathways were tested by examining whether the expected sequence from Project support to institutional use, enterprise application and emerging outcomes occurred; whether key assumptions held; and what external or alternative factors influenced the result. Major judgements normally required corroboration from at least two reasonably independent sources. Divergent perspectives were retained and explained rather than averaged out.

Gender equality, disability inclusion, LNOB and environmental sustainability were integrated through disaggregation and targeted interpretation of evidence. The analysis considered not only participation but also differences in access, use, decision-making, agency, benefits and institutional responsiveness. Disability-specific analysis remained constrained by limited disability-disaggregated monitoring and the small number of identifiable respondents with disabilities and was therefore interpreted cautiously.

The principal limitations were the breadth of the Project, purposive rather than representative sampling, uneven evidence across result levels, incomplete output-level financial data, limited longitudinal evidence from earlier phases and the difficulty of assessing higher-level market and institutional change before Project closure. Survey findings were also subject to self-selection and positive-response bias, while field visits covered only a subset of supported locations and beneficiaries. These limitations were mitigated through triangulation, targeted follow-up, cross-country and stakeholder comparison, source-level verification and calibrated claims. Evaluative judgements distinguish between verified delivery, observed use or behavioural change, plausible contribution, emerging higher-level effects and results for which evidence remained insufficient.

6 Findings

6.1 Design

Finding 1. The Project's ToC and results framework provided a strong, flexible and institutionally realistic architecture for implementation, but were less explicit about the intermediate pathways through which support would contribute to higher-level economic and systemic outcomes.

The Project Document presented a strong diagnosis of the interconnected barriers affecting trade and productive capacity in Central Asia. It identified regulatory constraints, limited trade-support services, weak standards compliance, fragmented agricultural production, insufficient market information and finance, high transport costs, low digital readiness and persistent barriers affecting women's entrepreneurship. It therefore framed Phase V as a multi-level intervention linking regional cooperation, macro-level policy support, meso-level institutional strengthening and micro-level assistance to MSMEs and value-chain actors. This was a major design strength because it recognized that enterprise competitiveness could not be improved sustainably through isolated training or firm-level support alone and **was designed as a flexible trade and competitiveness intervention capable of responding to evolving government priorities and institutional entry points.** This enabled the Project to engage selectively in areas such as standards, certification, e-commerce, trade intelligence, export promotion, women's entrepreneurship and institutional capacity development.

The design was well aligned with UNDP's comparative advantage and the differing reform contexts of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Rather than prescribing one uniform reform package, it allowed country components to respond to government demand through practical entry points. **The macro–meso–micro connections were particularly well conceived**. The design logic was that such enabling measures would strengthen institutional services, which would then support MSMEs to improve standards compliance, productive capacity, export readiness and market access.

The regional layer was integral to this logic because many constraints were inherently cross-border. The framework included specific targets for the regional component to generate regional public goods, shared knowledge and cooperation on standards, market access, trade intelligence and value-chain integration. The design was therefore more substantive than simply grouping three country projects under a regional label.

The assumptions were also clearly relevant to the results chain. The original ToC assumed, for example, that governments would remain committed to regional integration and export-development policies, that private-sector demand for regional cooperation and online trade would remain stable or increase, that sufficient numbers of firms would have export potential, that green finance would grow, and that export markets would remain open. These were appropriate assumptions for a technical-assistance intervention, but they were demanding and substantially outside UNDP's control.

The main design limitation was not the absence of a credible systems logic, but the limited specification of some intermediate changes connecting the different levels. The results framework included higher-level measures related to policy change, improved public services, market access, export contracts, jobs and business performance, but was less explicit about the milestones and conditions through which these results were expected to emerge—for example, how policy advice would progress from proposal to adoption and implementation; how strengthened institutional capacity would translate into routinely delivered and sustainably financed services used by enterprises; and how enterprise readiness would progress toward transactions and sustained market engagement. Some longer-term outcomes, including durable commercial and resilience effects, would also require observation beyond the Project period.

A related design challenge was managing the breadth inherent in a regional macro–meso–micro programme. The wide scope enabled the Project to respond flexibly to interconnected policy, institutional and enterprise constraints, but required strong prioritization and sequencing to ensure that interventions at different levels reinforced one another. In some areas, support addressed only part of a broader constraint set or remained less tightly connected across levels, reducing the depth of intervention and making broader value-chain upgrading and integrated market-system effects more difficult to demonstrate consistently within the evaluation period.

Finding 2. The regional model was well justified and designed to address gaps that could not be addressed as effectively through national action alone, although the pathways from regional cooperation to sustained national uptake and institutionalized regional mechanisms were not always specified in sufficient detail.

The Project Document presented a strong rationale for regional action. Many constraints affecting trade in Central Asia, including differing standards and practices, limited trade intelligence, weak cross-border value-chain linkages, digital connectivity constraints and barriers to regional and global markets, extended beyond national boundaries. The design therefore appropriately complemented country-level support with regional policy dialogue, shared analysis, cooperation among institutions and value-chain actors, and knowledge transfer within Central Asia and with European, particularly Finnish, counterparts.

The proposed mechanisms were practical and built on existing regional assets rather than creating entirely new structures. The Project envisaged using the Central Asian Trade Intelligence Portal and the Central Asian Working Group on Export Promotion of Agricultural Products, alongside cooperation with the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on trade intelligence and agricultural standards. Exchanges, study visits, expert engagement and business linkages with Finnish institutions were intended to bring external expertise into regional and national systems.

The results framework reinforced this logic through distinct targets for regional policy dialogue, studies of productive capacities and economic opportunities, cooperation among Central Asian value-chain actors, and knowledge-transfer activities. The regional component was therefore a substantive part of the design, focused on shared knowledge, platforms and relationships that would have been difficult to generate through separate national interventions.

The principal design vulnerability was not the plausibility of the regional model, but the limited specification of the intermediate pathways through which regional activities were expected to generate and sustain higher-level effects. Regional dialogue, technical networks, shared analytical work and knowledge exchange provided credible entry points, and the Project explicitly recognized that results depended on continued government commitment, private-sector demand and favourable external conditions. However, the framework was less explicit about the successive milestones through which regional outputs would translate into sustained national application, institutionalized cooperation, coordinated services or stronger cross-border linkages, and about how such changes would be monitored. While IRH and CO responsibilities for connecting regional and national implementation were established, post-project ownership, financing and continuation arrangements for some regional products and mechanisms could have been specified more clearly.

Finding 3. The indicators and monitoring framework were functional for tracking delivery, reach and selected headline results, but captured the institutional, behavioural and market changes required by the Project's systems logic less consistently.

The results framework contained a substantial number of specific and measurable indicators and was not limited to recording activities. At the regional level, it tracked dialogues, studies, cooperation activities and knowledge transfer. At the policy level, it tracked proposals, draft legislation, strategies and recommendations. At the enterprise level, it included measures related to MSMEs supported, women-owned enterprises, value-chain participation, jobs, export contracts, market access and business performance. **Several indicators also demonstrated an effort to go beyond simple beneficiary counts**. The framework included measures related to improvement of public services delivered by trade-support institutions, use of trade and business-development services by MSMEs, export value associated with supported business linkages, online trade capacity, and changes in women entrepreneurs' business performance.

The main weakness was uneven coverage of the intermediate results and milestones through which the Project expected change to occur. At policy level, indicators on proposals, draft legislation and recommendations did not consistently distinguish subsequent stages of formal submission, adoption, incorporation into official frameworks, implementation or financing. At institutional level, the framework included measures of improved services and enterprise use, but was less systematic in tracking whether service improvements became embedded in regular mandates, staffing and budgets, whether service quality was sustained, and whether enterprises became repeat users. At enterprise level, indicators on jobs, contracts, market access and business performance captured important headline outcomes, but the monitoring system did not consistently link specific forms of support such as certification, e-commerce, trade fairs or market intelligence to successive stages of enterprise uptake, transactions and repeated market engagement. Evidence on the longer-term persistence of these results would, in many cases, require longitudinal or post-project follow-up beyond routine implementation monitoring.

Gender integration was comparatively strong in the formal framework. Policy products were expected to include gender lens, women-owned and women-led enterprises were specifically identified, and at least 15 per cent of resources were intended to support women's and youth entrepreneurship, economic empowerment and gender equality. However, indicators were stronger on participation, firms reached and jobs than on women's leadership, decision-making influence, control over income or assets, sustained access to finance, and changes in market power. Disability inclusion was not supported by comparable indicators or systematic disaggregation, limiting the framework's ability to assess whether persons with disabilities benefited equitably.

6.2 Implementation

Finding 4. Phase V implementation benefited from accumulated institutional capacity and learning across earlier Aid for Trade phases, while adaptive management helped preserve relevance despite externally driven delays and uneven country timelines.

The evaluator finds that Phase V was implemented effectively through a multi-level arrangement linking IRH, UNDP COs, national institutions, trade-support organizations, business associations and value-chain actors. Implementation benefited materially from the relationships, technical knowledge, delivery platforms and regional networks developed during previous Aid for Trade phases. This continuity reduced start-up requirements, particularly for the regional component and in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and enabled Phase V to deepen established areas of cooperation rather than construct its partnerships and delivery mechanisms from the ground up.

The Project also demonstrates a clear trajectory of learning across phases. Phase V's design reflected accumulated experience from earlier interventions and evaluations by retaining the macro–meso–micro architecture while placing greater emphasis on regional cooperation, green and "future-proof" value chains, women's economic empowerment, digitalization and e-commerce. Following the Phase IV evaluation, UNDP also adopted a formal and differentiated Management Response: some recommendations were fully accepted, others partially accepted and two were rejected with documented justification. Accepted elements were translated into specific follow-up actions with assigned responsibilities and timelines and were progressively implemented during Phase V. These included strengthened environmental-impact tracking and dedicated reporting, expansion of results-data management, introduction of pre/post tests and self-assessment tools for capacity development, improved documentation of inclusion, adaptations to women's entrepreneurship and community-engagement approaches, use of successful mentees as local ambassadors, and continuity in evaluation methods and data. Together with strengthened field monitoring, beneficiary feedback and verification, this demonstrates that learning from the previous phase was translated into concrete management and implementation adjustments.[vii]

Adaptive management that is covered in depth in sub-section 6.3.4 was a clear implementation strength. The Project adjusted the sequencing, scope and modalities of activities in response to changing government priorities, institutional restructuring and turnover, partner readiness, emerging market opportunities and the wider geopolitical and trade environment. These adjustments generally preserved the relevance and coherence of the Project's integrated approach and allowed implementation to continue where rigid adherence to the original workplans would likely have constrained results. At the same time, several activities had to be delayed, re-sequenced or revised for reasons largely outside the Project's control.

The most significant planned-versus-actual variance occurred in Tajikistan. Difficulties recruiting the core national team delayed the full operationalization of the country component, while changes in the socioeconomic and policy environment required its programmatic focus and staffing model to be recalibrated. During this period, participation in regional activities continued through interim CO arrangements, but substantive country-level implementation started approximately one year later than in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.[viii] Delivery accelerated during 2024–2025, including through stronger engagement with national institutions and the rollout of enterprise- and value-chain support; however, the shortened implementation window left less time for commercialization, market uptake and other downstream results to mature.

The no-cost extension to September 2026 was justified primarily as a consolidation and quality-assurance measure: it provided time to complete outstanding national and regional activities and allowed emerging institutional and market-level results to mature, rather than requiring accelerated delivery that could have weakened quality and sustainability.[ix] The detailed implications of implementation delays, adaptation and the extension for timeliness, financial delivery and resource use are examined under efficiency.

6.3 Results

6.3.1 Relevance

Finding 5. Phase V was highly relevant to national and regional development priorities and remained responsive as government, institutional and enterprise needs evolved.

Phase V was strongly aligned with the strategic priorities of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and with UNDP's regional and corporate frameworks. Its focus on productive capacity, export competitiveness, economic diversification, green growth, digitalization, women's economic empowerment and regional cooperation addressed issues central to national development agendas and the changing trade environment in Central Asia.[x] This assessment is supported by Project documentation, diagnostics, Project Board records, stakeholder interviews and field visits.

At the corporate level, the Project was aligned with the UNDP Regional Programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) 2022–2025, particularly its emphasis on access to productive assets and services, sustainable livelihoods, employment and prosperity. It was also consistent with relevant UNDP Strategic Plan priorities and SDGs concerning poverty reduction, sustainable agriculture, gender equality, decent work, inclusive industrial development, sustainable production and partnerships.[xi] Its objectives remain broadly consistent with the subsequent UNDP regional programming direction for 2026–2029, although that later framework provides evidence of continuing strategic fit rather than part of the Project's original design basis.[xii]

The regional–macro–meso–micro architecture was appropriate to the interconnected nature of the challenges addressed. Regional support responded to shared needs related to standards, trade intelligence, professional networks and access to international expertise. Macro-level assistance supported policy and regulatory priorities; meso-level interventions strengthened trade-support and standards institutions; and micro-level assistance addressed enterprise capabilities, technology, quality, certification and market readiness.

Country portfolios were closely connected to national strategies. In Kyrgyzstan, Phase V supported priorities related to export development, green growth, sustainable tourism, entrepreneurship and digitalization. In Tajikistan, it aligned with industrialization, non-commodity exports, rural development, productive employment and greater domestic value addition. In Uzbekistan, it supported the wider reform agenda related to World Trade Organization (WTO) accession, trade facilitation, investment, quality infrastructure, private-sector development and green transition.

A particular strength was the Project's ability to respond to emerging government demand.[xiii] Project-supported research and continuing consultation enabled country teams to adjust activities as priorities evolved. For example, research on green and "future-proof" products informed support in Kyrgyzstan to sustainable tourism, honey and bee products, dried fruits and nuts, and handicrafts linked to tourism. Similar analysis informed interventions in trade intelligence, standards, certification, processing, green production and export readiness across the portfolio.[xiv] Examples of alignment with broader national strategies included support to e-commerce statistics, customs procedures and the Time Release Study in Kyrgyzstan;[xv] export legislation, free economic zones and modernization of export services in Tajikistan; [xvi] and analysis of more cost-efficient and WTO-compatible export-support measures in Uzbekistan. [xvii] Project Board processes provided an additional mechanism for reviewing strategic fit, national ownership and changing implementation conditions.[xviii]

Field consultations broadly confirmed that the selected interventions addressed practical needs of government institutions, trade-support organizations and enterprises, including export promotion, standards, certification, trade intelligence, processing, aggregation, digital marketing, sustainable tourism and business mentoring.[xix]

The main qualification is that adaptive implementation, while strengthening responsiveness to government and stakeholder priorities, did not always address the full set of binding constraints affecting a value chain. Several interventions responded to complex and nationally owned policy, institutional and enterprise priorities, reflecting the Project's trusted advisory role and strong relationships with counterparts. At the same time, individual interventions sometimes addressed only one part of a broader constraint set involving finance, logistics, aggregation, certification, production volumes and buyer demand. This limited the extent to which otherwise relevant support could translate into integrated value-chain or market-system effects. The trade-off was therefore less about pursuing readily accessible entry points than about the practical limits of addressing multiple interdependent constraints within the Project's mandate, resources and implementation timeframe. This does not materially weaken the assessment of high strategic relevance.

6.3.2 Coherence

Finding 6. Phase V demonstrated strong internal coherence and substantive two-way interaction between its regional and country components and with complementary UNDP initiatives, although regional products were not always accompanied by sufficiently explicit national uptake and follow-up arrangements.

Internal coherence was embedded in the Project's design and broadly confirmed by annual reporting, Project Board records, stakeholder interviews and field visits. IRH managed regional partnerships, shared analysis, technical networks and knowledge exchange, while COs connected these resources to national authorities, institutions, business organizations and enterprises.[xx] This combined regional expertise and economies of scope with the institutional access and contextual knowledge of the COs, without creating parallel national delivery structures.[xxi]

A number of regional–country linkages were identified, with standards, trade intelligence and green value chains providing the clearest flagship examples. The regional layer supplied common methodologies, technical networks and access to international processes, while Country Offices and national institutions translated these resources into country-specific policy, institutional and enterprise support. Field consultations broadly confirmed the value of this model: national counterparts valued access to regional expertise, comparative experience and international networks, while emphasizing the importance of adapting these resources to national institutions and practical needs.[1]

Standards and quality infrastructure provide the strongest example of two-way interaction. Through UNECE and the Central Asian Working Group on Export Promotion of Agricultural Produce (CAWG), specialists from participating countries jointly developed and promoted agricultural quality standards and explanatory materials, while regional cooperation also strengthened practical capacity for inspection, sampling and assessment of compliance. A 2024 regional workshop in Tashkent, for example, combined practical application of UNECE standards with discussion of how national quality-control systems could be strengthened. These regional inputs were complemented nationally: in Kyrgyzstan, the Center of Standardization and Metrology obtained recognition as a certification body for ISO 22000 and HACCP; in Uzbekistan, Phase V supported establishment of a Produce Quality Control and Exporter Training Center and enterprise preparation for HACCP, ISO 22000, GLOBALG.A.P., Halal and Organic standards. The interaction also operated in reverse. National and CAWG specialists brought Central Asian production realities into UNECE processes, including work on the dried rosehip standard, while resulting standards and technical materials were subsequently incorporated into national exporter guidance and compliance services.

Trade intelligence shows a similar regional-to-national multiplier effect. The UNDP–ITC regional programme initially trained 52 analysts and trade-support specialists from the three countries and created a network of 14 ITC-certified trainers. During 2024, nationally based trainers subsequently reached more than 250 trade specialists, exporters and MSMEs across Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, extending the regional methodology through nationally retained expertise. National institutions increasingly applied these approaches through their own market-intelligence and exporter-advisory functions. Field interviews similarly indicated that the value of the regional intervention lay not simply in participation in common training, but in access to methodologies, tools and professional networks that institutions could subsequently adapt and reuse.[2]

Green value-chain work provides a further example of feedback across levels. A regional methodology developed with participation of the three country teams was applied to country-specific production, regulatory and export-market constraints and informed selection of priority value chains for national support. Project Board discussions subsequently confirmed national application of the analysis, including its use in export-promotion work with KyrgyzExport. By 2025, lessons from country implementation were again being consolidated through regional consultations and knowledge products, with this learning explicitly informing refinements to both regional and country programming

---

[1] United Nations Development Programme. (2024, May 16). Aid for Trade in Central Asia: Phase IV and Phase V Projects Board meeting minutes. UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub; United Nations Development Programme. (2025, June 3). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V Project Board meeting minutes. UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews with national authorities, trade-support institutions, standards and quality-infrastructure bodies in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan [Unpublished evaluation evidence].

[2] United Nations Development Programme. (2024). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2023 annual progress report. UNDP; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2024 annual progress report. UNDP; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report. UNDP; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews with ITC, national trade-support institutions and regional stakeholders [Unpublished evaluation evidence].

Standards and trade intelligence provide the clearest examples. Cooperation with UNECE and the Central Asian Working Group on Export Promotion of Agricultural Products connected regional and international standards processes with national institutions, inspectors, producers and processors.[xxii] Regional work on agricultural quality and food-safety standards was complemented by country-level assistance on compliance, certification readiness and enterprise upgrading. Cooperation with ITC similarly introduced shared trade- and market-intelligence tools that were subsequently applied through national export agencies and other trade-support institutions. Regional research on green and future-proof value chains also informed country-level sector selection.[xxiii]

The Project also generated synergies with other UNDP initiatives where complementary networks, expertise and geographic presence were available. In Uzbekistan, established UNDP engagement in the Fergana Valley helped connect Phase V with local authorities, business associations and enterprises working on standards, green value chains, women-led businesses, inclusive employment and sustainable tourism. In Kyrgyzstan, cooperation with another UNDP initiative supported participation in international tourism promotion. These arrangements enabled Phase V to build on existing relationships and delivery capacity rather than establish stand-alone structures.[xxiv]

Gender equality and environmental sustainability were reflected across regional and country activities, including policy dialogue, institutional support, green value-chain development and assistance to women-led enterprises. Disability inclusion was less consistently integrated and remained more dependent on individual activities and partnerships.

The principal qualification is that coherence was stronger in thematic alignment than in systematic follow-through. Regional products and networks were not always accompanied by clear national uptake plans, assigned responsibilities, financing or monitoring of subsequent use. Project Board discussions themselves raised questions concerning the follow-up and utilization of analytical studies and study visits, even while confirming examples of national application. These gaps qualify, but do not materially weaken, the assessment of generally strong internal coherence.

Finding 7. External coherence was strong: partnerships based on complementary mandates extended the Project's technical reach and largely avoided duplication. A key opportunity for future programming is to strengthen systematic connections between UNDP's technical, institutional and enterprise support and financing and investment mechanisms that can enable scale.

The design explicitly anticipated cooperation with specialized organizations, including ITC, UNECE, Hilfswerk International, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), International Finance Corporation (IFC), United States Agency for International Development (USAID)and other partners, rather than expecting UNDP to internalize all the necessary expertise.[xxv] Project documentation, partnership records and stakeholder interviews confirm that Phase V was broadly coherent with other actors working on trade, standards, export promotion, enterprise development and regional cooperation. Finland's contribution beyond financing is assessed separately in Finding 8.

The partnerships with the ITC and the UNECE provide the clearest examples. ITC contributed trade- and market-intelligence methodologies and expertise, while UNDP connected these inputs with national export-support institutions. The joint programme trained 52 analysts and specialists in 2023, with certified national trainers subsequently extending the approach across the three countries. [xxvi] UNECE and the Central Asian Working Group connected international agricultural standards with national institutions, inspectors, producers and processors, complemented by practical work on inspection, sampling and compliance.

A broader group of partnerships complemented this core technical offer. Collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme (CAREC) strengthened the capacities of officials and researchers to design, negotiate, implement and monitor free-trade agreements and contributed to a proposed CAREC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) roadmap. A direct collaboration with the WTO supported a regional programme on trade and gender, while cooperation with women's business associations supported mentorship and services for women-led MSMEs. In Tajikistan, Responsible Party Agreements with the Aga Khan Foundation and the University of Central Asia expanded value-chain and women's entrepreneurship support into rural and underserved areas. In Uzbekistan, dialogue with the World Bank, Alibaba and the Association of E-commerce explored cooperation on digital skills and access to international marketplaces, while discussions with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) considered possible cooperation on sustainable tourism in the Fergana Valley.[xxvii] Late-stage engagement with Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) also opened a possible route for complementary expertise and networks.[xxviii] Disability inclusion also benefited from engagement with organizations of persons with disabilities in all three countries. This partnership dimension was still emerging compared with the Project's more established gender and green-economy partnerships: collaboration had supported inclusive enterprise and mentoring activities, although systematic policy-level engagement and a regional results pathway were less developed.[xxix]

An important opportunity for future programming is to strengthen systematic connections between UNDP's technical, institutional and enterprise support and financing and investment mechanisms that can enable scale. The Project Document recognized access to long-term and trade finance as a constraint, identified potential financing partners including IFC, and envisaged leveraging public, private and development resources. Phase V also established relevant engagement with financing institutions: cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was primarily technical, while dialogue with the World Bank and other financing actors provided opportunities for exchange and potential alignment. These relationships did not, however, develop into a structured pathway linking Project-supported reforms, institutional services or enterprise/value-chain interventions with financing, investment readiness or larger investment programmes. Nor did the results framework explicitly track progression toward financing, co-financing or mobilized investment. This should therefore be understood primarily as a future programme-design opportunity: more systematic partnerships with IFIs, development-finance institutions and other public and private financing actors could help connect UNDP's technical and institutional contributions with financing and investment pathways for sustainable scale, where appropriate.[xxx]

Validation interviews confirmed that USAID had exited relevant trade and private-sector programming, while several other donor-supported programmes had reduced or narrowed their engagement. ITC, UNECE and GIZ remained active in defined areas, but the overall presence of complementary development partners had diminished. This reduced potential overlap but also increased the importance of UNDP's country presence, institutional relationships and ability to convene specialized expertise. **Looking forward, these comparative strengths could be complemented by more systematic engagement with financing partners where larger-scale investment is needed to sustain or expand Project-supported reforms, services and enterprise pathways.**

Finding 8. Phase V was coherent with Finland's development priorities and deliberately used Finnish expertise and networks beyond the funding relationship. Results were strongest in business brokerage, institutional learning and relationship-building, but less developed in sustained institutional uptake and commercial cooperation.

Project documentation, annual reports, Project Board records and stakeholder interviews confirm that the Finnish dimension was intentionally incorporated into Phase V through B2B activities, study visits, expert exchanges and institutional partnerships. The approach drew on Finnish experience in innovation, digitalization, sustainable and circular-economy approaches, food safety, quality management and standards. **It was closely aligned with Finland's development policy priorities concerning sustainable economy and decent work, the rights of women and girls, and climate change, biodiversity and sustainable natural-resource management**.[xxxi]

Some relevant Finnish cooperation activities on food safety, certification and sustainable tourism pre-dated Phase V and should not be attributed to it. These earlier activities nevertheless provided professional relationships and accumulated experience that Phase V could draw upon, although available evidence does not establish that they generated sustained certification, institutional change or repeat commercial activity.[xxxii]

In Kyrgyzstan, the strongest direct Phase V example was the August 2023 Kyrgyz–Finnish Business Forum. An internal results note reported 175 subsequent business negotiations or meetings and three signed contracts with a nominal value of USD 30.2 million, providing evidence that engagement progressed beyond initial introductions and illustrating UNDP's brokerage role. The USD 30.2 million figure should, however, be treated as the reported nominal value of signed contracts rather than as verified or realized sales: the contracts were not independently reviewed by the evaluation, and subsequent reporting does not confirm implementation of the full amount. Later Project reporting recorded approximately USD 2.44 million in implementation across nine contracts arising from several trade-promotion events, but did not disaggregate the amount attributable specifically to the Kyrgyz–Finnish Business Forum. The evidence therefore supports a credible contribution to business matchmaking and progression toward commercial transactions, while the scale of realized commercial results attributable specifically to the Forum cannot be established with confidence.[xxxiii]

Institutional exchange was more prominent in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In August 2024, ten representatives from seven Tajik public institutions examined Finland's export-promotion, quality-infrastructure and business-support systems. Subsequent outreach by the Tajik Chamber of Commerce concerning participation in Finnish trade fairs provided evidence of initial follow-up, although resulting changes in institutional services or enterprise market access were not yet demonstrated.[xxxiv] In Uzbekistan, six senior officials participated in a February 2024 visit involving 15 meetings with Finnish institutions. A joint visit in September 2025 subsequently brought four Tajik and six Uzbek participants to Finland to examine sustainable tourism, eco-certification, digital services and international positioning. These exchanges generated relevant learning, comparative exposure and professional relationships, but evidence of institutional adoption remained limited.[xxxv]

Field-phase consultations broadly confirmed that Finnish exchanges were valued for comparative learning, professional contacts and exposure to credible institutional models. They also identified important barriers to commercial conversion, including limited awareness of Central Asian products and destinations in Finland, geographical distance and transport costs, certification and laboratory gaps, limited supply volumes and aggregation, uneven commercial readiness, buyer confidence and insufficient post-event follow-up.

6.3.3 Effectiveness

As summarized in Table 2 below and detailed in Annex 10.3, **Phase V demonstrated very strong reported performance against its results framework.** Of the 96 indicators, 81 were reported as achieved or exceeded without qualification, eight were achieved with qualification, four were considered likely to be achieved, and three were assessed as at risk or unlikely to be achieved. Performance was strongest at the regional and macro levels, while the few material shortfalls were concentrated in Tajikistan's micro-level portfolio. These results provide strong evidence of delivery but do not, by themselves, establish the quality, adoption, institutionalization or durability of the changes reported. The findings below therefore examine how Project-supported policies, services, tools and enterprise practices were adopted and used, the factors that enabled stronger effectiveness, and the areas where results remained qualified. Broader changes in exports, income, employment and structural transformation are assessed separately under early impact, while continuation and institutionalization are examined under sustainability.

Table 2. Summary of Target Achievement Assessment

Component	Total	Achieved without qualification	Achieved with qualification	Likely	At risk	Unlikely
Regional	5	4	0	1	0	0
Kyrgyzstan	32	28	4	0	0	0
Tajikistan	29	21	2	3	1	2
Uzbekistan	30	28	2	0	0	0
Total	96	81	8	4	1	2

Finding 9. Phase V's macro–meso–micro model generated credible and mutually reinforcing results across policy, institutional and enterprise levels, with the strongest contribution where interventions were connected around defined sector or market pathways. The revised ToC was broadly borne out in practice, although progression towards sustained commercial, institutional and regional outcomes remained dependent on adoption, financing, market response and political-economy conditions.

Contribution analysis against the revised ToC indicates that Phase V generated substantial progress across all four interconnected pathways. Evidence was particularly strong for policy and institutional uptake, strengthened service capacity, enterprise-level application and regional knowledge and cooperation. The main variation concerned **how far these results had progressed from immediate and intermediate changes towards institutionalization, sustained commercial performance and wider systemic effects**. This is consistent with the ToC, which assumes that higher-level change depends on continued government commitment, functioning partner institutions, enterprise demand, market opportunities, financing and institutional ownership, and continued space for regional cooperation.[xxxvi]

At the macro level, the pathway from technical and policy support to a stronger enabling environment was well established, although downstream effects depended on implementation. Phase V contributed to adopted programmes, regulatory and procedural improvements and nationally owned reform processes across export development, customs facilitation, tourism, green economy, standards and related areas. Results were strongest where government demand was explicit, responsible institutions had authority to act and Project inputs coincided with active reform processes. Where these conditions were weaker, technically sound proposals were more likely to remain under review or at draft stage. The evaluative distinction is therefore between credible contribution to policy quality, adoption and institutional alignment, which was often strong, and the subsequent translation of these measures into financed implementation and measurable effects on firms and markets, which extends beyond the Project's direct control and timeframe.

At the meso level, Phase V moved convincingly from capacity development towards practical institutional use, although sustainability is less firmly established. Trade-support institutions acquired and applied market-intelligence tools, advisory methodologies, certification and standards expertise, digital platforms and other capacities, with substantial evidence of improved service quality and enterprise-facing application. The main qualification is not whether institutional strengthening occurred, but whether supported functions will continue at the same quality and frequency after Project support ends. Prospects are stronger where functions are embedded in formal mandates, regular budgets and established staffing, and more conditional where continued delivery depends on specialist personnel, subscriptions, data access or external facilitation. The meso pathway therefore performed strongly in terms of capability and initial use, while the degree of full institutionalization remains uneven.

At the micro level, Phase V generated some of its clearest and most tangible results, with strong evidence that enterprises changed practices and productive capabilities. Supported firms and value-chain actors improved production, processing, quality, packaging, resource efficiency, certification readiness, digital promotion, business planning and market engagement, particularly where assistance addressed a specific business constraint, market requirement or commercial opportunity. These changes are directly consistent with the ToC expectation that MSMEs and value chains become more productive, competitive, export-ready and better able to respond to market opportunities. The less mature part of the pathway is the transition from improved capability and readiness to repeat commercial performance, sustained employment and wider value-chain effects. These outcomes depend on finance, certification costs, logistics, aggregation, production volumes, infrastructure, buyer relationships and demand; in Tajikistan, several investments had not yet completed a full production and marketing cycle. The evaluation therefore finds strong enterprise-level effectiveness, while sustainability and longer-term commercial impact require additional time to assess.

At the regional level, Phase V generated clear added value through shared technical capacity, knowledge, professional networks and emerging regional public goods. Cooperation through UNECE and CAWG, ITC-supported trade intelligence and regional exchanges created expertise and relationships that individual countries would have been less likely to develop independently. The pathway was most advanced where cooperation centred on technically defined issues such as standards, trade intelligence and professional exchange that aligned with national institutional interests. Progress towards more formalized or jointly financed regional mechanisms was necessarily slower because it depended on political economy, national priorities, shared ownership and recurrent financing. This qualification does not weaken the regional rationale; rather, it confirms that regional cooperation progressed most effectively through technically grounded and nationally relevant entry points, while deeper institutionalization is inherently gradual and non-linear.

Country experience illustrates how these pathways interacted in practice. In Kyrgyzstan, tourism and linked handicrafts provided the clearest integrated example. At the macro level, the Project supported the national tourism-development framework and sustainable-tourism criteria. At the meso level, cooperation with the Department of Tourism, the Kyrgyz Association of Tourism Organizations and other partners translated these priorities into advisory services, certification preparation and market promotion.[xxxvii] At the micro level, tourism enterprises and related producers received support on product development, service quality, safety, sustainability and digital promotion. Interviews with public institutions, sector associations, tourism businesses and handicraft groups in Bishkek and Issyk-Kul confirmed application through improved products, business planning, digital visibility and external promotion. Links with handicrafts, cultural products and local services also extended opportunities to women-led and rural enterprises within the wider local economy.[xxxviii]

In Tajikistan, a promising pathway connected export policy and institutional support with the dried-fruit value chain. Support to export planning, the Export Portal and trade-support institutions was complemented by assistance to aggregation centres and efforts to connect producers in Khatlon with more established processors in Sughd. Field evidence confirmed the underlying market logic: producers required aggregation, storage, transport and market connections, while processors needed more reliable volumes and quality. The pathway was therefore coherent and operationally relevant, but several investments and institutional arrangements were introduced late and had not yet completed enough production and marketing cycles to demonstrate their full commercial effect.[xxxix]

In Uzbekistan, the strongest pathway connected national trade-modernization, standards and green-production priorities with institutional compliance services and enterprise upgrading in the Fergana Valley. National institutions strengthened standards, certification and exporter-advisory functions, while enterprises applied support to production, packaging, resource efficiency, mentoring and pre-certification preparation. The wider Uzbekistan portfolio also contained several complementary macro-, meso- and micro-level pathways. The limitation was therefore **not the absence of a coherent results logic**, but that these pathways were not always documented or monitored as a single sequenced causal chain showing how specific policy and institutional changes translated into wider sector-level effects. The contribution to broader sector change was consequently credible but less directly traceable than the stronger evidence of institutional and enterprise-level results.[xl]

Finding 10. Phase V made substantive and valued contributions to regional cooperation and to nationally owned policy, regulatory and institutional processes. Effectiveness was strongest where governments sought external expertise to align reforms with international requirements and incorporated that advice into adoption or operational use.

At the regional level, Phase V met or exceeded four of five targets and generated credible immediate results through common standards work, trade-intelligence tools, regional dialogue and professional capacity development. The Central Asian Working Group and collaboration with ITC strengthened technical knowledge, networks and nationally retained expertise, although uptake and operational use varied across countries. These results are considered further under early impact, including their contribution to institutional cooperation, international engagement and emerging regional public goods.

At national level, all 13 macro-level indicators were reported as achieved or exceeded**. The Project generally responded to specific government requests within broader reform processes.** Its contribution lay less in initiating reforms than in providing timely and trusted expertise that helped counterparts draw on global practice, align proposed measures with WTO rules and international standards, and validate policy options before adoption. National counterparts consistently valued this role, particularly where specialized knowledge or an independent technical perspective was needed to support complex decisions.

In Kyrgyzstan, the strongest evidence concerned export policy and customs facilitation. Project expertise contributed to the adopted National Export Programme "Made in Kyrgyzstan" for 2025–2028, while the supported Time Release Study methodology was operationalized and subsequent studies financed nationally.[xli] Contributions to entrepreneurship, e-commerce, green economy and tourism instruments were also credible, although these remained at different stages of finalization or implementation.

In Tajikistan, Project support contributed to national development and export programmes, analysis of regulatory barriers and reported legislative changes concerning free economic zones. [xlii] Other initiatives, including the draft Law on Export Support and digital-commerce instruments, remained under consideration or inter-agency review. The evidence therefore supports contributions to agenda-setting, policy formulation and selected legislative change, but not completed regulatory outcomes across the full portfolio.[xliii]

Uzbekistan had the broadest macro-level portfolio, reflecting a strong nationally driven reform agenda and sustained demand for international expertise. Project inputs informed work on WTO-compatible export support, investment, responsible business conduct, free economic zones and export-support institutions. MIIT and ITC independently confirmed that analysis of transport and export subsidies informed government decisions, while several other instruments remained under legislative development or consultation.[xliv] Phase V therefore influenced selected reforms within a wider government-led process rather than generating them independently.

Across the three countries, results were strongest where government demand was explicit, the counterpart had authority to act, technical support aligned with the reform timetable, and follow-through connected analysis with adoption or operational use. Where these conditions were weaker, useful inputs were more likely to remain as studies, recommendations or draft instruments, while institutional restructuring, staff turnover and inter-agency coordination slowed uptake. **Phase V's most defensible contribution was therefore to strengthen policy quality, institutional capability and alignment with international practice, rather than to claim comprehensive system reform or independently attributable changes in trade performance**. [xlv]

Finding 11. Phase V substantially strengthened the skills, tools and service capacity of selected trade-support institutions, but prospects for sustained delivery depended on formal mandates, recurrent financing and organizational incentives.

At the meso level, 20 of the 21 indicators were reported as achieved or exceeded, including qualified achievements, while the remaining indicator was considered likely to be achieved. Phase V supported export-promotion agencies, chambers of commerce, standards and certification bodies, tourism institutions, business associations and other intermediaries expected to translate policy priorities into services for firms. **Triangulation of Project reporting, institutional interviews and evidence of service delivery confirmed substantial gains from training-of-trainers, market-intelligence tools, digital platforms, advisory methodologies and international exposure**. These inputs strengthened institutional capabilities and service offers, but sustained delivery depended on clear mandates, recurrent budgets, specialist staff, data access and incentives to maintain regular engagement with enterprises.[xlvi]

The meso survey provides corroborating evidence that Phase V support was relevant, used in practice and associated with perceived institutional and beneficiary-level changes. Among the 35 institutional respondents, 91.4 percent rated the support as highly or fully aligned with institutional needs, 84.8 percent reported improved service quality or relevance, and 80.0 percent reported regular or occasional use of Project-supported services, tools or approaches. In addition, 80.0 percent perceived significant or very significant changes among the MSMEs and value-chain actors they served, while 94.3 percent considered the Project to have made at least a substantial contribution to institutional changes. Although 85.7 percent expected the improvements to continue, a somewhat lower 77.1 percent reported that supported services or tools had been fully or partly embedded in regular institutional work.

In Kyrgyzstan, KyrgyzExport provided the clearest evidence of institutionalization.[xlvii] Phase V supported the export.gov.kg portal, market-intelligence subscriptions, exporter guidance, market profiles, staff development and regional outreach through the Export Caravan. Interviews confirmed that trade analytics, exporter consultations and training had become part of its regular work and that Project-supported knowledge was subsequently used under the national "Made in Kyrgyzstan" Export Programme. Its public mandate and growing government support provided a comparatively strong basis for continuity, although portal maintenance, data access and outreach still required recurrent financing. Other chambers and associations acquired useful tools and knowledge but had fewer dedicated resources or viable revenue models for delivering trade-specific services regularly and at scale.[xlviii]

In Tajikistan, institutional results were more recent and less embedded, partly because the delayed start reduced the time available to move from capacity development to routine service delivery. The Agency for Export established the Export Portal, online learning resources, dialogue mechanisms and emerging advisory functions, while the Chamber of Commerce and Industry strengthened its website, business information and export-preparation support. However, several services remained under development, and evidence of regular updating, repeated use by firms and recurrent financing was limited. The Project therefore strengthened institutional foundations, but had not yet supported a fully operational and sustainably financed export-support model.

In Uzbekistan, results were strongest where Project assistance complemented established government mandates and public financing. The Trade Development Company already operated state-backed services covering international fairs, B2B facilitation, certification subsidies, showrooms and selected pre-export support. Phase V strengthened the analytical quality and market orientation of this system through market intelligence, international exposure and comparative institutional analysis rather than creating the delivery mechanism itself. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Agency for Technical Regulation also improved market-analysis, certification and exporter-advisory capabilities.[xlix] Their mandates and nationwide structures supported continuity, although shortages of specialized staff and equipment, gaps in internationally recognized testing and certification, certification costs and limited buyer demand continued to constrain enterprise uptake.[l]

Across the three countries, institutional results were strongest where Phase V reinforced an established public mandate, counterpart leadership and recurrent resources. Capacity development alone was less likely to produce sustained services where institutions lacked dedicated staff, operational budgets, data access or incentives to maintain regular contact with enterprises.

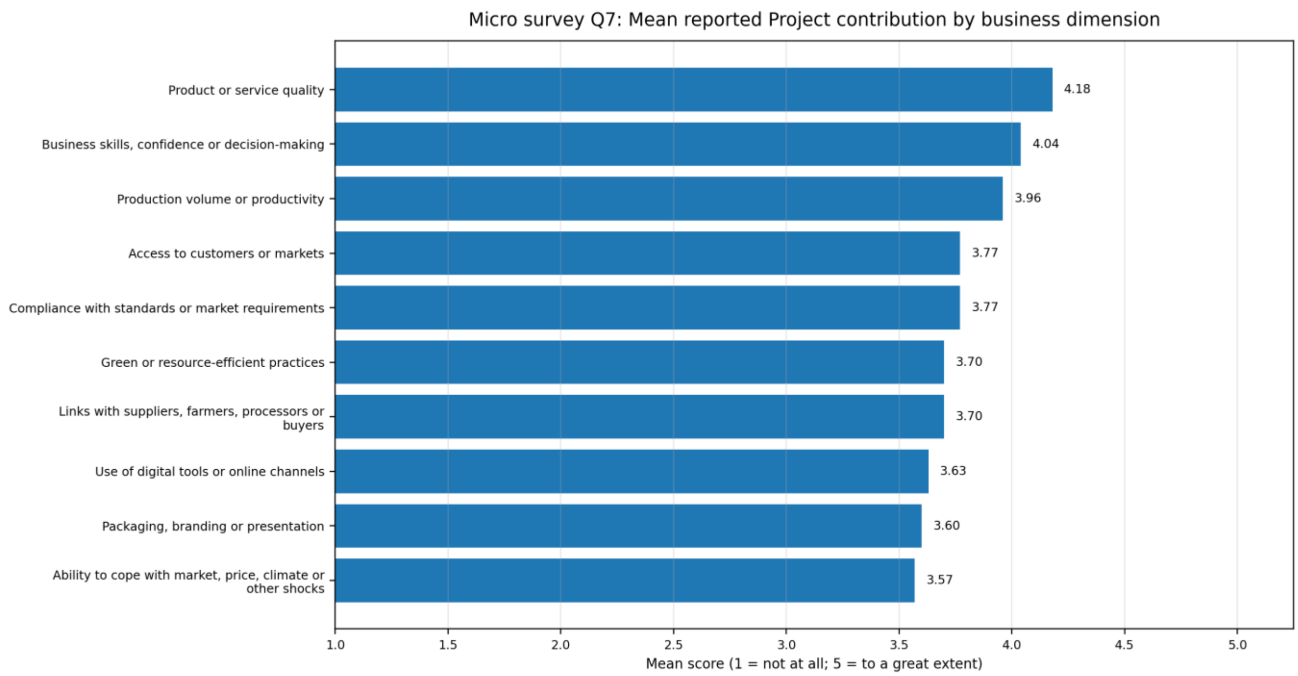
Finding 12. Phase V generated strong and diverse enterprise-level results across selected value chains. Effectiveness was strongest where technical support addressed a clear business constraint or market opportunity, while the principal shortfalls were concentrated in Tajikistan and partly reflected its delayed operational start.

Of the 57 micro-level indicators, 50 were reported as achieved or exceeded without qualification, two were achieved with qualification, two were considered likely to be achieved, and three were at risk or unlikely to be achieved. All 13 targeted value chains, four each in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and five in Uzbekistan received support. Assistance addressed practical enterprise and value-chain functions, including aggregation, storage and processing, product quality, resource efficiency, certification preparedness, digital marketing, business planning and market connections.[li]

Fieldwork confirmed that these results reflected tangible changes in enterprise practices rather than activity completion alone. In Kyrgyzstan, support to honey and bee products strengthened quality management, processing, packaging, certification readiness and relationships between processors and beekeepers. Tourism, handicraft and dried-fruit enterprises similarly applied support to improve products, service standards, digital visibility and market readiness.[lii]

Survey evidence presented in Figure 2 corroborates these findings. Question 7 of the micro survey asked respondents to rate the extent of the Project's contribution to ten business dimensions on a five-point scale. As shown in Figure 2, the highest mean scores concerned product or service quality (4.17), business skills, confidence or decision-making (4.04), and production volume or productivity (3.95).

Figure 2. Micro survey Q7: Reported Project contribution by business dimension



Micro-level survey, n = 137. Question 7 scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = to a great extent; "not applicable" responses excluded.

In Tajikistan, field visits validated the practical logic of connecting dehkan farmers and aggregators in Khatlon with more established processors and exporters in Sughd. Producer groups and aggregation centres received warehouses, collection vehicles, drying and processing equipment and improved handling materials. Farmers and aggregators described using nets, crates, pallets and storage to reduce losses, improve quality and consolidate volumes, while processors emphasized the value of more reliable supply, consistent quality and stronger farmer–processor coordination. Several investments were recent, however, and had not yet completed sufficient production cycles to demonstrate their full commercial effects.[liii]

Building a bridge between regions

At Suhrob Sharipov's consolidation centre in Muminabad, the evaluation saw how a locally owned enterprise could connect farmers in Khatlon with processors in Sughd. The centre gave small producers a more reliable route to larger markets, while northern processors gained better-organized access to raw materials. Sharipov's own investment and ambition were central to the result. The visit offered an encouraging example of how practical support could strengthen local initiative and give producers greater confidence that their products could reach opportunities far beyond their own communities.

Source: field mission notes and Project reports

In Uzbekistan, enterprises demonstrated varied forms of adoption, including water- and energy-saving technologies, improved processing and packaging, certification preparation, women's mentoring, green entrepreneurship and development of niche products. The country's stronger institutional environment also created entry points for connecting enterprise experimentation with established MSME, export and green-transition programmes.[liv]

Across the three countries, effectiveness was strongest where technical upgrading was linked to an identifiable business case, market requirement, buyer relationship or functioning institutional support system rather than remaining at the level of general capacity-building. The three material shortfalls were concentrated in Tajikistan: 14 of the targeted 40 MSMEs or individuals gained access to value chains, three of five planned climate-resilient or low-emission solutions were introduced, and three of 20 new women-led enterprises were established. These results partly reflected the delayed start and compressed implementation period, which provided less time for equipment, aggregation facilities and enterprise support to mature into market entry, technology adoption and new business formation. The shortfalls therefore qualify, but do not materially alter, the strongly positive assessment of overall micro-level effectiveness.

6.3.4 Efficiency

Finding 13. Financial delivery was strong and resources were managed adaptively, with generally credible value for money. The approved financial reporting structure supported financial oversight and accountability, although the level of cost disaggregation available to the evaluation did not permit a more granular comparative assessment of cost-effectiveness across intervention types and delivery modalities.

Phase V maintained strong financial delivery and adjusted its use of resources as implementation conditions evolved. As the Project was not designed with a formal cost-per-outcome or cost-effectiveness framework, the evaluation does not impose one retrospectively. It instead considers whether resource allocations, staffing, partnerships and technical inputs were proportionate to identified needs and generated reasonable value relative to feasible delivery alternatives.

Phase V did not include a dedicated value-for-money framework based on unit costs, cost-per-outcome measures or systematic comparison of alternative delivery modalities; nor was such a framework specified in the approved Project design. Financial delivery, resource utilization and achievement of results were nevertheless monitored regularly through annual workplans, progress and financial reporting, Project Board oversight and adaptive budget management. Available evidence supports a generally positive qualitative assessment of value for money, although the financial data were not structured to enable a detailed retrospective comparison of costs and results across different intervention types or delivery modalities.

Provisional financial data presented in Table 3 below indicate that cumulative expenditure and commitments reached EUR 6.69 million by 30 June 2026, equivalent to 98.5 percent of the budget. Cumulative delivery increased from 49.82 percent at the end of 2024 to 82.46 percent at the end of 2025 and 98.5 percent by June 2026, indicating that the extension enabled the Project to complete or commit resources for most outstanding activities.

Table 3. Revised budget, cumulative expenditure and variance by output, 30 June 2026[lv]

Output	Budget (EUR)	Expenditure and commitments (EUR)	Variance (EUR)	Delivery
Regional	1,285,084.72	1,193,770.42	91,314.30	92.89%
Kyrgyzstan	2,088,611.67	2,085,589.43	3,022.24	99.85%
Tajikistan	1,333,317.27	1,328,006.22	5,311.05	99.60%
Uzbekistan	2,088,611.67	2,086,594.59	2,017.08	99.90%
Total	**6,795,625.33**	**6,693,960.67**	**101,664.66**	**98.50%**

Source: Phase V January–June 2026 draft financial report. Uzbekistan and total expenditure include USD 24,966.95 in outstanding commitments. Financial data were provisional at the time of the evaluation.

The remaining variance was concentrated in the regional output, which accounted for approximately 90 percent of the unutilized balance. The financial reports did not provide sufficient activity-level detail to determine whether this residual balance reflected timing, savings or incomplete regional activities. Similarly, expenditure within the four outputs could not be disaggregated consistently across macro-, meso- and micro-level interventions or thematic results areas. This limits assessment of whether resources were concentrated on the activities generating the strongest adoption, institutionalization or commercial results.

Budget management nevertheless responded appropriately to major implementation variances. In October 2024, the Project Board reallocated USD 600,000 from Tajikistan equally among the regional, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan outputs. At that point, cumulative delivery in Tajikistan was only 26.86 percent, reflecting its delayed operational start and limited capacity to use the original allocation within the remaining period. Delivery subsequently increased to 74.75 percent by the end of 2025 and 99.60 percent of the reduced allocation by June 2026. The reallocation and extension were therefore pragmatic responses to demonstrated absorptive capacity rather than evidence of limited demand.

A notable efficiency strength was the extensive use of national consultants, trainers and institutional expertise for policy analysis, export-promotion systems, trade intelligence, e-commerce and value-chain development. This reduced reliance on international inputs, strengthened contextual relevance and helped retain knowledge within participating countries. The recruitment of an international Project Manager/Chief Technical Adviser for Tajikistan was a justified response to unsuccessful national recruitment efforts and the need to recover delayed implementation, and available evidence indicates that the appointment contributed to implementation recovery. Available documentation did not permit the evaluation to compare systematically the relative cost and efficiency of the international management modality with feasible national alternatives. The evaluation therefore considers the appointment operationally justified, while noting that its comparative efficiency could not be fully assessed from the available evidence.

Responsible-party arrangements were justified where partners offered specialist expertise, geographic access or beneficiary networks that the Project could not readily reproduce, particularly for value-chain work in Tajikistan. The three country assessments of green products, value chains and export opportunities also provided a common analytical basis for intervention selection. **The**

evaluation could not systematically compare the cost-effectiveness of partner delivery with direct delivery because comparable cost data were not available.

Finding 14. The Project was supported by a lean and generally effective management architecture; transparent beneficiary selection in major micro-level interventions and strengthened field monitoring improved accountability and adaptive management.
The management architecture was appropriate to the Project's regional, country and multi-level design. Under the Direct Implementation Modality, IRH provided consolidated management, regional delivery and oversight, while Country Offices implemented national portfolios under delegated authority. [lvi] This combined regional coherence and accountability with the institutional relationships and operational presence required for country delivery. The Project Board functioned as an active management mechanism, reviewing performance, workplans, budgets, risks and monitoring evidence and taking decisions on resource reallocation, implementation priorities and the no-cost extension. [lvii]

The staffing model established clear responsibilities across regional management, CO assurance, national Project leadership and technical delivery.[lviii] By using established UNDP programme, finance, procurement and administrative systems, the Project avoided large parallel structures and maintained a relatively lean model. Management also adapted constructively to implementation constraints, including delayed recruitment in Tajikistan, institutional restructuring in Uzbekistan and the additional oversight required for responsible-party delivery. These adjustments increased coordination requirements but helped implementation recover and remain responsive. Risk monitoring covered relevant political, institutional, financial, security and operational concerns, with mitigation measures and management responsibilities assigned.[lix]

A particular management strength was the transparency of beneficiary selection in major enterprise-support, mentorship and incubation initiatives. Documentation reviewed by the evaluation included public calls, standardized applications, predefined criteria, scoring tools, selection committees, shortlisting and pitching processes. In Tajikistan, selection considered business viability, implementation capacity, co-financing and linkages with producers and markets, while subsequent monitoring verified supporting records and beneficiary compliance.[lx] Competitive procedures were also applied to entrepreneurship and e-commerce initiatives in Kyrgyzstan.[lxi]

Field consultations confirmed that these procedures had practical significance. Several women entrepreneurs and rural business owners reported initially expecting that grants or equipment would depend on connections or informal influence. Selection through open competition increased confidence that smaller and less-connected firms could compete on the quality of their proposals. Public calls, documented scoring, retained records, communication with applicants and subsequent beneficiary verification therefore strengthened the credibility of Project support.

The monitoring system also supported adaptive management.[lxii] Country monitoring reports combined site observation and beneficiary interviews with procurement, co-financing and documentary checks; verification of equipment, infrastructure and safety conditions; and assessment of production, employment, sales and operational constraints. [lxiii] Monitoring identified delayed or underused investments, equipment-installation and electricity problems, asset-transfer issues and sustainability risks, and informed corrective follow-up. In Tajikistan, it also provided direct verification of beneficiary selection, procurement and equipment use under the AKF and UCA responsible-party agreements. [lxiv]

The main qualification concerned results measurement and indicator verification rather than the overall quality of management or field monitoring. Of the 96 indicators, 81 were reported as achieved or exceeded without qualification, eight were achieved with qualification, four were considered likely to be achieved, and three were at risk or unlikely to be achieved. The qualifications reflected a combination of indicator-design, reporting, aggregation and verification issues. The approved Results Framework was comparatively comprehensive and included policy-, institutional- and enterprise-level outcome indicators covering policy implementation, improved and utilized services, client-base growth, exports, jobs, income, productivity, certification, market access, online trade and sales. However, some indicators did not distinguish sufficiently between successive stages such as development, adoption, implementation and operational use. Other qualifications arose primarily from reporting and verification: data aggregation did not always allow consistent confirmation of unique beneficiaries and gender subtargets, while commercial reporting did not always clearly distinguish facilitated or signed contracts from executed transactions and realized export revenues. **The main lesson for future programming is therefore not simply to reduce the number of indicators, but to rationalize and prioritize a more strategic set of outcome-oriented measures that clearly track progression from outreach and uptake to adoption, operational use, institutionalization and commercial results**. Clear definitions, consistent aggregation and stronger verification protocols would further strengthen evaluability, accountability and the assessment of value for money.

6.3.5 Sustainability

Finding 15. Phase V established credible sustainability foundations where supported functions were embedded in national mandates and routine services; prospects were more conditional for models and tools requiring recurrent resources and for regional cooperation dependent on shared ownership.

As Phase V was still operational during the evaluation, sustainability could not yet be assessed through observed continuation after closure. The evaluation therefore examined credible proxies: incorporation into approved policies and workplans, assigned mandates and staff responsibilities, retained capacity, recurrent financing, repeated service delivery, continuing demand and practical transition arrangements. Prospects were strongest where Project support reinforced permanent institutions and ongoing regulatory or market functions, and more conditional where continuation depended on external facilitation, subscriptions, platform maintenance, certification costs or shared regional financing.[lxv]

As discussed in Findings 10 and 11, Phase V contributed to policy uptake, stronger standards and certification functions, and improved trade-support services across the three countries. The sustainability question is not whether these results occurred, but whether partners have the mandate, staffing, resources and incentives to maintain them. In Kyrgyzstan, Project-supported export development, sustainable tourism and green-economy priorities were incorporated into government programmes and institutional arrangements. Uzbekistan established permanent structures and programmes covering export promotion, standards and private-sector development.[lxvi] Prospects in Tajikistan were more provisional because several services were introduced late and had not yet demonstrated regular updating, repeated use or recurrent financing.[lxvii]

The same differentiation applied across the wider portfolio. **Adopted policies, retained methodologies and practices embedded in institutional work had comparatively strong prospects for continuation. Enterprise-level benefits from training, green-production support, mentoring, equipment and improved production and business practices could also persist where firms retained the capacity and incentive to use them, even without immediate export conversion**. Longer-term commercial returns were more conditional where working capital, maintenance, certification, logistics, aggregation or sustained buyer relationships remained unresolved. Given the limited number of enterprises supported and the early stage of several value-chain interventions, these gains are best viewed as promising but not yet demonstrative of wider replication or broader value-chain upgrading.

Field visits showed that formal adoption alone was not decisive. Continuation appeared most credible where counterparts could explain who would deliver a supported function, through which structure and with what resources. Committed officials, association leaders and technical staff often drove uptake, **but reliance on individual champions remained a vulnerability where responsibilities had not been formalized or supported by regular budgets**.[lxviii]

The meso-level survey reinforces this differentiated assessment. While 85.7 percent of respondents expected the improvements to continue, 77.1 percent reported that supported services or tools were fully or partly integrated into routine operations. Limited institutional budgets were the most frequently identified risk, followed by technical-capacity constraints, platform-maintenance costs and staff turnover.

At the regional level, technical products and retained expertise had stronger sustainability prospects than the mechanisms required to maintain cooperation. Trade-intelligence methodologies, trained specialists, UNECE standards, explanatory materials and professional relationships can continue through national institutions. The Central Asian Trade Intelligence Portal (CATI) portal, continued CAWG activity and other shared platforms are more conditional because their value depends on updated content, active focal points, technical coordination and modest recurrent financing.[lxix]

Political-economy conditions further differentiated the prospects for regional trade and tourism. Improved relations among participating countries supported stronger technical exchange, but differing national priorities, institutional mandates, market competition, border procedures and transport constraints continued to limit initiatives requiring shared ownership. A common Fergana Valley tourism identity, for example, offered regional potential but raised sensitivities because of the name’s close association with Uzbekistan’s Fergana Region. Technical cooperation on standards, trade intelligence and professional exchange therefore had stronger prospects than common branding or integrated tourism products requiring political agreement, shared financing and negotiated benefit distribution. Regional trade and tourism nevertheless remain credible areas for selective cooperation.

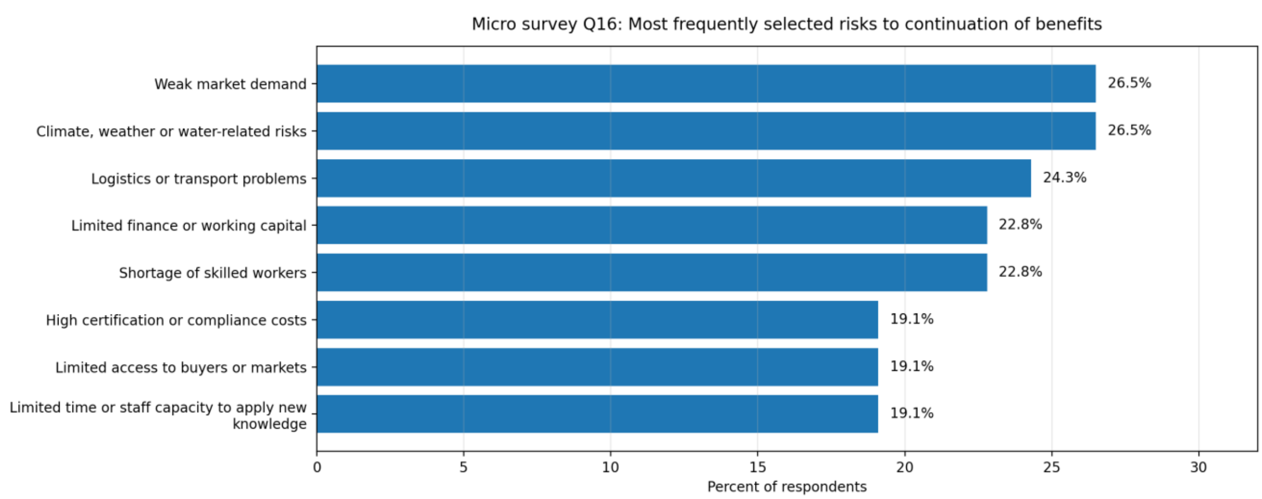
Finding 16. Micro-level sustainability prospects were generally favourable for continued use of Project-supported assets, technologies and practices where beneficiary commitment, co-investment and commercial incentives were strong; the durability and scale of resulting commercial gains remain more dependent on market demand, finance, logistics and other external conditions.

As shown in Finding 12, Phase V generated diverse enterprise-level results across selected value chains. **Sustainability prospects were strongest where Project support addressed a clear productive-capacity, business or market constraint and became integrated into the beneficiary’s own investment strategy**. Major enterprise-support initiatives generally used competitive and documented selection processes, including public calls, predefined criteria, scoring and, in some cases, pitching. Criteria typically considered business viability, implementation capacity, producer or market linkages and, where relevant, willingness or ability to co-invest. These procedures helped identify beneficiaries with sufficient commitment and capacity to make effective use of support, while field consultations also indicated that competitive calls enabled smaller and less-connected firms to compete on the quality of their proposals. This strengthened ownership and prospects for continued use without limiting support only to already established firms. The favourable sustainability prospects observed among supported beneficiaries should nevertheless not be extrapolated automatically to the wider MSME population, particularly firms with substantially different levels of maturity, resources, implementation capacity or market access.[lxx]

Field visits confirmed that sustainability was strongest where Project inputs reinforced an existing commercial trajectory. Enterprises continued to use machinery, storage and processing technologies, quality-control practices, business knowledge and market contacts. In several cases, beneficiaries invested amounts comparable to or greater than the Project contribution in premises, additional equipment, renewable energy, storage or working capital. Such co-investment provided a strong indication of ownership and showed that Project inputs formed part of broader business strategies rather than isolated grant-dependent activities.[lxxi]

The micro-level survey nevertheless identified important risks to the continuation and, particularly, the expansion of enterprise-level results. As presented in Figure 3 below, the most frequently selected response options were weak market demand and climate-, weather- or water-related risks (26.5 percent each), followed by logistics or transport problems (24.3 percent), and limited finance or working capital and shortages of skilled workers (22.8 percent each). These constraints do not necessarily imply that Project-supported gains will cease: enterprises may continue to use acquired equipment, skills, technologies or improved business practices. Rather, they affect the extent to which these gains can be sustained at scale and translated into stronger commercial returns. Storage and processing technologies, for example, can continue to reduce losses and strengthen productive capacity, while wider commercial effects depend on production volumes, maintenance, finance and viable producer–processor–buyer relationships. E-commerce support can leave lasting digital skills and visibility even where platform costs, payments, logistics, documentation and marketing constrain sustained online sales. Certification, tourism and handicraft interventions face similar dependencies, with the scale and commercial returns of supported gains remaining sensitive to recurrent costs, visitor flows, logistics and market demand.

Figure 3. Micro survey Q16: Risks to continuation of benefits



Source: Evaluation micro survey, audited n = 137. Multiple responses were permitted; percentages show the share selecting each stated response option and do not sum to 100.

Field evidence illustrated these points. Storage and processing technologies created a stronger basis for reducing post-harvest losses, but wider effects depended on production volumes, maintenance, working capital and viable producer–processor–buyer relationships.[lxxii] E-commerce support strengthened digital skills and visibility more consistently than sustained online sales, which remained constrained by platform fees, payments, logistics, documentation, marketing costs and limited follow-up.[lxxiii] Certification, tourism and handicraft support faced similar dependencies on recurrent costs, visitor flows and reliable market demand.

Interviews and field evidence suggested that women-led and rural enterprises often demonstrated strong commitment and continued use of supported assets and knowledge, while some remained more exposed to constraints related to finance, business networks, mobility and unpaid care responsibilities. These observations are consistent with barriers identified in the Project design and evaluation framework, but should not be generalized across the full portfolio given the purposive nature of the evaluation sample. Sustainability prospects for such enterprises therefore depend not only on individual motivation, but also on continued access to advice, finance, certification, technology, logistics and commercially relevant networks.[lxxiv]

In sum, micro-level sustainability prospects were strongest where four conditions converged: a capable and committed beneficiary; meaningful beneficiary investment; continued use of commercially valuable assets and practices; and an enabling environment providing demand, finance, inputs, logistics and buyer access. Phase V directly strengthened the first three conditions and also influenced elements of the fourth through policy reform, institutional strengthening, standards and certification, trade-support services and market intelligence. However, important enabling conditions such as finance, logistics, infrastructure, buyer demand and wider market dynamics remained only partly within the Project's influence and will be important determinants of the scale and commercial returns of enterprise-level gains.

Evidence of wider replication and scaling was emerging but less developed than evidence of likely continuation among direct beneficiaries. Annual reporting and evaluation evidence identified examples of approaches being institutionalized, adapted or disseminated through national institutions and partnerships, including trade-intelligence and other trade-support services, sustainable-tourism standards and certification mechanisms, training-of-trainers approaches, peer learning and replication of good practices. However, the breadth, maturity and degree of independent replication varied across interventions. The evaluation therefore finds credible early pathways toward wider institutional and market uptake, but could not yet establish that these approaches had reached sufficient scale or independence from Project-supported facilitation to demonstrate systemic effects across the wider portfolio.

6.3.6 Early Impact

Finding 17. Phase V generated credible early institutional impact and established pathways towards improved international compliance and more inclusive, environmentally sustainable and trade-oriented development. Prospects for continued uptake were comparatively strong for several flagship policies and institutional approaches, although wider economic, fiscal and SDG effects remain conditional on implementation, financing and private-sector response.

Phase V moved progressively from analysis, policy preparation and capacity-building towards policy uptake and practical institutional use. At the time of the evaluation, the probability of adoption or continued uptake was high for several flagship initiatives because Project-supported inputs had entered approved programmes, government planning processes, operational methodologies or institutional services. **Effective implementation could improve compliance with international standards, reduce trade and administrative costs, expand formal and higher-value economic activity, strengthen inclusion and environmental performance, and contribute over time to**

employment, income, a broader public-revenue base and progress towards the SDGs.[lxxv] Wider evaluative evidence from some relevant World Bank projects evaluations supports this caution, indicating that trade-related programmes often generate credible intermediate effects before sustained changes in income, employment, productivity, or exports become fully visible and verifiable.[lxxvi]

Kyrgyzstan provided the clearest policy-to-institution pathway. Project expertise contributed to the National Export Development Programme 2025–2028, which had been adopted and was under implementation. The Tourism Development Programme 2025–2030 and its Action Plan were approved, while the National Sustainable Tourism Criteria were finalized and piloted through training and certification preparation. The National Time Release Study Methodology was being applied, subsequent studies were nationally financed, and Project inputs had informed aviation, railway, postal and inter-agency control procedures. KyrgyzExport expanded its market intelligence, exporter guidance and regional outreach, while the Center of Standardization and Metrology obtained recognition as a certification body for ISO 22000 and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP).[lxxvii]

These measures create a comparatively strong pathway towards more predictable trade procedures, stronger exporter services, improved standards compliance, increased domestic processing and access to higher-value markets. Sustainable-tourism measures could also extend income opportunities to guides, artisans, food producers and other rural enterprises. If these changes expand formal activity, employment, domestic value addition and recorded trade, they could gradually broaden the tax and social-contribution base. Continued policy and institutional uptake is highly probable, while wider income, employment and fiscal effects remain more dependent on finance, certification costs, logistics, aggregation and buyer demand.

In Tajikistan, the strongest pathway linked export diversification with green economic transition. Phase V recommendations on the National Strategy on Green Economy 2023–2037 informed preparation of the Mid-Term Development Programme 2026–2030. The Project also supported the approved State Programme on Export Development 2026–2030, a green-trade action plan and analysis of non-commodity exports, which was approved by the Agency for Export and made available through institutional platforms, including the Trade Facilitation Committee. Ministry for Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan (MEDT) counterparts reported that specific recommendations concerning free economic zones were reflected in legislative changes. The draft Law on Export Support remained under government consideration, however, while digital-commerce proposals had not completed formal review and adoption.[lxxviii]

If backed by financing and clear institutional responsibilities, these initiatives could encourage higher-value processing, product and market diversification, standards compliance, resource-efficient production and more stable rural income and employment. Stronger producer–processor relationships, aggregation and storage could also reduce post-harvest losses and improve farmer returns. Uptake within national planning frameworks is moderately high, but wider impact remains more conditional because of the component's later start and continuing constraints in finance, institutional capacity, quality infrastructure and market access.

Uzbekistan generated the broadest portfolio of policy and analytical propositions, with differing levels of uptake. Project reporting indicates that the women's entrepreneurship assessment was informing the government-funded Women's Entrepreneurship Support Programme, while a Market-Access Policy Paper was supporting MIIT's horticulture export roadmap and a HACCP/ISO 22000 toolkit had been piloted in Fergana. Other work addressed higher-value and more water-efficient horticulture, informal employment and formalization, Responsible Business Conduct, logistics modernization and regulatory pathways for horticultural exports.[lxxix]

Implementation of these recommendations could increase women's economic participation, enterprise survival and access to finance; improve employment security and social-protection coverage through proportionate formalization; raise water and land productivity; reduce post-harvest and logistics losses; and strengthen environmental and social due diligence in investment and corporate systems. Logistics measures such as digital single-window functions and multimodal hubs could further reduce delivery time and uncertainty. Policy influence is highly probable for selected initiatives, but wider environmental, employment and fiscal effects remain dependent on government decisions, investment, inter-agency coordination and safeguards for smaller producers.

At the regional level, early impact arose primarily from public goods, expertise and professional networks that individual countries would have been less likely to develop independently. Through CAWG, Phase V connected specialists from the participating countries with UNECE standard-setting processes and supported joint technical work on agricultural products important to Central Asia. This strengthened regional professional cooperation, increased the visibility of Central Asian expertise in international processes and generated standards and explanatory materials reflecting regional production conditions. The ITC partnership established nationally based expertise in trade and market analysis: certified trainers subsequently delivered national training, elements of the methodology entered institutional services and university teaching, and the Central Asian Trade Intelligence Portal attracted more than 5,000 users. These results demonstrate movement from regional knowledge exchange towards nationally retained and reusable capability.

Interviews also indicated that the Project reinforced a broader development-oriented framing of trade. Policymakers and institutional partners commonly connected trade with diversification, decent employment, resilience, gender equality, environmental performance and the SDGs, and several emphasized that reforms should benefit poorer and more vulnerable groups. This cannot be attributed to Phase V alone, but it suggests that the Project helped translate developmental and distributional considerations into selected analyses, planning processes and institutional services.[lxxx]

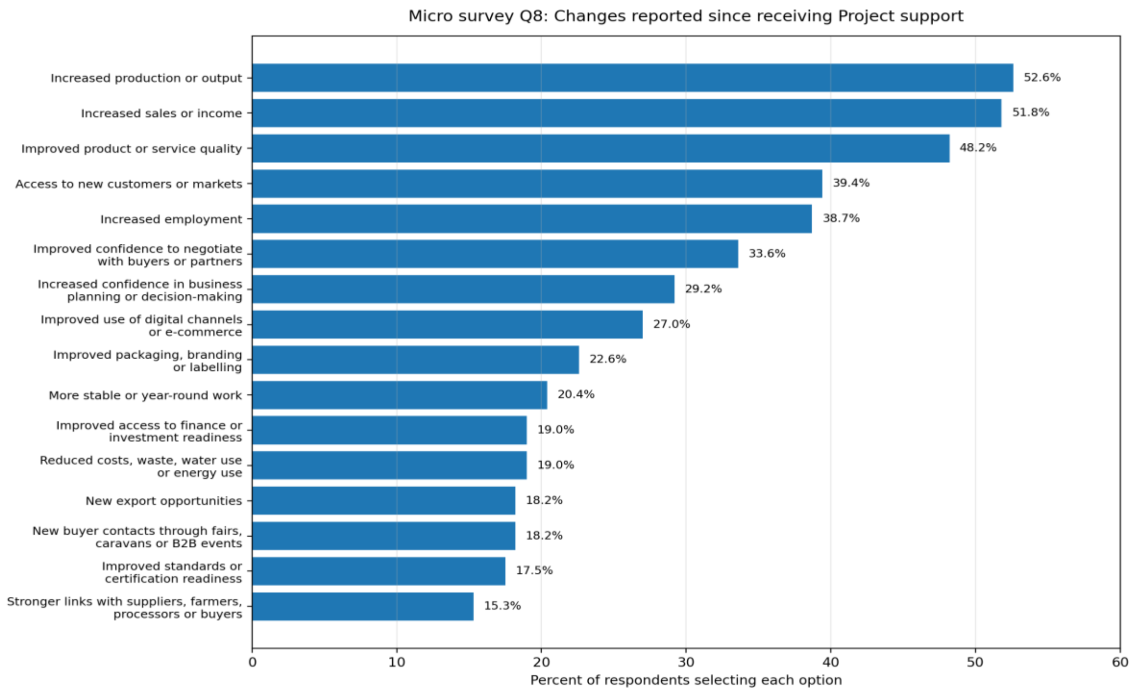
Finding 18. At the micro level, Phase V generated credible early impact through improved enterprise practices, productive capacity, quality, resource efficiency and market readiness, alongside selected increases in sales, market entry and employment; evidence of the persistence and scale of these commercial gains - including repeat exports and sustained employment - was more limited and uneven at the time of evaluation.

The evaluation assessed micro-level impact through a progression from reach to adoption, market conversion and durability. Annual reporting, monitoring records and field evidence indicate that Phase V moved from largely preparatory support in 2023 towards more extensive enterprise upgrading, technology adoption and commercial engagement during 2024–2025. **Productive-capacity and competitiveness gains were demonstrated more consistently across the portfolio, while evidence of the persistence and repeatability of commercial outcomes—such as repeat sales, sustained exports and durable employment—was less systematic.** This distinction is particularly important given the late maturation of some interventions and the limited period available for longitudinal observation before Project closure.[lxxxi]

The micro survey provides corroborating evidence. Question 8 asked respondents to select the business changes experienced since receiving Project support. Figure 4 reports every positive response option retained in the audited analysis. Increased production or output was selected by 52.6

percent and increased sales or income by 51.8 percent. Other market-access and capability outcomes, including new export opportunities, improved certification readiness and stronger supplier or buyer linkages, were reported by smaller shares of respondents. These results provide evidence of meaningful productive and commercial changes among surveyed enterprises, while the extent to which such gains were repeated and sustained over time could not yet be established systematically.[lxxxii]

Figure 4. Micro survey Q8: Changes reported since receiving Project support



Source: Evaluation micro survey, audited n = 137. Question 8 allowed multiple responses; percentages show the share selecting each response option and do not sum to 100. Results are self-reported.

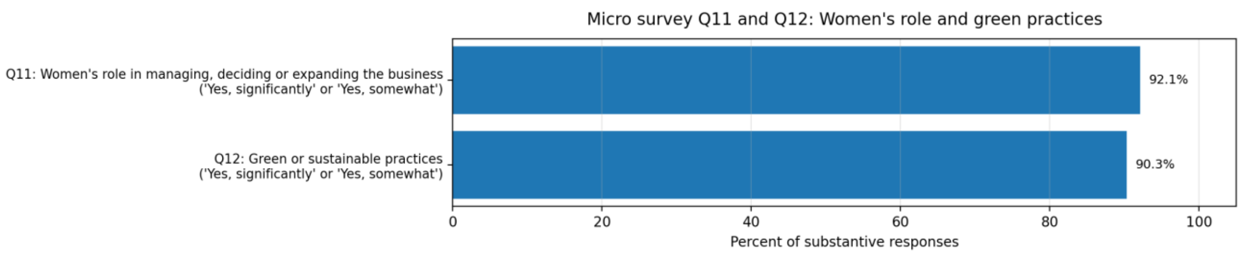
Field evidence broadly confirmed this pattern. In Kyrgyzstan, the strongest cases combined tailored advice, productive assets, standards preparation, enterprise co-investment and a clear market rationale. Sun Planet Organic and Dary Tien-Shanya reported growth in production, sales and employment following support for business planning, standards, equipment modernization and market entry. Although these figures were not independently audited, observed operations, substantial co-investment and the sequencing of support provide credible contribution pathways. Tourism and handicraft initiatives also connected accommodation providers, guides and artisans with new products and sales channels.[lxxxiii]

In Tajikistan, the most promising pathway operated at value-chain level. The North–South model connected producers and consolidators in Khatlon with processors and exporters in Sughd, addressing aggregation, storage, logistics and supply consistency. At a dried-apple consolidation centre in Muminabad, Project and partner records reported substantial increases in production, sales and employment, supported by 52.5 percent beneficiary co-financing. Monitoring confirmed functioning aggregation assets and emerging producer–processor linkages, although the commercial figures remain partner-reported. Nerui Kand's application of UNECE Standard DDP-15 and solar installations at Nerui Kand and Isfara Food also demonstrated early changes in standards compliance and environmental practice.[lxxxiv]

In Uzbekistan, field visits and monitoring identified improvements in processing, packaging, product development and resource efficiency, alongside uneven equipment utilization. A woman-led mung-bean processor reported increased output, sales, diversification and water recycling. At Cibus, aseptic filling technology, HACCP-related assistance and enterprise co-investment created a credible basis for improved sterility, shelf life and access to larger buyers, although sustained demand and capacity utilization were not yet demonstrated. Monitoring also identified electricity and infrastructure incompatibilities, prompting stronger pre-installation checks and follow-up.[lxxxv]

Questions 11 and 12 separately asked whether Project support strengthened women's role in managing, deciding or expanding the business and whether it introduced or strengthened green or sustainable practices. As shown in Figure 5, 92.1 percent of substantive respondents selected "Yes, significantly" or "Yes, somewhat" for Question 11, and 90.3 percent selected the same two response categories for Question 12. In Question 10, women were selected by 69.3 percent, rural residents by 46.0 percent, young people by 43.1 percent and persons with disabilities by 17.5 percent among groups benefiting from jobs, income or business opportunities linked to respondents' businesses.

Figure 5. Micro survey Q11 and Q12: Women's role and green practices



Source: Evaluation micro survey, audited n = 137. Percentages are based on valid responses to each question and combine only "Yes, significantly" and "Yes, somewhat." Purposive, self-reported sample.

A business-incentive lens explains much of the variation. **Results were strongest where enterprises could identify a credible return through lower energy or water costs, reduced losses, improved quality, larger volumes, better prices or access to buyers**. Co-investment strengthened ownership and commercial relevance, while integrated packages combining advice, productive assets, standards and market linkages were generally more consequential than isolated workshops or equipment provision.

The remaining "last mile" was not primarily another training gap. Respondents continued to identify weak market demand, climate and water risks, logistics, finance, skilled labour, certification costs and buyer access as important constraints. Employment evidence was also positive but needs careful interpretation. In the broader business-outcome question, 38.7 percent of respondents selected employment growth, while a separate question focused specifically on jobs found that 74.5 percent reported some temporary or permanent job creation. Because the two questions measured employment differently, the figures are not directly comparable. Taken together, they suggest that employment effects occurred among surveyed enterprises, but the scale, permanence and quality of those jobs cannot be established from the survey alone.

Cumulative and emerging transformational effects, 2009–2026

It is too early to assess whether Phase V itself has generated transformational impact in the sense of sustained structural change in the participating economies. Many of the pathways through which such change could occur, including sustained export growth, productivity and employment effects, wider replication of enterprise models and systemic value-chain change—require implementation and observation beyond the Project period. The evaluation therefore does not attribute structural transformation to Phase V. It does, however, identify **broader changes supported by triangulated evidence in institutional practice, capacity and development orientation to which successive phases of Aid for Trade, including Phase V, have plausibly contributed**. These changes are important because transformation can occur not only through economy-wide indicators, but also through institutional capabilities, ways of working and development perspectives that influence future policies, services and investment decisions.[lxxxvi]

First, there is evidence of progressive institutionalization of selected trade-development functions. Phase I already combined trade mainstreaming, market information, export-support services, SME and farmer capacity development, standards and environmentally sustainable production in selected subnational locations.[lxxxvii] Some early investments demonstrated notable durability. **The Batken Market Information Centre in Batken Region, southern Kyrgyzstan, provides one of the clearest examples.** Phase I supported the Centre to strengthen market-information and trade-promotion services for farmers and agribusinesses in this predominantly agricultural and relatively remote region. By the Phase II evaluation, around 4,500 farmers were using its services, 3,409 entrepreneurs had sold products through the Centre, and it had achieved financial sustainability through paid information and business-matching services. A 2016 follow-up visit found that it remained operational, maintained close relations with regional authorities and continued providing market information, radio services and buyer–seller matchmaking from a location close to the local market.[lxxxviii] In Tajikistan, the Trade Export Promotion Centre had also achieved financial sustainability, while the Agricultural Information Marketing System had expanded services to farmers.[lxxxix]

Successive phases progressively shifted these functions towards wider institutional systems. Phase III formalized the macro–meso–micro architecture and strengthened government, TSI and enterprise capacities, while Phase IV deepened work on export promotion, trade intelligence, green value chains, standards and women's entrepreneurship.[xc] Phase V built on this accumulated base rather than starting anew. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, the Project contributed to the *Made in Kyrgyzstan* National Export Programme, KyrgyzExport incorporated market intelligence, exporter guidance and regional outreach into its work, and the Time Release Study methodology continued to be applied with subsequent studies financed nationally. At regional level, CAWG cooperation and ITC methodologies generated technical capabilities increasingly retained within national institutions. These examples indicate movement from **project-supported activities towards more durable institutional capability**, although the degree of institutionalization remains uneven and some functions continue to depend on recurrent budgets, specialist staff, subscriptions or external facilitation.

Second, repeated engagement appears to have accumulated institutional relationships and trust. This is visible across evaluation periods rather than only in Phase V. The Phase III evaluation found that Aid for Trade had established effective communication with stakeholders ranging from senior government officials to farmers in remote areas and described it as a "well-respected and long-standing interlocutor" for key government counterparts.[xci] Phase V independently produced a similar finding: national partners consistently valued UNDP's timely and trusted expertise, particularly where specialized knowledge, international experience or an independent technical perspective was required for decisions involving WTO-compatible approaches, standards and trade reform. This accumulated relational capital plausibly reduced start-up and transaction costs and enabled Phase V to respond to emerging government demand. It cannot, however, be attributed solely to Aid for Trade, since UNDP COs and wider UNDP engagement also contribute to institutional trust.

Third, earlier phases generated several flagship results that demonstrate the scale that the programme was able to reach, although these cannot be aggregated into a single 2009–2026

impact estimate. The Phase III evaluation reported more than 4,000 new jobs and approximately USD 560 million in supported export deals.[xcii] Phase IV subsequently reported support to approximately 6,000 MSMEs, nearly two-thirds of them women-led enterprises, more than 1,000 new quality jobs, and USD 156 million in facilitated export contracts.[xciii] These figures provide useful evidence of the breadth and scale achieved in individual phases, but differences in indicators, definitions, verification arrangements and programme geography mean that they should **not be summed or interpreted as an attributable cumulative programme impact**.

A less tangible but potentially important cumulative effect concerns how trade itself is increasingly understood by national partners and trade-support institutions. During Phase V fieldwork, counterparts across the three countries frequently **discussed trade not only in terms of exports and firm competitiveness, but through a broader development lens: opportunities for women and rural or vulnerable groups, decent employment, resilience, the SDGs, environmentally sustainable production, and more efficient use of water and energy**.[xciv] The existing Phase V evidence similarly records policymakers and institutional partners connecting trade with diversification, gender equality, environmental performance and benefits for poorer and more vulnerable groups.

This orientation was not introduced by Phase V. Phase I explicitly connected trade with poverty alleviation, gender equality, inclusive growth and environmentally friendly technologies; Phase III linked trade policies with human development, sustainable agriculture and women's economic participation and used evidence on barriers faced by women entrepreneurs to inform subsequent programming; and Phase IV substantially deepened the focus on green value chains and women-led businesses.[xcv] The longitudinal change is therefore better understood as the **progressive normalization of these considerations within the trade-development agenda**. During Phase V fieldwork, inclusion and environmental sustainability were often discussed by partners as elements of better trade and enterprise development rather than as separate project requirements.

Practical evidence reinforces this interpretation. Supported enterprises in Phase V used water recycling, solar energy, drip irrigation and other resource-efficient technologies, with beneficiaries frequently framing these measures as ways to reduce costs, improve resilience and strengthen business performance rather than simply meet environmental objectives. This suggests an emerging convergence between commercial and sustainability incentives.

Finally, there is evidence of gradual movement from externally supplied technical assistance towards nationally retained, reusable and increasingly self-reproducing expertise. Phase III documented coordinated engagement of Central Asian institutions in the development of UNECE agricultural standards. Under Phase V, CAWG specialists continued participating in international standard-setting, while nationally based trainers certified through the UNDP–ITC partnership subsequently trained other specialists; elements of the methodology entered institutional services and university teaching, and the Central Asian Trade Intelligence Portal provided a reusable regional knowledge resource. The significance lies not simply in training numbers, but in **the increasing capacity of national and regional actors to retain, adapt and transmit technical knowledge.**

Taken together, these changes **do not demonstrate economy-wide structural transformation**, nor can they be attributed to Aid for Trade alone. National reforms, wider UNDP engagement, other development partners and broader changes in international trade and development policy have all influenced this trajectory. They nevertheless provide credible evidence of **emerging transformational change at selected institutional and behavioural levels**: some trade-support functions have become more embedded; technical knowledge is increasingly retained and reused; long-term engagement has generated institutional trust; and key partners increasingly frame trade as an instrument of inclusive, resilient and environmentally sustainable development. Given the programme's continuity since 2009, these less tangible changes in institutional capability, professional norms and problem framing constitute an important dimension of its cumulative contribution and may ultimately be as consequential as individual policy reforms or enterprise-level results.

6.3.7 Cross-cutting areas

The evaluation applies a human-rights-based lens through its analysis of gender equality, disability inclusion and LNOB. This includes consideration of non-discrimination and equitable access, participation and voice, accessibility, accountability and the responsiveness of institutions to groups facing barriers. As the Project did not directly engage with formal human-rights institutions, the analysis focuses on how these principles were reflected in trade and enterprise support and stakeholder engagement. The evaluation assessed gender equality, Leave No One Behind (LNOB) and environmental sustainability as substantive dimensions of Project performance rather than as participation targets or compliance requirements.[xcvi]

Finding 19. Gender equality was among the stronger cross-cutting dimensions of Phase V: the Project credibly strengthened women's enterprise capabilities, confidence, networks and market access, with evidence of increased agency and business decision-making among participating women; institutional and policy-level gender-responsive results were also evident but were less systematic and less mature.
Gender equality was explicitly integrated into Project design through its GEN2 classification and a commitment to allocate at least 15 percent of the programmatic budget to gender equality, women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. This classification was substantively justified by dedicated mentorship, incubation and entrepreneurship initiatives, sex-disaggregated indicators and partnerships with women's business organizations. However, available reporting did not permit the evaluation to verify implementation of the 15 percent allocation, and gender analysis remained uneven across countries and value chains. **Gender integration was strongest and most consistently evidenced at enterprise level.** There were also credible meso- and macro-level examples, including gender-responsive trade-policy capacity building, institutional services for women entrepreneurs and selected policy uptake, but these were less systematic across the portfolio and had not yet translated into equally strong evidence of institutionalized gender-responsive policy and service delivery.[xcvii]

Phase V generally moved beyond treating women solely as participants and supported them as entrepreneurs, mentors, producers, artisans, tourism actors and value-chain participants. Results were strongest where women received sustained packages combining mentorship, business planning, equipment, digital skills, e-commerce, market exposure and business networks. The evaluation surveys corroborate this assessment: 92.2 percent of valid micro-level respondents reported strengthened roles for women in management, decision-making or business expansion, while 85.7 percent of valid institutional respondents reported improved capacity to serve women entrepreneurs.[xcviii]

Kyrgyzstan provides the strongest evidence of outcome-level change. Mentorship, e-commerce incubation and Open Osh combined continuing advice, business planning and practical digital-market support. Of the 48 enterprises selected for full e-commerce incubation, 41 were women-led. The wider entrepreneurship package supported 425 individual entrepreneurs, 54 percent of whom were women, and Project reporting recorded increased annual and online sales and employment. While these figures remain Project-reported, field interviews confirmed that continuing mentorship helped women address practical commercial constraints rather than simply acquire general knowledge.[xcix]

Confidence as a business asset

During the evaluation visit to Royal Gate in Sary-Talaa, the change in confidence was as important as the new business skills. With mentorship from Asel Dildebaeva, Gulayym Tashtanbaeva began looking beyond accommodation alone and considering how visitors could stay longer, experience more and connect with other local tourism providers. New bicycle services and partnerships reflected this broader vision. The discussion was encouraging: mentorship had helped an entrepreneur trust her own judgement, act on her ideas and approach the future of the business with greater confidence.

Source: field mission notes and Project reports

Uzbekistan also generated visible results through mentorship, handicrafts, tourism, digital promotion, certification and productive equipment. Women-led enterprises introduced products and tourism-oriented workshops, improved branding and processing and reached new customers, while the Business Women Association and other partners strengthened mentoring and networking. There was also selective upstream uptake: Project reporting indicates that the national women's entrepreneurship assessment, based on a survey of 5,543 women entrepreneurs, was informing the new government-funded Women's Entrepreneurship Support Programme.[c]

Tajikistan produced promising but more recent results through training, coaching, grants and equipment. Project reporting recorded support to 134 women-owned enterprises and 151 women and youth through entrepreneurship programmes. However, no result was recorded against the women entrepreneurs' sales-growth indicator, and only three new enterprises were reported. Because implementation accelerated mainly during 2025, evidence of sustained income, enterprise survival and market positioning remained less mature.[ci]

Across countries, **field evidence identified a less visible and partly unanticipated effect: for many women entrepreneurs, increased confidence, morale, peer support and agency were perceived as at least as important as finance or technical training**. Mentorship, group learning and engagement with other entrepreneurs helped women overcome self-doubt, test ideas, expand networks and see themselves more confidently as business leaders. Transparent competitive selection also strengthened trust among smaller and less-connected applicants that opportunities could be accessed on merit. These effects help explain why sustained mentorship and combined packages of advice, equipment, market exposure and networking produced stronger results than stand-alone training, although women continued to face constraints related to finance, assets, unpaid care, mobility and social norms.

Across countries, field evidence suggests that mentorship, peer learning, market exposure and transparent competitive selection strengthened confidence, agency and business leadership among many participating women. At the meso level, the Project strengthened connections among women entrepreneurs, mentors, business associations, chambers and service providers and improved the responsiveness of parts of the support ecosystem to women-led MSMEs. Macro-level and institutional influence was also evident through selected initiatives, including gender-responsive trade-policy capacity building and emerging policy uptake. However, enterprise-level evidence was not yet systematically consolidated and fed back into trade policy, export strategies, value-chain governance, finance and regulatory reform across the portfolio. **Women's business organizations and gender-focused stakeholders were engaged in several enterprise-support and consultation processes, but their participation in higher-level policy dialogue and formal governance mechanisms was not equally systematic across countries**.[cii]

Finding 20. Phase V made a meaningful but uneven contribution to LNOB by expanding commercially relevant opportunities for rural and subnational MSMEs, small producers, youth and persons with disabilities; inclusion was increasingly substantive in selected interventions, but systematic monitoring of disability, accessibility and intersecting disadvantages remained limited.

Phase V generally embedded inclusion within practical support for productivity upgrading, certification, e-commerce, tourism, aggregation and market access. **LNOB results were strongest where reducing barriers also created a credible economic opportunity, rather than where inclusion was treated primarily as participation in Project activities.**

The Project reached rural producers, artisans, tourism providers, processors, start-ups and entrepreneurs outside capital cities. In the purposive micro-level survey, respondents identified rural residents among beneficiaries in 46.4 percent of cases, youth in 42.8 percent and persons with disabilities in 17.4 percent.[ciii] **These results indicate meaningful geographic and economic outreach, while also showing that disability inclusion was less systematic than outreach to rural residents and youth.**

Annual reporting and field evidence corroborate this pattern. The Kyrgyz Export Caravan engaged more than 130 rural MSMEs, while mentorship and value-chain activities operated across five regions. In Tajikistan, partnerships with the Aga Khan Foundation and the University of Central Asia extended support into rural and underserved areas. The One Village One Product (OVOP) approach connected more than 60 rural producer groups, particularly women to processing, branding and markets.[civ] These interventions reduced geographic and institutional barriers and linked groups that might otherwise have remained outside formal enterprise- and trade-support systems to commercially relevant services and relationships.

Disability inclusion became progressively more substantive during implementation, moving from general mainstreaming commitments toward targeted enterprise, employment and policy-dialogue initiatives. In Kyrgyzstan, persons with disabilities participated in mentorship and benefited from employment generated through supported enterprises. In Uzbekistan, 107 entrepreneurs and business representatives received advisory support on inclusive business models; ten persons with disabilities had been employed by supported enterprises at the time of reporting, while 22 jobs for persons with disabilities were reported under sub-output 3.5. The Project also supported an Inclusive Business Forum that generated a draft multi-stakeholder action plan and engaged organizations of persons with disabilities across all three countries. **These developments indicate meaningful progress, although results remained uneven across countries and were not yet captured through a systematic portfolio-wide results architecture**.[cv]

A route from the workshop to the market

In Mikhailovka, Kyrgyzstan, the evaluator met the women leading Kelechek Sary-Kol, a group of seven artisans that includes persons with disabilities. Training and individual support helped them improve their felt products, learn new techniques and connect with tourism and retail channels through partner organizations. The most encouraging result was not only the prospect of income, but the women's growing confidence that their skills and creativity had value in the wider tourism economy. The group offered a tangible example of inclusion creating dignity, stronger social connection and hope for the future.

Source: field mission notes and Project reports

Rural and geographically underserved groups were explicitly targeted and reached through

several value-chain and enterprise interventions. However, portfolio-wide beneficiary selection and monitoring did not consistently capture multiple and intersecting disadvantages, particularly disability, poverty status and combinations of vulnerability. Youth were widely included but were frequently combined with women in indicators, limiting assessment of youth-specific outcomes. Evidence was therefore stronger on reach, participation and immediate enterprise or employment outcomes than on accessibility and reasonable accommodation, the quality and persistence of jobs, control over resulting economic benefits and their longer-term distribution.

Finding 21. Phase V made a credible contribution to environmental sustainability by integrating green value chains, resource efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable tourism into enterprise and institutional support; however, environmental outcomes were not consistently quantified, and documentation linking project-level SESP commitments to some downstream implementation instruments was uneven.

Environmental sustainability was embedded in the Project's focus on green and employment-rich value chains, sustainable production, resource-efficient technologies and economic resilience. Country-level assessments considered sustainability, export and employment potential when selecting value chains, while enterprise assistance supported resource efficiency, processing, storage, quality and certification readiness.[cvi]

Implementation generated credible examples of changed practice. In Tajikistan, solar installations reduced reliance on conventional energy, while improved storage and handling created opportunities to reduce post-harvest losses. In Uzbekistan, supported enterprises introduced water- and energy-saving technologies, resource-efficient processing and improved packaging. Some investments were too recent to demonstrate their full environmental and commercial effects.[cvii]

Using resources more wisely

During the Uzbekistan mission, a woman entrepreneur explained how new mung-bean processing equipment allowed water to be reused while increasing production and diversifying products. Project monitoring provided a complementary example at Beshler Agro Holding, where solar panels supply farm operations and drip irrigation reduces water use. What was encouraging was that these practices were not viewed as external environmental obligations. Entrepreneurs saw them as practical investments in efficiency, resilience and the future of their businesses, demonstrating that environmental and commercial objectives could reinforce each other

Source: field mission notes and Project reports

The evaluation survey corroborated this evidence: 90.4 percent of valid micro-level respondents reported stronger green or sustainable practices. This indicates substantial behavioural uptake, although the survey did not quantify changes in energy use, water consumption, waste or emissions.

Results were strongest where environmental improvements also offered a clear business benefit, such as lower operating costs, reduced losses, improved quality or access to higher-value markets. Conversely, equipment support was less effective where electricity supply, infrastructure, maintenance or market demand were insufficient. Monitoring in Uzbekistan identified technical incompatibilities affecting some equipment and led to stronger readiness checks and follow-up.[cviii]

The Project also established a relevant environmental and social risk-management foundation through UNDP's SES and the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP). The Project was categorized as Low Risk, with specific mitigation measures identified, including environmental eligibility criteria for supported enterprises and requirements related to decent work and occupational health and safety. Risk logs were regularly updated, beneficiary-feedback mechanisms were established, UNDP's Corporate Accountability Mechanism was communicated and no grievances were reported. Available documentation therefore indicates that project-level social and environmental risk management was operational.[cix] The main area for strengthening concerns downstream traceability: documentation did not always make it equally clear how relevant SESP commitments were carried through into beneficiary-selection criteria, partner and grant agreements, procurement specifications and routine monitoring—for example environmental eligibility and compliance requirements, labour and OHS protections, grievance arrangements and follow-up on identified risks. This should be understood as an issue of documenting and demonstrating consistent downstream application rather than evidence of general SES non-compliance. Future programming could strengthen this traceability while also improving quantitative measurement of environmental outcomes.[cx]

7 Conclusions

Phase V leaves UNDP in a position of strength as a credible partner for trade-led development in Central Asia. The Project was highly relevant and generally successful, strengthening trade-related policies and institutions, improving enterprise capabilities and expanding economic opportunities for women, rural producers and smaller firms across Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Of its 96 indicators, 81 were reported as achieved or exceeded without qualification, and eight additional indicators were achieved with qualification. By 30 June 2026, expenditure and open commitments together represented approximately 98.5 percent of the budget, indicating high provisional resource utilization. These figures demonstrate strong delivery, although some indicator definitions and verification arrangements, particularly for employment, commercial outcomes and longer-term effects, require cautious interpretation. The approved Results Framework included a broad range of policy-, institutional- and enterprise-level measures, but implementation did not consistently generate the evidence needed to trace uptake, institutionalization and longer-term durability across all interventions.

The Project demonstrated UNDP's resilience and capacity to remain relevant as the context for trade changed. Phase V operated during a period of shifting trade routes, evolving government priorities, institutional transitions and growing pressure on enterprises to comply with new standards, technologies and market requirements. UNDP adjusted activities, partnerships and resource allocations while maintaining constructive engagement with national ministries, local authorities, standards bodies, trade-support institutions, universities, business organizations and enterprises. This flexibility was not simply an operational strength; it was central to preserving relevance and generating results under changing conditions.

UNDP's distinctive contribution lay in using the macro–meso–micro model to connect trade policy, institutional capacity and enterprise realities while retaining a clear development purpose. Its value was less in the volume of financing provided than in its ability to act as a trusted broker between governments, institutions, international expertise and businesses. Results were strongest where policy advice informed institutional decisions, strengthened institutions delivered services that enterprises used, and enterprise experience revealed practical constraints requiring institutional or policy attention. The model was less effective where interventions at different levels remained parallel or where broad portfolios were not sufficiently prioritized and sequenced to generate reinforcing pathways. Phase V therefore showed that systemic trade-for-development results depend not only on the scale of activity and beneficiary reach, but on whether policy, institutional and enterprise support form coherent and mutually reinforcing pathways towards improved competitiveness and market participation.

The Project also demonstrated that Aid for Trade can advance wider development objectives. Women's economic empowerment, inclusion, green practices and responsible business considerations were incorporated into commercially oriented support for standards, tourism, e-commerce, value chains and enterprise development. Where these dimensions were linked to clear institutional or business incentives, they strengthened rather than displaced the commercial logic of the interventions.

Regional additionality was credible but selective. The strongest regional contribution came through functions that individual countries could not access as effectively alone: international standards expertise, shared trade intelligence, professional networks, peer learning and connections with institutions such as UNECE. National specialists subsequently applied some of this knowledge through public services, technical work and university teaching, demonstrating that regional inputs could strengthen national capabilities. Regional results were less developed in relation to coordinated action on shared trade barriers, sustained cross-border value chains and demonstrable commercial outcomes. Phase V nevertheless validated a pragmatic form of regional cooperation centred on specific technical interests, shared knowledge and network assets, and regional public goods where cross-country use and additionality were demonstrated.

At enterprise level, Phase V generated well-documented capability and productive-capacity improvements and selected commercial gains; evidence of the persistence and scale of these gains was less systematic at the time of the evaluation. Enterprises and producers applied new equipment, knowledge and practices; improved quality and production; used digital and trade-information tools; and developed stronger links with institutions, processors, tourism operators and buyers. Field evidence also revealed changes not fully captured by quantitative indicators. Women entrepreneurs described greater confidence in making business decisions and pursuing opportunities; rural producers saw clearer possibilities for reaching processors and wider markets; and artisans and smaller firms gained confidence that their products, skills and proposals had commercial value. These were meaningful trade-for-development results, creating not only potential income but also greater agency, dignity and hope for the future.

Evidence was less systematic regarding the persistence and scale of these gains over time. Selected increases in sales, market entry and employment were documented, but repeat sales, sustained exports and the durability of employment could not be verified consistently across the portfolio. These longer-term commercial effects remain influenced by finance, certification, production scale, aggregation, logistics, reliable supply, buyer relationships and market demand, as well as by the limited period available for longitudinal observation before Project closure.

The Project showed that inclusion and environmental sustainability can strengthen competitiveness when embedded in practical trade and business support. Women's economic empowerment was among the strongest dimensions of Phase V, particularly where mentorship combined technical advice, problem-solving, confidence-building and access to networks. Rural producers, youth, subnational businesses and selected persons with disabilities also gained access to opportunities that would otherwise have been difficult to obtain. Environmental practices were most likely to be adopted where they reduced losses, saved water or energy, improved reliability or strengthened business resilience.

These results were not uniform. **Disability inclusion and accessibility were less systematically embedded than gender equality, environmental effects were not consistently quantified, and documentation linking project-level SES/SESP commitments to some downstream**

implementation and monitoring instruments was uneven. These limitations do not diminish the Project's achievements, but they demonstrate that development quality requires explicit institutional responsibilities, incentives and monitoring if it is to extend beyond individual examples.

Sustainability prospects are positive but conditional on ownership, incentives and financing. Results are most likely to continue where Project-supported policies, methodologies and services have become part of regular government or institutional work, and where enterprises have invested their own resources and incorporated supported assets and practices into their operations. Sustainability is more variable for platforms, databases, mentorship arrangements and technical networks that continue to depend on external financing, specialist expertise, recurrent budgets or individual institutional champions. The Project's experience also highlights that, for evaluation purposes, high financial delivery alone is insufficient to assess value for money; consideration of uptake, additionality, continued use and durability can provide a fuller basis for assessing cost-effectiveness in future programmes.

Phase V closes as the environment for trade and development financing is becoming more constrained and demanding. Geopolitical and trade relationships continue to evolve, several traditional development partners have reduced or concluded their engagement, and governments and donors increasingly expect clearer additionality, measurable results and credible prospects for scale. These changes do not reduce UNDP's relevance. Rather, they increase the value of an organization that is trusted, adaptable and able to work across policy, institutional and enterprise levels. **At the same time, they increase the importance of prioritizing where UNDP can add most value and of complementing grant-funded technical assistance with partnerships capable of addressing larger financing, infrastructure and investment requirements.**

The overall outlook is positive but appropriately cautious. Phase V demonstrated that UNDP has the experience, relationships and operational resilience needed to continue supporting trade for development under changing conditions. It showed that UNDP can help translate trade policy into institutional practice, connect smaller enterprises and underserved groups with economic opportunities, and incorporate inclusion and sustainability into commercially oriented support. It also demonstrated that these contributions are most likely to generate lasting results when policy, institutions, enterprise support and wider financing and market systems reinforce one another. Phase V therefore closes with a strong foundation, a clearer understanding of where UNDP's contribution is most distinctive, and practical evidence of both the potential and the limits of its Aid for Trade model.

8 Lessons Learned

The evaluation identified five transferable lessons from Phase V concerning the conditions under which regional Aid for Trade support generated stronger institutional, enterprise and regional results.

Lesson 1 – Systemic change depends on coherent and sequenced linkages across policy, institutions and enterprises

Phase V confirmed the value of the macro–meso–micro model where interventions at different levels were functionally connected. Results were strongest when policy advice, institutional strengthening and enterprise support addressed related constraints and generated observable changes in institutional practice, service delivery, firm behaviour, market positioning or value-chain participation. **Broad portfolios could add value by responding to diverse priorities, but breadth alone was insufficient where interventions were not sufficiently prioritized, sequenced or mutually reinforcing.**

Policy support added most value when it informed institutional decisions or addressed constraints affecting firms; institutional strengthening mattered when new capacity translated into services that enterprises used; and enterprise assistance was most meaningful when firms applied it to improve products, production, practices or market engagement. **The transferable lesson is therefore that complex programmes need both appropriate reach and coherent results pathways linking activities at different levels to behavioural, institutional and market change.**

Lesson 2 – Enterprise readiness and initial commercial gains need longitudinal tracking to demonstrate sustained commercial impact

Phase V generated credible additionality by giving women-led businesses, rural producers and smaller firms access to mentorship, certification preparation, market information, digital channels, institutional services and buyer networks that would otherwise have been difficult to obtain. **This contributed to strong and relatively well-documented improvements in productive capacity, competitiveness and market readiness, including stronger business capabilities, confidence, product quality, production practices and market awareness, together with meaningful but heterogeneous commercial results.** Because many enterprise interventions matured relatively late and Project monitoring was not designed for systematic post-support longitudinal tracking, evidence was less complete regarding the persistence and scale of these gains, particularly repeat exports, sustained sales and employment. **The absence of systematic follow-up of enterprise results across earlier phases further limited the evaluation's ability to assess longer-term persistence and cumulative commercial impact.**

These gains translated into selected improvements in production, sales, market access, employment and other dimensions of enterprise competitiveness, but evidence of their persistence and repeatability was less systematic across the portfolio. In particular, repeat sales, sustained exports and the durability of employment depended on access to finance, certification and logistics costs, aggregation, reliable supply, packaging, production volume, buyer confidence and market demand, and in some cases could not yet be established within the evaluation period. Reach, capability change, adoption, initial commercial outcomes and longer-term durability should therefore be treated as distinct stages of the results pathway. **Enterprise readiness is a meaningful result, but it should be complemented by follow-up evidence on sustained commercial performance where the intervention aims to generate such outcomes.**

Lesson 3 – Political economy is central to regional cooperation

Phase V showed that technically sound regional initiatives advanced where they aligned with national priorities, institutional mandates and politically feasible areas of cooperation. Governments could support regional dialogue in principle while differing in their readiness to translate it into operational commitments. [cxi]

Adaptive management helped the Project remain relevant as national priorities, institutional leadership, implementation conditions and regional opportunities evolved. This was visible in the adjustment of country workplans and sequencing, the recovery of delayed implementation in Tajikistan, the ability to respond to emerging government demand in areas such as standards, e-commerce and sustainable tourism, and the use of regional technical cooperation where more formalized regional action was not yet feasible. Rather than operating against a fixed pathway established at design, Phase V used country engagement, partner dialogue and implementation experience to adjust the mix and timing of support while retaining the overall macro–meso–micro logic. Regional cooperation nevertheless remained gradual and non-linear, and its most realistic outcomes varied—from shared technical knowledge, methodologies and professional networks to coordinated national application and, in selected areas, more institutionalized regional mechanisms. **The transferable lesson is that political economy and changing institutional incentives shape not only the pace of regional cooperation, but also the form that meaningful regional results can realistically take.**

Lesson 4 – Women's economic empowerment requires more than enabling measures

Phase V showed that enabling policies and responsive institutional services are important for women's economic empowerment, but are insufficient on their own to ensure effective access to and use of economic opportunities. Participating women entrepreneurs also benefited from practical support and trusted networks that helped them navigate limited market exposure, unequal access to information and business networks, and other structural constraints.

Mentorship was particularly valuable because it combined technical advice, peer learning, practical problem-solving and confidence-building with encouragement to engage with institutions, buyers and new markets. **The broader lesson is that women's economic empowerment requires mutually reinforcing policy, institutional and enterprise-level measures that strengthen agency, networks and the capacity to act on commercial opportunities.**

Lesson 5 – Embedding development objectives in commercial support can influence business and institutional practice

Phase V demonstrated a distinctive strength of UNDP's Aid for Trade approach by linking export, enterprise and value-chain support with women's economic empowerment, inclusion, green practices, responsible business conduct and LNOB. This was important because development benefits do not arise automatically from greater participation in trade; firms and value-chain actors respond primarily to profitability, competitiveness, market access and buyer requirements.

When these objectives were embedded in practical support—such as certification, market access, e-commerce, tourism, value-chain upgrading and mentorship—they began to shape how competitiveness was understood. Enterprises increasingly associated inclusion, quality and sustainability with market readiness, while trade-support institutions were better positioned to incorporate these dimensions into their services and policy engagement.

The experience also points to potential complementarity between UNDP and IFIs or other financing partners. UNDP's strengths in policy advice, institutional capacity, inclusion, sustainability and enterprise readiness can complement partners able to mobilize larger-scale financing, investment or reform support. Such complementarity was not yet systematic under Phase V but represents a plausible pathway for connecting inclusive and sustainable technical assistance with larger financing and implementation opportunities.

9 Recommendations

The recommendations are framed by a more uncertain geopolitical and development-finance environment, in which resources are tightening and priorities are shifting. Future Aid for Trade support should therefore be more strategically focused: concentrating enterprise- and value-chain-level investments where coherent results pathways can be established, while retaining broader policy, institutional and regional engagement where this generates clear systemic or regional additionality. Partnerships with IFIs, specialized agencies, financial institutions and private-sector actors can help connect UNDP technical assistance with complementary financing, reform and investment pathways.

Recommendation/intended change 1 – Concentrate enterprise and value-chain support on a limited number of evidence-selected pathways with clear links from policy and institutional support to sustainable commercial results
Priority: High
Linked findings: Findings 1, 2, 9 and 15.

Subject to national priorities, market evidence and available resources, future Aid for Trade programming should concentrate enterprise- and value-chain-level support on a limited number of evidence-selected pathways where UNDP can connect policy reform, institutional services and enterprise upgrading around clearly identified constraints and opportunities. Phase V showed that results were strongest where macro-, meso- and micro-level interventions addressed related constraints, while enterprise readiness alone did not consistently translate into sustained commercial outcomes where finance, aggregation, logistics, certification costs, production scale and buyer demand remained unresolved. Regional and policy-level engagement should remain broader where cross-sectoral issues—such as trade facilitation, standards, market intelligence, digitalization and connectivity—generate clear regional or systemic additionality. UNDP should focus its own resources on policy advice, institutional capability, inclusion, sustainability, enterprise readiness and coordination, while helping connect capital-intensive financing and infrastructure needs to government, private-sector, IFI and other development-finance partners.

Suggested actions:

- **Sustainable tourism and associated local products and services:** connect destination coordination, service standards, digital promotion and tour development with mentorship and market access for local tourism, food and handicraft enterprises. Support should strengthen commercial relationships among tourism institutions, operators and local producers while embedding accessibility and environmental sustainability.
- **Selected agri-food value chains with identifiable buyer demand:** connect standards and certification services with producer organization, aggregation, processing, packaging, logistics and buyer engagement. UNDP could strengthen institutional services and enable smaller and women-led producers to participate, while financing, storage, transport and major capital requirements are addressed through partnerships.
- **Develop a concise and evidence-based results pathway for each selected value-chain pathway,** identifying the critical constraints, the intended connections between macro-, meso- and micro-level support, and the respective responsibilities of UNDP and its partners.

Responsible parties: UNDP IRH and UNDP COs, with national institutions and private-sector partners

Timeframe: To inform future programming and resource mobilization; operational arrangements to be established during the design of any approved support

Indicative completion markers:
- Functioning destination partnerships, jointly marketed products or experiences, sustained links between operators and local enterprises, and evidence of repeat bookings or sales, where sustainable tourism pathways are selected.
- Repeated enterprise use of institutional services, functioning aggregation or supply arrangements, achievement of certification or buyer-readiness milestones, and movement toward repeat orders or sustained market entry, where agri-food pathways are selected.

Recommendation/intended change 2 – Use enterprise-level experience and pilots to inform institutional and policy change
Priority: High
Linked findings: Findings 6, 9, 12, 17 and 19-21

UNDP should systematically use evidence generated through enterprise support, value-chain initiatives and local pilots to improve institutional services, inform national policy dialogue and, where relevant, support regional cooperation. Phase V showed that direct engagement with firms and producers revealed practical constraints, including certification costs, access to finance, logistics, aggregation, digital payments, production capacity and buyer requirements that were not always visible through policy analysis alone. The wider contribution of pilots was strongest where these experiences were documented, validated with responsible institutions and translated into changes in services, procedures or policy. UNDP is well positioned to perform this bridging function because it works simultaneously with enterprises, institutions and policymakers.

Suggested actions:

- **Create a structured evidence-to-policy mechanism around selected pilots and value chains.** COs should periodically synthesize the recurring constraints, tested solutions and implementation lessons emerging from enterprise engagement and validate them with trade-support institutions, business organizations, private-sector partners and relevant ministries. The resulting evidence should be translated into practical responses, such as changes to advisory or certification services, simplified procedures, policy proposals, public-investment priorities or models for wider replication. Where similar constraints arise across countries, IRH could consolidate the evidence for regional technical dialogue and peer learning. Progress would be demonstrated through documented and partner-validated pilot lessons and their use in at least one institutional service, policy process or coordination mechanism.
- **Use selected enterprise and value-chain pilots to demonstrate commercially viable approaches that also embed inclusion, responsibility and sustainability.** Relevant project-level SES/SESP commitments,[cxii] environmental and social eligibility criteria and risk-mitigation measures should be translated proportionately into enterprise selection, technical assistance, partnerships and monitoring. Gender equality, LNOB, human rights, labour, environmental sustainability, stakeholder engagement and grievance considerations should be incorporated where relevant.[cxiii]

Responsible parties: UNDP IRH and participating COs, working with national counterparts.

Timeframe: Build into programme design and operationalize within the first 6–12 months.

Indicative completion markers:
- A documented mechanism or regular process is established for synthesizing enterprise- and value-chain-level evidence, including recurring constraints, tested solutions and implementation lessons, with clear responsibility for preparing and reviewing the evidence.
- Pilot and enterprise evidence is periodically validated with relevant ministries, trade-support institutions, business organizations and private-sector actors, with documented feedback and agreed follow-up where appropriate.
- Evidence from selected pilots is demonstrably used in at least one institutional, policy or coordination response, such as adaptation of an advisory or certification service, revision of a procedure, development of a policy proposal, identification of a public-investment priority or adoption of a model for replication.

- Relevant SES/SESP commitments, environmental and social eligibility requirements and mitigation measures are visibly reflected, where applicable, in beneficiary-selection criteria, technical-assistance arrangements, partner or grant documentation and monitoring tools.

Recommendation/intended change 3 – Explore strategic financing partnerships that connect UNDP Aid for Trade support with larger reform and investment pathways
Priority: Medium
Linked findings: Findings 7, 10, 17 and 18

Subject to national demand, strategic fit and available resources, **future Aid for Trade programming should explore more systematic engagement with IFIs and other financing partners where this can connect UNDP-supported policy, institutional and enterprise/value-chain interventions with larger reform, financing and investment pathways.** Phase V demonstrated UNDP's ability to identify practical constraints, strengthen institutions, test approaches and prepare MSMEs and value chains for wider market participation. **The scale and persistence of these results were also influenced by financing, infrastructure and longer-term reform requirements that UNDP was not positioned to address through its own project resources alone.** Selective partnerships could combine larger-scale financing and reform leverage with UNDP's trusted relationships, macro–meso–micro reach, institutional strengthening and capacity to integrate gender equality, LNOB, stakeholder participation and environmental and social safeguards. **UNDP's role would be catalytic: identifying financing gaps and enabling constraints, strengthening institutional and enterprise readiness, developing evidence and viable concepts where appropriate, and connecting these with relevant financing and implementation partners.**

Suggested actions:

- **Explore a limited number of high-potential country-level partnership opportunities.** COs, together with national counterparts, may identify areas where UNDP-supported evidence, institutions or tested approaches could complement an existing or prospective IFI or other financing operation—for example, quality infrastructure and certification, trade logistics, digital trade, sustainable tourism or selected value chains. Dialogue with financing partners could clarify the binding constraint, government ownership, respective roles, readiness requirements and potential financing or implementation pathways. **Progress could include jointly developed concepts, incorporation of UNDP-supported evidence or approaches into financing or reform operations, complementary technical assistance, mobilization of public/private/IFI financing, or progression of suitable initiatives toward implementation.**
- **Explore an IRH-level mechanism to identify and broker selected regional and cross-border partnership opportunities where regional action adds value.** Where country-level action alone is insufficient, IRH could consolidate demand from COs and explore partnership opportunities related to regional standards and certification, shared trade intelligence, institutional networks, cross-border value chains and other common trade constraints. IFIs and other financing partners could be engaged as technical, financing or co-financing partners, including through relevant project-preparation facilities, trust funds or regional technical-assistance windows. Progress could be reflected in jointly assessed opportunities, partner participation in the design of specific initiatives, mobilized financing, or adaptation of tested approaches across more than one country.

Government ownership and a realistic route to reform, financing or institutional uptake should guide whether individual opportunities are pursued. Meetings, memoranda and expressions of interest would remain intermediate steps; the more meaningful results would be funded technical assistance, jointly developed initiatives, institutional readiness, integration into larger reform or financing operations, co-financing and progression toward implementation.

Responsible parties: UNDP IRH and participating COs, working with national counterparts, relevant IFIs and other financing partners

Timeframe: Explore during future programme design and resource mobilization; develop selected partnership opportunities within the first 6–12 months of any approved support

Indicative completion markers

- A limited number of high-potential partnership opportunities are identified and jointly assessed with national counterparts and relevant financing partners.
- UNDP-supported evidence, approaches or readiness work is reflected in larger reform, financing or investment initiatives where relevant.
- Selected opportunities move beyond dialogue to concrete next steps, such as jointly developed concepts, complementary technical assistance, co-financing or progression toward implementation.
- Periodic review confirms whether opportunities should be advanced, adapted or concluded based on government ownership, partner commitment and implementation prospects.

Recommendation/intended change 4 – Embed women's economic empowerment in trade institutions and use mentorship, where effective and viable, to strengthen business and market opportunities.
Priority: High
Linked findings: Findings 11, 15, 19 and 20

UNDP should build on the strong enterprise-level results of Phase V by placing greater emphasis on the policy and institutional conditions that determine whether women can access and benefit from trade opportunities at scale. Mentorship and targeted business support strengthened women's confidence, capabilities, networks and market exposure, but their commercial progress continued to be affected by unequal access to finance, certification, productive assets, market information and business networks, alongside mobility, care and social-norm constraints. Future support should therefore combine direct assistance with changes in the policies, eligibility arrangements, institutional services and value-chain governance that shape women's economic participation. This would allow benefits to extend beyond the relatively small number of women who can be reached through individual enterprise support.

Suggested actions:

- **Use women entrepreneurs' experience to make trade policies, institutions and value-chain services more responsive.** Within selected sectors and value chains, COs and national partners should identify a limited number of recurring constraints through structured engagement with women entrepreneurs and women's business organizations. The evidence should inform policy dialogue and practical institutional changes, such as more accessible eligibility and application processes, gender-responsive certification and advisory services, improved referrals to finance and markets, and meaningful representation of women, including rural women and women with disabilities in public-private and value-chain decision-making forums. Progress would be demonstrated through specific institutional or policy changes adopted in response to the evidence, increased use of relevant services by women, and routine collection and use of sex- and disability-disaggregated service data.
- **Institutionalize mentorship as a pathway into mainstream business and market-support**

systems where it is demonstrated to be effective and viable. Where supported by evidence of demand, effectiveness and institutional capacity, mentorship should remain an important mechanism for strengthening women entrepreneurs' capabilities, confidence, networks and ability to make use of business and market opportunities. It should be anchored, where feasible, in capable women's business organizations, chambers or other relevant institutions rather than operate as an isolated Project activity. Delivery arrangements should cover mentor selection and matching, quality assurance, follow-up and referrals to finance, certification, technology, buyers and specialized technical support. Expansion should remain conditional on demonstrated demand, institutional capacity and sustainable financing or continuation arrangements. Progress should be assessed through a results progression from strengthened capabilities and sustained use of mentorship and referral services to improved business practices, market engagement and, where relevant, commercial outcomes.

Results should be assessed not only through participation in activities, but through women's use of institutional services, access to finance and certification, entry into new markets or higher-value activities, business performance and influence over the economic decisions that affect them.

Responsible parties: UNDP IRH and participating COs, working with relevant government institutions, trade- and business-support organizations, women's business organizations and private-sector partners

Timeframe: Agree institutional responsibilities during programme design and operationalize them within the first 6–12 months of any approved support

Indicative completion markers:
- Specific policy, institutional or service changes are adopted in response to evidence from women entrepreneurs and women's business organizations.
- Relevant trade and business-support services show increased and better-documented use by women, including routine sex- and, where feasible, disability-disaggregated monitoring.
- Where mentorship is retained, an institutional delivery model is in place with clear responsibility, mentor selection and matching, follow-up, referrals and continuation arrangements.
- Evidence shows progression from participation and capability gains to greater use of services, stronger market engagement and, where relevant, improved access to finance, certification, buyers or other commercial opportunities.

Recommendation/intended change 5 – Strengthen proportionate value-for-money assessment in future Aid for Trade programming
Priority: Medium
Linked findings: Findings 3, 13, 14 and 15

In a constrained development-finance environment, future Aid for Trade programmes should consider incorporating proportionate approaches to assessing cost-effectiveness and value for money at the design stage, particularly for larger or more resource-intensive interventions. Phase V achieved strong financial delivery and demonstrated generally credible value for money within its approved management, financial-reporting and results framework. However, because the Project was not designed to generate detailed comparative cost-and-results data across intervention types or delivery modalities, the evaluation could not undertake a more granular assessment of relative cost-effectiveness or determine systematically whether more resource-intensive approaches generated proportionately greater additionality and durable results. Future programme design could strengthen this evaluability by identifying, where useful and feasible, a limited set of cost, additionality, uptake and sustainability measures, together with a clearer rationale for resource allocation and choice of delivery modality. These measures should complement existing UNDP financial, results and monitoring requirements without creating disproportionate reporting burdens.

Suggested actions:

- **Apply proportionate cost-effectiveness considerations during programme design and major resource-allocation decisions.** Major components could compare feasible delivery alternatives and consider expected costs alongside likely institutional, commercial, inclusion and regional benefits. Formal cost–benefit analysis may be considered for larger or quantifiable investments where data permit; structured qualitative or semi-quantitative assessment would generally be more appropriate for technical assistance and institutional support. Progress would be reflected in a documented consideration of delivery options, key assumptions and the rationale for the preferred approach.
- **Define a small number of value-for-money measures linked to the results pathway.** These could combine expenditure and reach data with evidence of additionality, adoption, institutional continuation, enterprise use, market conversion and prospects for replication or scale. More intensive assistance such as grants, equipment, certification support, incubation or individualized mentorship could include an explicit rationale for its expected added value relative to lighter-touch alternatives. Progress would be reflected in the inclusion and periodic review of relevant measures in project monitoring frameworks.
- **Use periodic programme reviews to consider whether resource allocations remain justified by results and changing circumstances.** Periodic reviews could consider whether regional activities, institutional services and enterprise-support approaches are generating sufficient uptake and added value relative to their costs and feasible alternatives, while also examining changes in political economy, institutional demand and implementation assumptions. The findings could inform documented management decisions to continue, deepen, adapt, replicate, transfer or conclude particular approaches. **Where significant adaptation occurs, reviews should record what changed, why it changed and how the revised approach is expected to contribute to intended outcomes.** Progress would be reflected in documented management consideration of results, contextual change and value-for-money evidence during programme reviews.

Responsible parties: UNDP IRH and participating COs, working with project teams, national counterparts and implementing partners

Timeframe: Consider during project formulation and resource allocation, and review periodically during implementation

Indicative completion markers:
- Major programme components document the rationale for selected delivery approaches and resource allocations, including feasible alternatives where relevant.
- A small set of proportionate VfM measures is included in the results framework, combining cost information with evidence of additionality, uptake, continuation and, where relevant, commercial or replication results.
- More resource-intensive interventions include a documented rationale for their expected added value relative to lighter-touch alternatives.
- Periodic programme reviews use results, contextual change and VfM evidence to inform documented decisions to continue, adapt, deepen, replicate or conclude particular approaches.

10 Annexes

Annex 10.1 Evaluation Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE
International consultant for Project Evaluation

TYPE OF CONTRACT:	*Individual Contract*
AGENCY/PROJECT NAME:	*UNDP 'Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V' Project*
COUNTRY OF ASSIGNMENT:	*Home-based with travel to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (4 days per country)*
DURATION	*Approximately 40 working days, Estimated 01 April – 05 August 2026*
LANGUAGES REQUIRED	*English and Russian (mandatory)*

1. Background and context

UNDP works in more than 170 countries and territories, helping to achieve the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion. UNDP supports countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities and build resilience in order to sustain development results.
UNDP's 'Aid for Trade in Central Asia (phase V)' is a regional Project that aims to support Central Asian (CA) countries (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) in pursuing inclusive and sustainable growth by promoting green value chains and by increasing the competitiveness of economies, and foster more resilient, secure, and gender-responsive economic structures through economic diversification and adapting to the COVID-19 emerging trends.
The overall strategy of the Project is to support businesses and producers to become more resilient to fragilities of economies in a post-COVID-19 context and promote inclusive and sustainable growth by building smart productive capacities and green value chains, which produce high value-added and competitive products, create decent jobs and promote sustainable and circular production patterns.
The main logic of the Project is to support building productive capacities and value chains that are employment-rich, green, and future-proof, as well as policies and regulations that favor shifting value chains towards sustainable and differentiated products with high employment potential and low environmental impact. It also promotes regional cooperation and connectivity in Central Asia, fostering linkages to regional and global value chains.
The Project aims at fostering more resilient, secure, and gender-responsive economic structures through economic diversification and adapting to the COVID-19 emerging trends[cxiv]. In order to do so, the Project works on three different levels that are mutually re-enforcing: the policy level (macro level), business support institutions (meso level), and direct support to businesses (micro level). The phase V of the Aid for Trade Project builds on the results of the previous phases – including the groundwork laid during phase IV. It continues pursuing the strategy of promoting inclusive and sustainable growth through supporting green value chains and increased competitiveness.

Programme strategy and approach
The main development challenge for the target countries is the under-utilization of productive capacities and trade potential, which in turn limits progress towards economic resilience and inclusive, sustainable development pathways.
The Project strategy and its activities are aligned to support businesses and producers to become more resilient to the emerging post-COVID-19 context and promote inclusive and sustainable growth by building 'forward-looking' and smart productive capacities and green value chains, which will be identified in the agricultural, agro-industrial, but also in other employment-rich sectors which produce high value-added and competitive products, create decent jobs and promote sustainable and circular production patterns. Addressing economic, social, and environmental sustainability requires integrated policies and approaches that create economic opportunities for upward mobility while still conserving natural resources, adapting to and mitigating climate change, as well as anticipating and adapting to other shocks and opportunities resulting from technology, political, sociological and market transformations.
The Project's approach is to address the development challenge in an integrated manner through three sub-components:

- At the regional level:
  - Supporting regional cooperation, connectivity, and integration into regional and global value chains
- At the country levels:
  - Supporting enabling environment for building economic resilience, and inclusive and sustainable growth through:

        - Enabling national policies for trade oriented private sector development and enhancing green economic resilience
        - Improving efficiency of public and trade support services for the private sector with strong focus on services critical for MSMEs in times of crisis or economic recovery periods
    - Supporting job creation and improving the efficiency, competitiveness, and gender-responsiveness of target 'green' value chains.

The Project also promotes better cooperation between the different countries in the implementation and coordination of different thematic areas.

Cross cutting themes throughout all three levels are job creation, gender equality and environmental sustainability.

Regional level

On the regional level, the Project focuses on ensuring collaboration and cooperation between participating countries, as well as other regional and national Projects working on sustainable growth and other related issues and facilitates cross-border networking of stakeholders for a larger scale regional impact.

In view of emerging regional and global sustainability, connectivity, and accessibility initiatives (such as the EU Green Deal, Trans-Eurasian rail network, UNESCAP's Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, and others) the Project supports regional dialogue among CA countries on regional development perspectives that have an impact on market access opportunities of the CA countries. The Project also supports regional policy analysis on the issues and initiatives, which are vital for the inclusion of economic operators in regional and global value chains, including connectivity improvement, and addressing policy, technical and administrative barriers to trade.

The Project also utilizes existing regional platforms (i.e., Central Asian Trade Intelligence Portal, Central Asian Working Group on Export Promotion of Agricultural Products, STEM4ALL, etc.) and works to establish new ones in partnership with stakeholders and other development partners to support policy makers, Trade Support Institutions (TSIs), and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) of the region to address the issues related to ensuring the sustainability of trade (shift to sustainable production, green value chains), embracing digitalization (addressing digital connectivity, scaling-up e-commerce capabilities), and addressing MSMEs constraints (harmonizing and aligning regulation, complying with standards and technical barriers and enabling access to trade intelligence and trade finance).

Country level (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)

Based on emerging post-COVID-19 trends, and with the aim of contributing to "building forward better" through trade, the Project (on a macro level) supports Governments in designing and implementing in a participatory manner trade and private sector development policies aimed at strengthening economic resilience and transforming their production and export structures, increasing export competitiveness through the development of productive infrastructure in-line with global quality standards and best practices, promoting green, employment-rich and future-proof value chains, fostering trade digitalization and enabling environment for e-commerce.

The Project (on a meso level) supports improving the efficiency of public and trade support services for the private sector with a stronger focus on services critical for MSMEs at crisis times, such as foresighting new markets and facilitating market access, accessing and use of big data tools for trade intelligence, supply chain management and preparing supply chains to weather future disruptions, advanced and innovative trade finance, e-commerce mentoring and connecting to digital platforms.

The Project (on a micro level) continues to support building 'forward-looking' productive capacities, enhancing the efficiency and competitiveness of target 'green' VCs contributing to inclusive and sustainable human development through increased number of decent green jobs and livelihood opportunities for vulnerable communities, and with the emphasis on enhancing their resilience to domestic economic inefficiencies and external shocks, including COVID-related shocks. Considering the shift in global trade towards digitalization and e-commerce, the dedicated activities under this component shall aim at enhancing MSMEs capacities to trade online and intensively utilize e-commerce to reach new customers and markets and strengthen the demand-driven quality of goods and services offered.

A particular emphasis is put on enhancing women's and youth's economic empowerment and participation in trade. The Project has dedicated activities to support women entrepreneurship development through mentorship programs, programmes on affordable finance or other forms of support.

Basic Project information:

PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION	
Project/outcome title	Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V
Quantum ID	00146569

<table>
<tr><td>Corporate outcome and output</td><td colspan="2">Outcome: No-One Left Behind, Centering on Equitable Access to Opportunities and a Rights-Based Approach to Human Agency and Human Development

Output: Access to basic services and financial and non-financial assets and services improved to support productive capacities for sustainable livelihoods and jobs to achieve prosperity</td></tr>
<tr><td>Country</td><td colspan="2">Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan</td></tr>
<tr><td>Region</td><td colspan="2">Central Asia</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date Project document signed</td><td colspan="2">19 September 2022</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Project dates</td><td>Start</td><td>Planned end</td></tr>
<tr><td>1 October 2022</td><td>30 June 2026 (for Country Components)
30 September 2026 (for REG Component and overall Project)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Project budget</td><td colspan="2">EUR 6,800,000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Project expenditure at the time of evaluation</td><td colspan="2">TBC</td></tr>
<tr><td>Funding source</td><td colspan="2">Government of Finland</td></tr>
<tr><td>Implementing party</td><td colspan="2">UNDP IRH</td></tr>
</table>

2. Evaluation purpose, scope and objectives

Evaluation purpose: The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess the results, development contributions, and measurable changes achieved by the "Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V" Project during its implementation period (2022–2026). As a results-driven initiative, the Project supports inclusive and sustainable growth in Central Asia through green value chain development, regional cooperation, and private sector competitiveness, integrating interventions across the macro (policy), meso (trade support institutions), and micro (enterprise) levels. Accordingly, the evaluation should prioritize a results-oriented assessment to focus on the Project's tangible development outcomes - including job creation, MSME competitiveness, access to new markets, and policy or institutional changes achieved.

Given the Project's dual structure of regional and country-level interventions, the evaluation should adopt an integrated Regional-Country approach, examining how initiatives implemented on the Regional level and in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan collectively contributed to both national-level outcomes and broader regional results such as enhanced cooperation, connectivity, and integration of Central Asian MSMEs into regional and global value chains.

The evaluation is also aimed to inform decision-making or any potential follow-on or scale-up support and exit or transition strategies both on regional and country-levels by providing an independent, utilization-focused assessment. Primary users are the Project Board, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub (IRH) and Country Offices and national stakeholders. Findings will be shared with these stakeholders, providing clear evidence on Project successes and shortfalls to inform programming and resource allocation.

Evaluation objectives:

- Assess Project's performance against the ToC and results framework, examining the delivery of outputs and plausible contribution to outcome-level changes across macro, meso and micro levels; as well as the quality of Project implementation across relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and cross-cutting results.
- Review the quality and use of monitoring data (baselines, targets, disaggregation) to inform evidence-based management.
- Assess the extent to which the Aid for Trade initiative has contributed to the overarching goal of inclusive and sustainable growth in the region[cxv].
- Examine how long-term engagement in the region may have contributed to deeper institutional capacities, more resilient trade ecosystems, and durable development results.
- Assess whether and how earlier phases have enabled more meaningful or scalable results in the current phase.
- Identify lessons learned and recommendations to inform future similar initiatives in the region.

Assess the Project's contribution to advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment across macro (policy), meso (institutional), and micro (enterprise) levels in line with its GEN2 classification. Specifically, the evaluation will:

- Assess progress toward gender equality and empowerment beyond participation, focusing on increased agency, voice, and influence of women entrepreneurs and workers within Project-supported value chains and institutions. Evaluate women's leadership and participation in decision-making within Project-supported value chains, producer and trade associations, and institutional or policy fora. Assess whether women-owned MSMEs and women workers have gained increased opportunities to participate in, influence, or benefit from these structures as a result of Project interventions.
- Verify and document the Project's GEN2 alignment under the UNDP Gender Marker system, identifying achievements that substantiate this rating and outlining feasible actions that could strengthen progress toward GEN3 in a potential follow-on phase (e.g., institutional gender accountability mechanisms, policy incentives, or gender-responsive financing instruments).
- Document differentiated impacts on diverse groups of women—including rural, young, migrant, and disabled women—focusing on how Project-supported interventions (capacity-building, market access, digital trade, and value chain upgrading) addressed or fell short of their specific needs and constraints.

Evaluation scope: This final evaluation is expected to evaluate the *Aid for Trade Project in Central Asia (phase V)*. The evaluation will cover the current implementation period (1 October 2022–30 June 2026) across all participating countries and client groups described below. In addition, the evaluation will assess cumulative results and pathways to impact since the Project's inception in 2009, drawing on evidence from prior phases (reports, monitoring data) to determine how earlier investments and reforms contributed to outcomes observed in the current cycle. Engagement with these stakeholders is for data collection and triangulation only. The evaluation will not assess or rate the performance, mandates or accountability of external entities not managed by the Project.

The geographical area of the Project

- Kyrgyzstan: Bishkek (capital), Naryn, Issyk-Kul, Osh and Jalal-Abad regions
- Tajikistan: Dushanbe (capital), Sughd and Khatlon regions
- Uzbekistan: Tashkent (capital), Andijan, Namangan and Fergana regions.

Target clientele

The Project works to create green jobs, support income generation using sustainable production methods (green niche products), and improve trade-related policy and services to enhance the private sector's resilience. The Project, therefore, works with the following actors, with whom the evaluator consultant will be expected to engage for evidence gathering:

- National authorized executive branch institutions, ministries/agencies, and local authorities,
- MSMEs, producers, processors, cooperatives, business associations, and value chains actors located in rural areas. Jobs and income generated primarily benefits rural populations that have limited access to income or employment opportunities,
- Special focus is given to women and young entrepreneurs, as well as women and youth[cxvi] working at target value chains,
- CSOs/NGOs.

The evaluation is scheduled between April 2026 and August 2026.

The evaluation includes a data collection, with a field mission to all three countries that have been involved in Project implementation (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan).

Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions

The evaluation should determine the Project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and contributions towards cross-cutting issues (human rights, leaving no-one behind, gender equality).

The evaluation will answer the following broad questions:

- To what extent has the Project achieved or is likely to achieve its intended objectives at the output level, and what contribution has it made toward outcome-level change?
- What significant (expected or unexpected) outcomes have emerged, and how do they align with or diverge from the Project's ToC and the regional context?

- To what extent has monitoring data (including baselines, targets, and disaggregation) been used for evidence-based management, learning, and decision-making?
- How has the Project contributed to advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment across macro, meso, and micro levels?
- What factors contributed to or hindered UNDP's performance and eventually, the sustainability of results?
- What key lessons learned, good practices or innovations can be drawn to strengthen future programming?

The following questions are tentative, and it is expected that the consultant will revise them to align them with the selected methodology for the evaluation (i.e. outcome harvesting). The final evaluation questions will be reflected in the evaluation matrix.

Relevance/Coherence

- To what extent was the Project's design and strategy relevant and responsive to country needs and priorities, providing an appropriate pathway toward the intended results and adapting to emerging regional needs?
- To what extent was the Project coherent with UNDP's regional and country programme priorities, UNDP regionality principles[cxvii], the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs, while ensuring national ownership and complementarity with other partners' initiatives?

Effectiveness:

- To what extent have the Project's intended outputs and outcomes been achieved, and to what extent can observed changes (e.g., job creation, improved livelihoods, enhanced productive capacities of value chain actors, increased sales and exports) - including intended and unintended effects on beneficiary institutions, MSMEs, women, and youth - be attributed to the Project's interventions? What factors have facilitated or constrained these results?
- How effectively has the Project leveraged partnerships, systems, and capacity strengthening to contribute to tangible and sustainable improvements in human development outcomes (e.g., job creation, livelihoods, productive capacities, and inclusiveness of business processes)?

Efficiency

- To what extent were the Project's management, coordination, and implementation strategies - including adaptive monitoring mechanisms - efficient and cost-effective in achieving intended results, ensuring timely delivery and optimal use of financial, human, and technical resources and coordination with implementing partners?
- How efficiently did Project management anticipate and respond to contextual changes, risks, and emerging needs - applying adaptive management and results-based monitoring to accelerate delivery, optimize resource use, and ensure value for money?

Sustainability:

- To what extent are Project results likely to be sustained beyond completion, considering institutional capacity, ownership, financing mechanisms, and exit strategies?
- What social, political, or environmental factors influence the sustainability and potential scaling of Project outcomes?

The evaluation should also include an assessment of the extent to which Project design, implementation and monitoring have taken the following cross-cutting issues into consideration:

Cross-Cutting Issues

- To what extent did the Project identify and respond to needs of vulnerable or marginalized groups (including women, youth, persons with disabilities)? What barriers exist for their effective inclusion?
- In what ways does the Project contribute to building or enhancing regional cooperation and integration? What measurable changes have been observed in regional cooperation and integration as a result of the Project?
- To what extent has the Project integrated gender equality and the empowerment of women in its design, implementation, and monitoring, and contributed to gender-transformative change in target value chains and institutions - evidenced by women's increased participation and leadership in decision-making (e.g., representation on committees, producer groups, facilitation roles), and by reductions in practical constraints (time and care burdens, mobility, access to assets and services)? Were there any unintended effects, positive or negative, related to gender outcomes?
- To what extent have women-owned business and women workers gained equitable access to economic opportunities (finance, trade intelligence, certifications, e-commerce, procurement/supplier diversity),

reflected in uptake of services, firms trading online, skills gains in market intelligence, and business performance (sales/export growth)?

3. Methodology

The evaluation will follow the [UNDP Evaluation Guidelines](), [United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards]() and will be conducted independently by the consultant, with UNDP IRH and the COs facilitating access and logistics. The evaluation will adopt a mixed-methods design, including triangulation across sources to ensure credibility and validity. The evaluation will engage stakeholders through consultations. The evaluation will use a ToC-based approach with contribution analysis at the outcome level. Using the ToC, it will map assumptions and causal linkages to understand how and under what conditions the Project contributed to its outcomes.

The evaluator will apply an outcome harvesting method [cxviii] to assess, document, and analyze the intended and unintended outcomes of the Project and to determine the level of the Project's contribution to these outcomes, particularly in terms of decent job creation, livelihoods enhancement, strengthened productive and trade capacities of value chain actors, increased sales and exports, and sustained structural transformation. The Inception Report will include an evaluation matrix linking evaluation criteria to key questions, indicators, data sources and methods and data analysis plan; a sampling strategy (including the sites to visit and stakeholders to consult) sized to the level of effort, with any exclusions and limitations; and the final methodological approach including the interview schedule, field visits and data to be used. The latter should have been fully discussed and agreed between UNDP and the consultant. The proposed methodology may employ any relevant and appropriate quantitative, qualitative or combined methods to conduct the Final Project Evaluation, exploring specific gender sensitive data collecting and analytical methods and tools suitable to the context.

Indicative data collecting methods include:

- Desk review: a detailed review of the programme materials and deliverables including the Project Document, ToC and results framework, monitoring and Project quality assurance reports, annual workplans, progress and annual reports and relevant partner and government documents. An indicative list of documents for desk review is provided in Annex 2.
- Key informant interviews and focus group discussions where appropriate: interviews with UNDP personnel, government and TSIs representatives, MSME and value chain actors, other relevant stakeholders (Annex 8).
- Surveys and questionnaires (if feasible) involving stakeholders at macro, meso and micro levels, with the sampling approach included in the Inception Report.
- Other methodologies, as appropriate, include field visits and on-site validation of key tangible outputs and interventions, case studies, statistical analysis, social network analysis, etc.

Under effectiveness, the evaluation will review higher-level effects plausibly contributed to by the Project among its target groups, based on triangulated evidence. In this context, the consultant is expected to gain insights from the key national and international players in knowledge and experience sharing.

Stakeholder engagement: the Consultant will meet UNDP IRH, COs' representatives, government stakeholders, key partners, Project beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Inputs from these meetings will be systematically documented to support the Project evaluation, but also to highlight recommendations and advise on the potential Project follow-up phase.

If a field mission is not possible, the consultant will conduct remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online videoconferencing tools (Zoom, Teams, etc.). This remote plan should follow the same standards set out in the Inception Report.

All relevant Project documentation will be made available by UNDP.

The evaluation will follow UNEG Ethical Guidelines. The consultant will use gender-responsive methods, collect sex- and age-disaggregated data whenever feasible, and apply safe interviewing protocols. Interviews are envisaged to be conducted in Russian but may use local language (Kyrgyz/Tajik/Uzbek) interpretation as required. If necessary, the Project will cover costs of interpretation to local language. All personally identifiable data will be anonymized, stored security with restricted access and retained for a time-bound period agreed at the time of inception.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

The evaluator must apply gender-responsive and intersectional evaluation methods, including sex, age disability and location-disaggregated analysis; power and role mapping within selected value chains; Change stories from women entrepreneurs/workers; where relevant, social network analysis to track women's brokerage/centrality in business associations and platforms.

The sampling strategy will ensure minimum 50% women respondents overall and meaningful participation of women in each stakeholder group (not fewer than 40% in any single FGD or KII set). The evaluator will organize women-only FGDs, provide women moderators.

All primary tools (surveys, KII/FGD guides) shall include items on decision-making, voice, bargaining power, time use, mobility, access to assets/finance/technology.

4. Phases and responsibilities

The evaluation process is divided in six phases:

Phase 1: Preparation, mainly devoted to structuring the evaluation approach, compiling Project documentation (shared by UNDP), desk review of relevant programme materials and Project reports, evaluation design, methodology and detailed work plan.
Estimated work input: 3 days
Location: Home- based
Responsible Party: International Consultant

Phase 2: Inception, which will involve consultations between the evaluator and the UNDP, Project review, finalization of stakeholder mapping, review of the result logics, analysis of information relevant to the initiative, finalization of evaluation methodology and preparation of inception report (around 20 pages without annexes). The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation must be clearly outlined in the Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP and the consultant.
Estimated work input: 5 days
Location: Home-based
Responsible Party: International consultant

Phase 3: Data collection and analysis, including in-depth desk research, in-depth review of the Project documents and monitoring frameworks, interviews and/or online interviews as necessary, staff and partner survey/s, and field visits.
Estimated work input: 19 days (Four days per country, 2 days for IRH (online))
Location: Home-based and the three countries/territories (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) defined in the inception report. The geographical selection will be made according to the Project's areas of intervention where designated Project activities took place. A non-exclusive list of all stakeholders interacted within the scope of the said Project will be provided for the Consultant's reference to be used while s/he prepares the interviewee list.
Responsible Party: UNDP (access and logistical support), International consultant

Phase 4: Preparation of a draft evaluation report and recommendations (*refer to report template in the annex 5*). Focusing on data analysed, interpretation of findings and drafting an evaluation report (50-60 pages maximum, including executive summary and excluding annexes). UNDP shall review the draft report and provide a set of consolidated comments to the evaluator within an agreed period of time, addressing the content required (as agreed in the TOR and inception report) and quality criteria as outlined in the evaluation guidelines.
Estimated work input: 10 days
Location: Home based
Responsible Party: International consultant, UNDP (revision of a draft evaluation report and providing comments).

Phase 5. Evaluation report audit trail. Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluator to show how he/she has addressed comments.

Phase 6: Finalization of evaluation report (including the executive summary and annexes, evaluation brief and presentation of results) and recommendations incorporating additions and comments provided by the Project staff, IRH and UNDP COs and submission of the final evaluation report. Focusing on data analysed, interpretation of findings and drafting an evaluation report. At the end of the final report, the evaluator is expected to present concrete recommendations which are addressed to specific stakeholders including the donor and UNDP. The final evaluation report will be reviewed and approved against a set of criteria which seeks to ensure premium quality for the evaluation deliverables (Annex 3).
Estimated work input: 3 days
Location: Home based
Responsible Party: International consultant, UNDP (revision of report and facilitation of final presentation)
Standard templates that need to be followed are provided in the Annexes section. It is expected that the evaluator will follow the UNDP evaluation guidelines and comply with the UNEG Quality Checklist.

5. Deliverables

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities	Reviews and approvals required
1	Evaluation inception report	Methodology, information collection roadmap, list of institutions/persons to be	By 20 April 2026	Evaluator submits Inception	Review and approval

		contacted/interviewed, modalities for data collection (prior to start of in-country evaluation), survey questionnaires. The outline of the inception report should be based on the guidance provided in Annex 5 A dedicated chapter on gender equality and women's participation and leadership should be included		Report to Project management	required from UNDP
2	A) Evaluation debriefing with UNDP management B) Evaluation brief/presentation that maybe shared with the Project board and other knowledge sharing events	Presentation of key findings	End of stakeholder meetings, interviews, etc., by 15 June 2026	Evaluator presents to UNDP management	Review and approval required from UNDP
3	Draft evaluation report	Full draft report with annexes. The outline of the report should be based on the guidelines provided in Annex 4	Within 3 weeks of end of stakeholder meetings, interviews, etc., by 10 July 2026	Evaluator submits to Project management	Review and approval required from UNDP
4	Final evaluation report + Evaluation report audit trail	Final evaluation report (including the executive summary and annexes) incorporating additions and comments provided by UNDP. Evaluation report audit trail, detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report (see template in ToR annex 7). This Audit Trail should be listed as an annex in the final report but not attached to the report file.	Within 1 week of receiving comments on draft report, by 01 August 2026	Evaluator submits both documents to Project management	Review and approval required from UNDP

Payment schedule:

- Payment 1: 20% upon confirmation by the Certifying Officer of satisfactory delivery of Deliverable 1
- Payment 2: 20% upon confirmation by the Certifying Officer of satisfactory delivery of Deliverable 2
- Payment 3: 30% upon confirmation by the Certifying Officer of satisfactory delivery of Deliverable 3
- Payment 4: 30% upon confirmation by the Certifying Officer of satisfactory delivery of Deliverable 4

6. Competencies and Qualifications

a) Corporate competencies:

- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability
- Treats all people fairly without favoritism
- Fulfils all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment

Functional competencies:

- Strong interpersonal skills, communication and diplomatic skills, ability to work in a team
- Openness to change and ability to receive/integrate feedback
- Ability to work under pressure and stressful situations
- Strong analytical, reporting and writing abilities

b) Qualification Required:

Education:

Minimum Master's Degree in a subject related to socio-economic development

Experience

- Minimum 10 years of professional expertise in international development co-operation in programme/Project management and impact assessment/evaluation
- Minimum 6 years of experience in conducting evaluations including around UNDP thematic areas of trade, value chains, private sector development and MSME competitiveness, local economic development and productive capacities
- Demonstrated field experience in data collection in qualitative research
- Proven experience in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), particularly in Outcome Harvesting or other outcome-oriented methodologies.
- Excellent professional knowledge of the CIS region, especially Central Asia, related to trade and economic development, private sector development.

Language skills:

- Excellent writing, editing, and oral communication skills in English and Russian

7. Evaluation Ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

8. Implementation Arrangements

The consultant will work under the overall guidance of the Project Manager and Evaluation Manager.

The Project Manager will work closely with the Evaluation Manager in arranging introductory meetings within IRH and UNDP COs and will establish initial contacts with partners and Project staff. The evaluator will take responsibility for setting up meetings and conducting the evaluation, subject to advanced approval of the methodology submitted in the inception report.

The IRH together with the COs will develop a management response to the evaluation recommendations within 6 weeks of report finalization. The evaluation mission will be facilitated by the Project Manager.

An Evaluation Reference Group will be set up to ensure a quality evaluation report. Specific tasks of the Reference Group will be to review and provide guidance to the evaluation process, review and comment on draft inception and evaluation reports, facilitate access to information, among others. The evaluation Reference Group will also advise on the conformity of evaluation processes to the UNEG standards. The evaluation manager will review and approve all deliverables of the consultancy following UNDP Quality Assurance criteria. The evaluators are required to address all comments of the reference group completely and comprehensively using an audit trail matrix. The Evaluators will provide a detail rationale for any comment that remain unaddressed.

9. Evaluation of Applicants

Individual consultants will be evaluated based on a cumulative analysis taking into consideration the combination of the applicants' qualifications and financial proposal.

The award of the contract should be made to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as:
a) responsive/compliant/acceptable, and
b) having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria specific to the solicitation.

Technical Criteria - 70% of total evaluation
Financial Criteria - 30% of total evaluation

Technical Criteria - 70% of total evaluation – max. 70 points:
Criteria A (Education) – max points: 5
Criteria B (Experience with international development co-operation in programme/Project management and impact assessment/evaluation) - max points: 10
Criteria C (Experience in evaluation around the Project thematic areas of trade, value chains, local economic development and productive capacities) – max points: 10
Criteria D (Experience in the region) – max points: 5
Criteria E (Proposed methodology) - max points: 10
Criteria F (Knowledge of English and Russian) – max points: 10
Criteria G (Interview- Capacities in conducting evaluations, communication skills)- max points: 20

Financial Criteria - 30% of total evaluation – max. 30 points
Only candidates who will receive min. 70% of points in desk review (criteria A-F) will be invited to interview. Only candidates who will get min. 70% of points in technical evaluation (criteria A-G) will be considered for financial evaluation.

10. Application procedures

Qualified candidates are requested to apply online via this website. The application should contain:
- Cover letter explaining why you are the most suitable candidate for the advertised position. Please paste the letter into the "Resume and Motivation" section of the electronic application
- A brief methodology on how you will approach and conduct the work
- Filled P11 form or CV including past experience in similar Projects and contact details of referees (Please see Annex 11 for P11 form template).
- Offeror's Letter (blank template can be downloaded from the below link https://popp.undp.org/document/4851/download/en?v=1690208966).
- Financial Proposal* in USD - specifying a) total lump sum amount for the professional fee for tasks specified in this announcement. The travel costs for the missions to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and living allowances for 4 days in each country/territory should be presented separately. In general, UNDP does not accept travel costs exceeding those of an economy class ticket. Per diems cannot exceed maximum UN daily allowance rates (http://icsc.un.org/rootindex.asp). In-country travel will be provided by UNDP Country Offices.
Incomplete applications will not be considered. Please make sure you have provided all requested materials.

**Please note that the financial proposal is all-inclusive and shall take into account various expenses incurred by the consultant/contractor during the contract period (e.g. fee, health insurance, vaccination, personal security needs and any other relevant expenses related to the performance of services…). Payments will be made only upon confirmation of UNDP on delivering on the contract obligations in a satisfactory manner.*

Individual Consultants are responsible for ensuring they have vaccinations/inoculations when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director. Consultants are also required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under dss.un.org
General Terms and conditions as well as other related documents can be found under: http://on.undp.org/t7fJs.

Qualified women and members of minorities are encouraged to apply.

11. ToR Annexes.

Annex 1. Project results framework
Annex 2. List of documents to be considered for the evaluation desk review
Annex 3. Quality criteria for report
Annex 4. Outline of inception report
Annex 5. Outline of evaluation report
Annex 6. AfT leaflet/brochure

Annex 7. Evaluation Audit Trail Template
Annex 8. List of stakeholders and main partners
Annex 9. Code of conduct
Annex 10. Evaluation matrix (suggested as a deliverable to be included in the inception report). The evaluation matrix is a tool that evaluators create as map and reference in planning and conducting an evaluation. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer, data sources, data collection, analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated.
Table. Sample evaluation matrix

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific sub questions	Data sources	Data-collection methods/tools	Indicators/ success standard	Methods for data analysis

Annex 10.2 Evaluation matrix

Evaluation questions	Methods	Judgement criteria	Documentary data sources
Broad questions			
To what extent has the Project achieved or is likely to achieve its intended objectives at the output level, and what contribution has it made toward outcome-level change? What significant (expected or unexpected) outcomes have emerged, and how do they align with or diverge from the Project's ToC and the regional context? To what extent has monitoring data (including baselines, targets, and disaggregation) been used for evidence-based management, learning, and decision-making? How has the Project contributed to advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment across macro, meso, and micro levels? What factors contributed to or hindered UNDP's performance and eventually, the sustainability of results? What key lessons learned, good practices or innovations can be drawn to strengthen future programming?	Stakeholder mapping and analysis Analysis of the regional and country context Review and testing of the revised ToC Outcome harvesting and contribution analysis Systematic documentary review, with particular attention to Project design, implementation and monitoring documentation Review of monitoring and financial data Semi-structured key informant interviews Small group discussions and, where appropriate, focus group discussions Survey of meso- and micro-level stakeholders, if feasible Field visits and direct observation, where feasible Enterprise case studies Triangulation of evidence	Achievement of outputs and progress toward outcomes. Plausible contribution to observed change. Consistency with the ToC and context. Evidence of intended and unintended results. Quality and use of monitoring data. Use of evidence for management and learning. Contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment. Attention to inclusion and cross-cutting issues. Enabling and constraining implementation factors. Prospects for sustainability and scaling. Relevance of lessons, good practices and innovations.	National development and sector strategies UNDP and relevant UN strategic frameworks Regional and national analytical reports and statistics Project Document, ToC, results framework and workplans Monitoring, quality assurance, financial and annual/progress reports Previous phase documentation and evaluations Government, TSI and partner documentation Project design, implementation and coordination records Project knowledge products and technical studies Evaluation-generated documentation

Evaluation questions	Methods	Judgement criteria	Documentary data sources
Relevance/coherence			
To what extent was the Project's design and strategy relevant and responsive to country needs and priorities, providing an appropriate pathway toward the intended results and adapting to emerging regional needs? To what extent was the Project coherent with UNDP's regional and country programme priorities, UNDP regionality principles , the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs, while ensuring national ownership and complementarity with other partners' initiatives?	Stakeholder mapping and analysis Context and policy analysis Review and testing of the revised ToC Systematic documentary review Semi-structured key informant interviews Small group discussions and, where appropriate, FGDs Field visits, where feasible Triangulation of evidence	Alignment with national priorities and regional needs. Alignment with UNDP frameworks and the SDGs. Relevance to target groups, supported by evidence. Coherent and context-appropriate design logic. Integration of gender, inclusion and environmental sustainability. National ownership and country responsiveness. Complementarity with partner initiatives. Adaptability to changing circumstances	National and sector strategies and plans Regional and national policy and analytical documents UNDP Strategic Plan and programme frameworks Relevant UN and SDG frameworks Project Document, ToC and results framework Workplans and annual/progress reports Partnership and coordination records Previous phase documents and evaluations Government, TSI and partner documentation Project knowledge products and studies
Effectiveness			

Evaluation questions	Methods	Judgement criteria	Documentary data sources
To what extent have the Project's intended outputs and outcomes been achieved, and to what extent can observed changes (e.g., job creation, improved livelihoods, enhanced productive capacities of value chain actors, increased sales and exports) - including intended and unintended effects on beneficiary institutions, MSMEs, women, and youth - be attributed to the Project's interventions? What factors have facilitated or constrained these results? How effectively has the Project leveraged partnerships, systems, and capacity strengthening to contribute to tangible and sustainable improvements in human development outcomes (e.g., job creation, livelihoods, productive capacities, and inclusiveness of business processes)?	Stakeholder mapping and analysis Review and testing of the revised ToC Outcome harvesting and contribution analysis Systematic documentary review of Project outputs, outcomes and partnership results Review of monitoring and financial data Semi-structured key informant interviews Small group discussions and, where appropriate, FGDs Survey of meso- and micro-level stakeholders, if feasible Field visits and direct observation, where feasible Enterprise case studies Triangulation of qualitative, quantitative and documentary evidence	Achievement of intended outputs and outcomes. Plausible contribution to observed changes in institutions, policies, MSMEs and value chains. Evidence of intended and unintended results. Evidence of results across macro, meso and micro levels. Contribution to job creation, livelihoods, productive capacities and market access. Contribution to stronger partnerships, systems and institutional capacities. Inclusiveness of results for women, youth and vulnerable groups. Quality and reach of support modalities and services.	Project Document, ToC and results framework Annual workplans and annual/progress reports Monitoring, indicator tracking and quality assurance reports Financial and delivery data Beneficiary lists and stakeholder mapping Training, mentoring and service delivery records Partnership and coordination documentation Policy outputs, technical products and knowledge materials Survey, case study and field mission documentation Previous phases documents and evaluations
Efficiency			
To what extent were the Project's management, coordination, and implementation strategies - including adaptive monitoring mechanisms - efficient and cost-effective in achieving intended results, ensuring timely delivery and optimal use of financial,	Stakeholder mapping and analysis Systematic documentary review of implementation, coordination and management processes	Timeliness of implementation and delivery. Efficient use of financial, human and technical resources.	Annual workplans and implementation schedules Annual/progress reports and quality assurance reports

Evaluation questions	Methods	Judgement criteria	Documentary data sources
human, and technical resources and coordination with implementing partners? How efficiently did Project management anticipate and respond to contextual changes, risks, and emerging needs - applying adaptive management and results-based monitoring to accelerate delivery, optimize resource use, and ensure value for money?	Review of monitoring, financial, budget and delivery data Review of adaptive management, risk management and reporting systems Semi-structured key informant interviews Small group discussions, where appropriate Comparative analysis across countries, components and support modalities Triangulation of documentary, financial and stakeholder evidence	Cost-effectiveness of implementation strategies and support modalities. Functioning management and coordination arrangements. Quality of collaboration with implementing partners and stakeholders. Usefulness of monitoring systems for timely decision-making. Ability to anticipate and respond to risks and contextual changes. Evidence of adaptive management and course correction. Value for money in relation to results achieved.	Financial, expenditure and delivery data Budget revisions and resource allocation records Monitoring, reporting and indicator tracking documentation Risk logs, mitigation measures and adaptive management records Coordination, governance and Project Board documentation Relevant audit, review or assessment reports Previous phases evaluations and management-related findings
Sustainability			
To what extent are Project results likely to be sustained beyond completion, considering institutional capacity, ownership, financing mechanisms, and exit strategies? What social, political, or environmental factors influence the sustainability and potential scaling of Project outcomes?	Stakeholder mapping and analysis Systematic documentary review of sustainability and institutionalization Review of monitoring data, follow-up actions and continuation arrangements Semi-structured key informant interviews	Institutional ownership and commitment to continuation. Strengthening and retention of capacities beyond Project support. Likelihood of continued use of systems, services and tools.	Annual/progress reports and quality assurance reports Monitoring data and evidence of follow-up or continued use Project transition, exit or continuation documentation, if available

Evaluation questions	Methods	Judgement criteria	Documentary data sources
	Small group discussions, where appropriate Survey of meso- and micro-level stakeholders Field visits and direct observation, where feasible Enterprise case studies Analysis of enabling and constraining contextual factors Triangulation of documentary and stakeholder evidence	Availability of financing or follow-up support mechanisms. Evidence of institutionalization, replication or scaling potential. Adequacy of exit, transition or handover arrangements. Resilience of results to social, political and environmental risks. Enabling and constraining contextual factors affecting sustainability.	Capacity-building, mentoring and institutional support records Partnership and coordination documentation Policy, regulatory and institutional outputs Beneficiary, TSI and government documentation on uptake or continuation Case study and field mission documentation Relevant contextual, political and environmental analyses Previous phases documents and evaluations
Cross-Cutting Issues			
To what extent did the Project identify and respond to needs of vulnerable or marginalized groups (including women, youth, persons with disabilities)? What barriers exist for their effective inclusion? In what ways does the Project contribute to building or enhancing regional cooperation and integration? What measurable changes have been observed in regional cooperation and integration as a result of the Project? To what extent has the Project integrated gender equality and the empowerment of women in its	Stakeholder mapping and analysis Systematic documentary review of cross-cutting design, implementation and monitoring evidence Review of disaggregated monitoring and survey data, where available Semi-structured key informant interviews Small group discussions and, where appropriate, FGDs	Responsiveness to the needs of women, youth, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. Identification and mitigation of barriers to inclusion and equitable participation. Evidence of inclusive access to Project benefits, services and opportunities.	Project Document, ToC and results framework Gender marker and related gender documentation Annual/progress reports and quality assurance reports Disaggregated monitoring and survey data Beneficiary lists and stakeholder mapping

Evaluation questions	Methods	Judgement criteria	Documentary data sources
design, implementation, and monitoring, and contributed to gender-transformative change in target value chains and institutions - evidenced by women's increased participation and leadership in decision-making (e.g., representation on committees, producer groups, facilitation roles), and by reductions in practical constraints (time and care burdens, mobility, access to assets and services)? Were there any unintended effects, positive or negative, related to gender outcomes? To what extent have women-owned business and women workers gained equitable access to economic opportunities (finance, trade intelligence, certifications, e-commerce, procurement/supplier diversity), reflected in uptake of services, firms trading online, skills gains in market intelligence, and business performance (sales/export growth)?	Field visits and direct observation, where feasible Enterprise case studies Gender-responsive and inclusion-sensitive analysis across macro, meso and micro levels Review of regional cooperation platforms, partnerships and knowledge products Triangulation of qualitative, quantitative and documentary evidence	Contribution to regional cooperation, coordination and integration. Evidence of measurable regional results and regional additionality. Integration of gender equality in design, implementation and monitoring. Evidence of women's participation, leadership and influence in value chains and institutions. Reduction of barriers affecting women's economic participation and empowerment. Equitable access of women-owned businesses and women workers to economic opportunities and services. Evidence of intended and unintended gender-related effects	Records of training, mentoring and service uptake Documentation on regional platforms, partnerships and coordination mechanisms Policy, institutional and value chain support documentation Project knowledge products, studies and technical materials Case study and field mission documentation

Annex 10.3 Assessment of Achievement against Final Results Framework Targets

Component	Result level	Indicator code	Output indicator	Final target	Reported cumulative result	Evaluation assessment	Basis / qualification
Regional	Regional	1.1	1.1. Number of public officials supported to negotiate and implement regional and multilateral trade agreements	105	107 (47 women)	**Achieved/ exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Regional	Regional	1.2	1.2. Number of regional dialogues on opportunities for strengthening regional cooperation in Central Asia and linking up to regional and global value chains supported	4	5	**Achieved/ exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Regional	Regional	1.3	1.3 Number of studies on analysis of productive capacities and economic opportunities for strengthening regional cooperation in Central Asia and linking up to regional and global value chains, % of studies include gender lens	3	7	**Achieved/ exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Regional	Regional	1.4	1.4 Number of cooperation activities on building 'future-proof' productive capacities and facilitating market access among Central Asian value chain actors and stakeholders supported	7	6	**Likely to be achieved**	Six of seven activities were reported. One additional regional cooperation activity would close the gap, and continuing standards and institutional cooperation mak this plausible.
Regional	Regional	1.5	1.5. Number of capacity-building and knowledge transfer activities on facilitating market access, trade intelligence and value chain development for participating countries (including from EU and Finland) supported	4	17	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Macro / policy	2.1.1	2.1.1. Number of proposals for laws and policies that improve business environment and regional economic integration provided to the government, % of proposals include gender lens	16	29	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Macro / policy	2.1.2	2.1.2. Number of draft laws and regulations, as well as strategies and plans that improve trade and business environment and regional economic integration developed, % of draft laws, regulations, strategies include gender lens	6	12	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.

Component	Result level	Indicator code	Output indicator	Final target	Reported cumulative result	Evaluation assessment	Basis / qualification
Kyrgyzstan	Macro / policy	2.1.3	2.1.3. Number of recommendations on policies aimed at trade-oriented private sector development, increasing competitiveness, and enhancing economic resilience developed and provided to the government, including, but not limited to: -diversification of economy/exports and improving productive capacities -promoting green, employment-rich, gender-sensitive and future-proof productive capacities and value chains -harnessing trade-related opportunities arising from transition to green economy -fostering trade digitalization and enabling environment for e-commerce, % of recommendations include gender lens	18	47	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Macro / policy	2.1.4	2.1.4. Number of policy measures, aimed at trade oriented private sector development, increasing competitiveness, development of new green economic sectors and enhancing economic resilience outlined in national policies and strategies, supported with practical implementation, % recommendations include gender lens	7	21	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Meso / institutions	2.2.1	2.2.1. Number of civil servants and representatives of TSIs with improved knowledge and skills in provision of efficient and gender-responsive trade support services (at least 40% women)	105 (42 women)	252 (156 women)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Meso / institutions	2.2.2	2.2.2. Number of simplified /optimized/improved trade-related public services on the national level	6	9	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Meso / institutions	2.2.3	2.2.3. Number of new export promotion services critical for MSMEs in times of crisis or economic recovery periods, established, including but not limited to: -forsighting new markets and facilitating market access -accessing and using big data for trade and market intelligence -gender-sensitive supply chain management and preparing supply chains to	6	11	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.

Component	Result level	Indicator code	Output indicator	Final target	Reported cumulative result	Evaluation assessment	Basis / qualification
			weather future disruptions - advanced and innovative trade financing -e-commerce mentoring and connecting to digital platforms.				
Kyrgyzstan	Meso / institutions	2.2.4	2.2.4. Number of improved public services provided by trade support institutions to the private sector	6	51	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Meso / institutions	2.2.5	2.2.5. Number of MSMEs, especially women entrepreneurs, that utilize trade and business development services including strengthening innovation and responsible business practices, and finance to improve and/or grew their business	320 (160 women)	1025 (586 women)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Meso / institutions	2.2.6	2.2.6. Number of B2B matches/trade fairs supported, % of women-led businesses participating	17	11 trade fairs, 2013 B2B matches	**Achieved with qualification**	The indicator combines two units: 11 fairs and 2,013 B2B matches against a target of 17 Achievement is clear if match are counted, but the mixed-ur formulation prevents a precis like-for-like comparison.
Kyrgyzstan	Meso / institutions	2.2.7	2.2.7. Increase in value of exports (USD) as a result of supported B2B matches/trade fairs	US$7 million	US$17.143 million	**Achieved with qualification**	The reported value exceeds th US$7 million target, but signe contracts, implemented contracts and realized exports should be clearly distinguishe and reconciled.
Kyrgyzstan	Meso / institutions	2.2.8	2.2.8. Number of new trade finance instruments developed/implemented	2	2	**Achieved with qualification**	Two instruments are reported against a target of two, but the latest narrative indicates that design, training and pilot work were still underway. Operational implementation should be confirmed.
Kyrgyzstan	Meso / institutions	2.2.9	2.2.9. % increase in client base of TSIs	15%	265%	**Achieved with qualification**	The cumulative client-base increase is reported as 265%, but portal outages and a 24% decline during January-June 2026 qualify the result.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.1.1	3.1.1. Number of green value chains supported	4	4	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.1.2	3.1.2. Number of full-time decent jobs (at least 50% for women) created, disaggregated by sex	250 (125 women)	837 (548 for women)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.1.3	3.1.3. Number of MSMEs (including women-led) or individuals (sex disaggregated) gaining access to value chains	50	312 (out of which 155 women-led and 5 PWDs)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.

Component	Result level	Indicator code	Output indicator	Final target	Reported cumulative result	Evaluation assessment	Basis / qualification
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.2.1	3.2.1. % increase in export volumes of targeted value chain actors	20%	22%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.2.2	3.2.2. % increase in incomes of targeted value chain actors	20%	49%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.2.3	3.2.3. % increase in productivity of targeted value chain actors	20%	30.5%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.2.4	3.2.4. Number of new markets reached by supported VC actors	5	6	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.2.5	3.2.5. Number of VCs stakeholders that introduced (and/or were certified) international standards (Global GAP, HACCP, FSSC, etc.)	6	6	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.2.6	3.2.6. Number of solutions that enhance climate resilient and low-emission development	3	16	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.2.7	3.2.7. Number of MSMEs supported (including women-led)	70 (31)	122 (65 women-led)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.3.1	3.3.1. Number of businesses (including women-led) trading online, supported by the project	40 (16)	61 (38 women-led)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.3.2	3.3.2. Number of e-commerce related capacity-building activities for entrepreneurs supported, % participants are women	8	14 (60%)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.3.3	3.3.3 % increase of volume in online trade of supported businesses	20%	48%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.4.1	3.4.1. Number of MSMEs (including women-led) that improved their knowledge and skills to use big data for trade and market intelligence	100 (43)	695 (247 women-led)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.5.1	3.5.1. Number of women-owned enterprises supported through targeted capacity building activities, information campaigns, etc.	1100	1455	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.5.2	3.5.2. Number of women and youth entrepreneurship development programmes for business/trade development, networking and investment, established	3	3	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.5.3	3.5.3. Number of women and youth benefitting from established programmes	100	152 (113 women)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.5.4	3.5.4. % increase of sales volume of women entrepreneurs	20%	67.5%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.

Component	Result level	Indicat or code	Output indicator	Final target	Reported cumulative result	Evaluation assessment	Basis / qualification
Kyrgyzstan	Micro / value chains	3.5.5	3.5.5. Number of new women-led enterprises established	15	15	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Macro / policy	2.1.1	2.1.1. Number of proposals for laws and policies that improve business environment and regional economic integration provided to the government, % of proposals include gender lens	12	12	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Macro / policy	2.1.2	2.1.2. Number of draft laws and regulations, as well as strategies and plans that improve trade and business environment and regional economic integration developed, % of draft laws, regulations, strategies include gender lens	7	7	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Macro / policy	2.1.3	2.1.3. Number of recommendations on policies aimed at trade-oriented private sector development, increasing competitiveness, and enhancing economic resilience developed and provided to the government, including, but not limited to: -diversification of economy/exports and improving productive capacities -promoting green, employment-rich, gender-sensitive and future-proof productive capacities and value chains -harnessing trade-related opportunities arising from transition to green economy -fostering trade digitalization and enabling environment for e-commerce, % of recommendations include gender lens	12	56	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Macro / policy	2.1.4	2.1.4. Number of policy measures, aimed at trade oriented private sector development, increasing competitiveness, development of new green economic sectors and enhancing economic resilience outlined in national policies and strategies, supported with practical implementation, % recommendations include gender lens	5	7	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Meso / institutions	2.2.1	2.2.1. Number of civil servants and representatives of TSIs with improved knowledge and skills in provision of efficient	90 (40 women)	143 (49 women)	**Achieved with qualification**	The overall and absolute fema targets were exceeded, but th participation share was not.

Component	Result level	Indicator code	Output indicator	Final target	Reported cumulative result	Evaluation assessment	Basis / qualification
			and gender-responsive trade support services (at least 40% women)				
Tajikistan	Meso / institutions	2.2.2	2.2.2. Number of simplified /optimized/improved trade-related public services on the national level	4	7	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Meso / institutions	2.2.3	2.2.3. Number of new export promotion services critical for MSMEs in times of crisis or economic recovery periods, established, including but not limited to: -forsighting new markets and facilitating market access -accessing and using big data for trade and market intelligence -gender-sensitive supply chain management and preparing supply chains to weather future disruptions -advanced and innovative trade financing -e-commerce mentoring and connecting to digital platforms.	4	4	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Meso / institutions	2.2.4	2.2.4. Number of improved public services provided by trade support institutions to the private sector	5	5	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Meso / institutions	2.2.5	2.2.5. Number of MSMEs, especially women entrepreneurs, that utilize trade and business development services including strengthening innovation and responsible business practices, and finance to improve and/or grew their business	120 (60 women)	96 (49 women-led)	**Likely to be achieved**	Ninety-six of 120 MSMEs were reported, leaving a gap of 24. Thirty-six users were added during January-June 2026, making final achievement plausible.
Tajikistan	Meso / institutions	2.2.6	2.2.6. % increase in client base of TSIs	15%	30%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.1.1	3.1.1. Number of green value chains supported	4	4	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.1.2	3.1.2. Number of full-time decent jobs (at least 50% for women) created, disaggregated by sex	100 (50 women)	90 (90 for women)	**Likely to be achieved**	Ninety of 100 jobs were reported. The remaining gap is small and may close as recen enterprise and aggregation investments become operational, although no additional jobs were reported June 2026.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.1.3	3.1.3. Number of MSMEs (including women-led) or individuals (sex disaggregated) gaining access to value chains	40 (20)	14 (10 women-led)	**Unlikely to be achieved**	Fourteen of 40 MSMEs or individuals were reported as gaining access to value chains with no additional progress recorded in 2026. The remaini gap is substantial.

Component	Result level	Indicat or code	Output indicator	Final target	Reported cumulative result	Evaluation assessment	Basis / qualification
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.1	3.2.1. % increase in export volumes of targeted value chain actors	15%	15%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.2	3.2.2. % increase in incomes of targeted value chain actors	20%	25%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.3	3.2.3. % increase in productivity of targeted value chain actors	20%	24%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.4	3.2.4. Number of new markets reached by supported VC actors	5	6	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.5	3.2.5. Number of smallholders reached through measures aimed to increase their sustainable agricultural production and/or access to markets	250	252	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.6	3.2.6. Number of solutions that enhance climate resilient and low-emission development	5	3	**At risk / uncertain**	Three of five climate-resilient low-emission solutions were reported. Two additional solutions are required, but the remaining pipeline is not clea documented.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.7	3.2.7. Number of MSMEs supported (including women-led)	50 (25)	94 (27 women-led)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.3.1	3.3.1. Number of businesses (including women-led) trading online, supported by the project	35 (18)	46 (24)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.3.2	3.3.2. Number of e-commerce related capacity-building activities for entrepreneurs supported, % participants are women	7	5 (60 %)	**Likely to be achieved**	Five of seven activities were reported. Four activities were delivered during January-June 2026, and two additional activities would close the gap
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.3.3	3.3.3 % increase of volume in online trade of supported businesses	15%	28%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.4.1	3.4.1. Number of MSMEs (including women-led) that improved their knowledge and skills to use big data for trade and market intelligence	60 (30)	60 (25 women-led)	**Achieved with qualification**	The overall target of 60 was m but the cumulative column reports 25 women against a target of 30 while the 2026 column reports 19 women. Th cumulative and sex-disaggregated figures require reconciliation.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.5.1	3.5.1. Number of women-owned enterprises supported through targeted capacity building activities, information campaigns, etc.	100	155	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.5.2	3.5.2. Number of women and youth entrepreneurship development programmes for business/trade development, networking and investment, established	2	3	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.

Component	Result level	Indicator code	Output indicator	Final target	Reported cumulative result	Evaluation assessment	Basis / qualification
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.5.3	3.5.3. Number of women and youth benefitting from established programmes	100	151	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.5.4	3.5.4. % increase of sales volume of women entrepreneurs	20%	34%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Tajikistan	Micro / value chains	3.5.5	3.5.5. Number of new women-led enterprises established	20	3	**Unlikely to be achieved**	Three of 20 new women-led enterprises were reported, an no additional enterprises wer recorded during January-June 2026.
Uzbekistan	Macro / policy	2.1.1	2.1.1. Number of proposals for laws and policies that improve business environment and regional economic integration provided to the government, % of proposals include gender lens	18	20	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Macro / policy	2.1.2	2.1.2. Number of draft laws and regulations, as well as strategies and plans that improve trade and business environment and regional economic integration developed, % of draft laws, regulations, strategies include gender lens	9	9	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Macro / policy	2.1.3	2.1.3. Number of recommendations on policies aimed at trade-oriented private sector development, increasing competitiveness, and enhancing economic resilience developed and provided to the government, including, but not limited to: -diversification of economy/exports and improving productive capacities -promoting green, employment-rich, gender-sensitive and future-proof productive capacities and value chains -harnessing trade-related opportunities arising from transition to green economy -fostering trade digitalization and enabling environment for e-commerce, % of recommendations include gender lens	18	18	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Macro / policy	2.1.4	2.1.4. Number of policy measures, aimed at trade oriented private sector development, increasing competitiveness, development of new green economic sectors and enhancing economic resilience outlined in national policies and strategies,	8	9	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.

Component	Result level	Indicator code	Output indicator	Final target	Reported cumulative result	Evaluation assessment	Basis / qualification
			supported with practical implementation, % recommendations include gender lens				
Uzbekistan	Macro / policy	2.1.5	2.1.5. Number of trade facilitation policy measures aimed at ensuring resilience of trade flows and maintaining trade connectivity, supported with practical implementation, % policy measures include gender lens	6	10	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Meso / institutions	2.2.1	2.2.1. Number of civil servants and staff of TSIs with improved knowledge and skills in provision of efficient and gender-responsive trade support services (at least 50% women)	180 (90 women)	435 (113 women)	**Achieved with qualification**	Achieved with qualification 11 of 435 participants were women—26.0 percent—belov the required 50 percent
Uzbekistan	Meso / institutions	2.2.2	2.2.2. Number of simplified /optimized/improved trade-related public services on the national level	6	7	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Meso / institutions	2.2.3	2.2.3. Number of new export promotion services critical for MSMEs in times of crisis or economic recovery periods, established, including but not limited to: -forsighting new markets and facilitating market access -accessing and using big data for trade and market intelligence -gender-sensitive supply chain management and preparing supply chains to weather future disruptions -advanced and innovative trade financing -e-commerce mentoring and connecting to digital platforms.	9	11	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Meso / institutions	2.2.4	2.2.4. Number of improved public services provided by trade support institutions to the private sector	9	10	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Meso / institutions	2.2.5	2.2.5. Number of MSMEs, especially women entrepreneurs, that utilize trade and business development services including strengthening innovation and responsible business practices, and finance to improve and/or grew their business	120 (60 women)	330 (73 women)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Meso / institutions	2.2.6	2.2.6. % increase in client base of TSIs	15%	17%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.

Component	Result level	Indicator code	Output indicator	Final target	Reported cumulative result	Evaluation assessment	Basis / qualification
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.1.1	3.1.1. Number of green value chains supported	5	5	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.1.2	3.1.2. Number of full-time decent jobs (at least 50% for women) created, disaggregated by sex	180 (90 women)	496 (329 for women)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.1.3	3.1.3. Number of MSMEs (including women-led) or individuals (sex disaggregated) gaining access to value chains	50 (22)	381 (298 women-led)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.1	3.2.1. % increase in export volumes of targeted value chain actors	20%	55%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.2	3.2.2. % increase in incomes of targeted value chain actors	20%	134%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.3	3.2.3. % increase in productivity of targeted value chain actors	20%	152%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.4	3.2.4. Number of new markets reached by supported VC actors	7	7	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.5	3.2.5. Number of smallholders reached through measures aimed to increase their sustainable agricultural production and/or access to markets	20	120 (35 women)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.6	3.2.6. Number of solutions that enhance climate resilient and low-emission development	3	3	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.2.7	3.2.7. Number of MSMEs supported (including women-led)	70 (31)	939 (306 women-led)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.3.1	3.3.1. Number of businesses (including women-led) trading online, supported by the project	45 (18)	151 (37)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.3.2	3.3.2. Number of e-commerce related capacity-building activities for entrepreneurs supported, % participants are women	7	8	**Achieved with qualification**	The activity target was exceed (8 against 7), but the cumulati share of women participants i not reported consistently; the 50% participation subtarget cannot be confirmed.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.3.3	3.3.3 % increase of volume in online trade of supported businesses	20%	30%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.4.1	3.4.1. Number of MSMEs (including women-led) that improved their knowledge and skills to use big data for trade and market intelligence	100 (43)	303 (63 women-led)	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.5.1	3.5.1. Number of women-owned enterprises supported through targeted capacity building activities, information campaigns, etc.	140	417	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.

Component	Result level	Indicator code	Output indicator	Final target	Reported cumulative result	Evaluation assessment	Basis / qualification
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.5.2	3.5.2. Number of women and youth entrepreneurship development programmes for business/trade development, networking and investment, established	2	3	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.5.3	3.5.3. Number of women and youth benefitting from established programmes	100	236	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.5.4	3.5.4. % increase of sales volume of women entrepreneurs	20%	188%	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.
Uzbekistan	Micro / value chains	3.5.5	3.5.5. Number of new women-led enterprises established	15	15	**Achieved/exceeded (reported)**	Reported cumulative result meets or exceeds the final numerical target.

Method note: 'Achieved/exceeded (reported)' means that the cumulative result in the June 2026 matrix met or exceeded the final numerical target. Where indicators contain gender-lens or participation subtargets, the assessment relies on disaggregated data only where the matrix reports them consistently.
Source: Phase V - Targets and Results (as of 30 June 2026), reviewed against the 2025 Annual Progress Report and evaluation evidence. Assessment concerns reported indicator achievement and does not by itself establish outcome quality, attribution, sustainability or durability.
Evaluation caveat: Large over-achievement against some outreach and participation indicators may reflect conservative targets, broad counting categories or repeated support. Policy products, services delivered, enterprise reach and commercial outcomes are therefore interpreted qualitatively in the main findings.

Annex 10.4 Evaluation mission itinerary

Agenda for
Mission of international expert of UNDP Mr. Arkadiy Toritsin
to Bishkek city and Issyk-Kul region

Mission period: from 14 to 19 May 2026
Participants: Mr. Arkadiy Toritsin, International M&E Expert of UNDP
Mr. Emil Iusupov, Aid for Trade Project Coordinator
Ms. Meerim Momunzhanova, Aid for Trade Project Analyst
Ms. Tuimakan Subankulova, Aid for Trade Project M&E Specialist

Arrival to Bishkek on 13 May 2026 (Wednesday) and hotel check-in	
Day 1: Thursday, 14 May 2026, Bishkek	
09:00-09:45	Meeting at UNDP CO - Mr. Patrick Haverman, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP in the Kyrgyz Republic - Ms. Aidai Arstanbekova, Monitoring & Evaluation Analyst - Mr. Azamat Usubaliev, Sustainable Economic Growth Cluster, Team Leader - Ms. Elmira Ibraeva, Sustainable Economic Growth Cluster, Program Associate - Mr. Emil Iusupov, Aid for Trade Project Coordinator - Ms. Meerim Momunzhanova, Aid for Trade Project Analyst - Ms. Tuimakan Subankulova, Aid for Trade Project M&E Specialist *Venue: UNDP CO - 160 Chui Avenue, Bishkek*
09:45-11:00	Meeting with gender expert, Bermet Ubaidillaeva *Venue: UNDP CO - 160 Chui Avenue, Bishkek*
11:15-12:45	Meeting at the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic (MoEC) - Ms. Rimma Kiseleva, Head of Trade Policy and WTO Division - Mr. Nasirov Akim Keneshbekovich, Head of the Department of Business Environment Policy - Mr. Bakyt Shabdanov, Head of Technical Regulation and Metrology Department - Mr. Zair Konurbaev, Head of the Division for Trade Facilitation and International Tax Relations, Customs Policy Department. - Ms. Aspira Kalieva - Head of the BCISM Conformity Assessment Department, Kyrgyzstandart - Mr. Uran Chekirbaev – Head of the Food Safety Department, Ministry of Agriculture of the Kyrgyz Republic *Venue: MoEC - Str. Abdumomunova, 206 Bishkek*
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:15-15:30	Meeting at the Kyrgyz Export Development and Promotion Center under the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek - Mr. Tilek Jumaliev, Deputy Director of the Kyrgyz Export Center - Ms. Asel Ibraimova, Head of the Department of Foreign Market Analytics at the Kyrgyz Export Center *Venue: MoEC - Str. Abdumomunova, 206 Bishkek*
15:40-16:40	Meeting at the The Kyrgyz Export Export Development and Promotion Center under the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek - Mr. Amangeldi Dzhumabaev, National Economic Officer, OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek | Economic and Environmental Activities. Partnership on e-commerce-related promotion activities (online) - Ms. Saikal Isaeva, Advisor, Green Economy and Sustainable Private Sector Development in Kyrgyzstan, GIZ, Partnership on capacity-building activities related to the promotion of Kyrgyzstan Sustainable Tourism Development Criteria (KGSTD) *Venue: MoEC - Str. Abdumomunova, 206 Bishkek*
17:00-18:00	Meeting at the Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic - Ms. Aleksandra Abdykaparova, Head of the Legal Support and Marketing Division *Venue: Department of Tourism of the Kyrgyz Republic - 96a Kievskaya street, Bishkek*

Day 2: Friday, 15 May 2026, Bishkek	
09:00-10:00	Meeting at the State Customs Service - Mr. Timur Dzhakypov, Head of the Project Implementation and Trade Facilitation Department *Venue: Customs - Baitik baatyr str. 4a, Bishkek*
10:30-11:30	Meeting at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic (CCI) - Mr. Avazbek Kerimbayev, Vice President - Ms. Cholpon Beishenalieva, Head of the Center for Business Education *Venue: CCI - Kievskaya Street, 107*
11:30-13:00	Meeting with representatives of the State Insurance organization (Developing a financing program for MSMEs-exporters - an export insurance mechanism) - Ms. Gulzina Batirkhanova, Deputy Director *Venue: State Insurance organization - Chyngyz Aitmatov Avenue, building 2, 4th floor*
13:00-14:30	Lunch (incl.travel time)
14:30-15:30	Meeting with representatives of women's organizations - Ms. Cholpon Ashimova, Chairman of the Board, Public Foundation "Women's Forum "Kurak" (Mentorship programme) - Ms.Cholpon Ormusheva, Executive Director, PF "Women's Forum "Kurak" - Mr. Azzambek Jeenbai Uulu, CEO of Business Association JIA (Mentorship programme) - Ms. Aisalkyn Talasbekova, JohnGalt LLC (Ecommerce incubation program) (online) - Ms. Gulzhan Nazarova (Director of IE ToiArt ceramics, participant in the E-Commerce Incubation Program) *Venue: UNDP Program office, 195 Kievskaya street, 6th floor, Bishkek*
15:40 -16:20	Kyrgyz Association of Tour Operators (KATO) and Association of Electronic Commerce - Ms. Aisha Mambetalieva, President - Mr. Nurbek Saparov, Executive Director *Venue: UNDP Program office, 195 Kievskaya street, 6th floor, Bishkek*
16:20-17:20	Meeting with AfT implementing partners (work on value chains) - Mr. Zhanybek Pakyrov, Coordinator of Public Foundation "FSDS" (Strengthening of Adventure Tourism and Handicrafts VCs) - Ms. Saule Zhumaeva, Coordinator of Public Foundation "TES-Center"(Strengthening of Natural Honey VC) - Mr. Aibek Marazhapov, Director of Erkin Consult LLC (Strengthening of Dried fruits, dried berries and walnuts VC) (online) *Venue: UNDP Program office, 195 Kievskaya street, 6th floor, Bishkek*
17:20-18:20	Meeting with VC actor: - Mr. Yuri Rahubin, Founder, Member of the Board of Directors, Head of Projects Development, SunPlanet LLC – Dried fruits processing and exporting company (Strengthening of Dried fruits, dried berries and walnuts VC) - Ms. Nargiza Erkinbaeva, Head of the PA "OSOP+1" Dried fruits processing and exporting company (Strengthening of Dried fruits, dried berries and walnuts VC) *Venue: UNDP Program office, 195 Kievskaya street, 6th floor, Bishkek*
Day 3: Saturday, 16 May 2026 (Bishkek, and Chui region)	
08.30-09.30	Travel from Bishkek to the Chui region Krasnaya Rechka (v.)
09:30-10:30	Meeting with Honey VC actor: Honey processing and exporting company Dary Tien Shan LLC: - Ms. Emma Savitskaya, Head of the Dary Tien Shan LLC *Venue: Krasnaya Rechka village, Lenin St.,130c, Chui region.*
10:30-13:30	Travel from Chui region Krasnaya Rechka to Sary-Talaa area of Bokonbaev village, Ton district *(on UNDP vehicle)*
13:30-14:30	Lunch (incl. travel time)
14:30-16:00	Visit of 'Royal Gate' LLC. Interview with the project's beneficiaries: - Ms. Asel Dildebaeva, Head of the Royal Gate LLC, Mentor of the Mentorship Program and participant of Adventure Tourism VC - Ms. Gulayym Tashtanbaeva, mentee of the Mentorship Program *Venue: Royal Gate LLC, Sary-Talaa area of Bokonbaev village (Issyk-Kul oblast)*

16:00-17:00	Travel from Sary-Talaa area to Jenish *(on UNDP vehicle)*
17:00-18:00	Visit of the "Taberik" craftswomen's group. Interview with the project's beneficiaries: - Ms. Gulbara Shadakova, Leader of the "Taberik" craftswomen's group *Venue: Jenish village (Issyk-Kul oblast)*
18:00-19:30	Travel from Jenish to Karakol city *(on UNDP vehicle)*
19:30-20:30	Dinner
20:30	Accommodation at Hotel 78 *Venue: 78 Str.Orozbekov, Karakol city*
Day 4: Sunday, 17 May 2026 (Issyk-Kul region)	
9:00-10:20	Visit of 'Nektar' LLC (participant of Honey VC) - Mr. Marat Galiev, head of the Nektar LLC; Beekeepers-members of the Issyk-Kul regional voluntary society of beekeepers *Venue: 35, Str. Japarov, Karakol city*
10:20-12:30	Visit of IE Alimova (Adventure Tourism VC, Expert on tourism development) and IE Turbatova (Ecommerce Incubation program) - Ms. Albina Alimova (Expert on tourism development)
12:30-14:30	Lunch (incl. travel time)
14:30 – 15:00	Travel from Karakol city to Mikhaylovka (on UNDP vehicle)
15:00 – 16:00	Visit of the Society of Persons with Disabilities "Kelechek Sary-Kol" craftswomen's group Interview with the project's beneficiaries: - Ms. Sonun Boronchieva, Ms. Kyyal Boronchieva *Venue: Mikhaylovka village (Issyk-Kul oblast)*
16:00 – 17:00	Visit of "Issyk-Kul Honey" Cooperative (participant of Honey VC) - Mr. Ulan Abdylashev, Head
17:00 – 17:30	Travel from Mikhaylovka to Karakol city (on UNDP vehicle)
18:00-19:30	Dinner
Day 5: Monday, 18 May 2026 (Issyk-Kul region)	
11:00-12:30	Visit of dried fruits processing and exporting company PA "OSOP+1" (Dried fruits, dried berries and walnuts VC actor): - Ms. Begimai Zhekshebekova, Accountant - Ms. Nazgul Omuralieva, Production Manager *Venue: 20/2, Str. Udilova, Karakol city*
12:30-13:30	Lunch (incl. travel time)
13:30- 19:30	Travel from Karakol to Bishkek (on UNDP vehicle)
Day 6: Tuesday, 19 May 2026 (Departure from Bishkek to Tashkent)	
07:30 – 08:30	Travel from Bishkek to Manas International Airport
11:40 – 12:00	Departure from Bishkek to Tashkent Flight K9-1929 TezJet: 11:40 – 12:00

Tentative Agenda for
Mission of international expert of UNDP Mr. Arkadiy Toritsyn
to Tashkent City, Namangan, Fergana and Andijan Regions

Mission period: 19-24 May 2026
Participants: Mr. Arkadiy Toritsin, International Expert of UNDP
Mr. Farrukh Zakirov, Aid for Trade in CA National Project Manager
Mr. Muzaffar Mirzarakhimov, Aid for Trade in CA Project Analyst
Mr. Nosirkhon Gozikhonov, Aid for Trade in CA Project Analyst
Ms. Maksuda Mukhsinbaeva, Aid for Trade Project M&E Specialist

Arrival to Tashkent on Tuesday, 19 May 2026 (Flight K9-1929 TezJet, Bishkek - Tashkent) and hotel check-in	
Day 1: Tuesday, 19 May 2026, Tashkent	
16:00-16:45	Meeting at UNDP CO - Mr. Ravshan Yunusov, IG Cluster Leader - Ms. Nargiza Khamidova, Programme Analyst on Inclusive Growth - Ms. Mukhabbat Turkmenova, Head of SPIU, gender specialist *Venue: UNDP CO – 4, Tarash Shevchenko, Tashkent*
16:45-18:15	Meeting with AfT project team *Venue: UNDP CO - 4, Tarash Shevchenko, Tashkent*
Day 2: Wednesday, 20 May 2026, Tashkent	
09:00-10:45	Meeting at the Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade of Uzbekistan (MIIT) - Mr. Aziz Jumaev, Deputy Head of Trade Directorate - Mr. Tengiz Asanov, Deputy Head of the Investment Climate Department *Venue: MIIT – 1 I.Karimov ave, Tashkent*
11:00-12:00	Meeting at The Trade Development Company (former Export Promotion Agency) - Mr. Nazarmurod Ismoilov, Chief officer of the Company - Mr. Shokhrukh Sherov, Chief officer of the Company *Venue: Trade Development Company – 13, Amir Temur Ave., Tashkent*
12:15 – 13:00	Meeting at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan - Mr. Jakhongir Sultanov, Head of export and import department *Venue: Chamber of Commerce and Industry*
13:15-14:15	Lunch
14:30-15:30	Meeting at the Tourism Committee of Uzbekistan - Mr. Farrukh Ermatov, Head of International relations department *Venue: Tourism Committee - 107B, Amir Temur Ave., Tashkent*
16:00 – 17:00	Meeting at the Agency on Technical Regulation of Uzbekistan - Mr. Askarali Askarov, Head of Department on Standards Management *Venue: the Agency on Technical Regulation of Uzbekistan –333A Farabi Str., Tashkent*
Day 3: Thursday, 21 May 2026 (Tashkent)	
09:30-11:30	Meeting with AfT implementing partners (work on value chains) - Ms. Zilola Bekmukhamedova (contractor, programme on support of selected VCs: topinambur powder) - Ms. Elena Selezneva (contractor, Green Entrepreneurship Programme)
12:00-13:00	Meeting with International Trade Center national project managers in Uzbekistan - Mr. Akmal Azimov (R4TCA project) - Mr. Adkham Akbarov (Facilitation of Uzbekistan's accession to the WTO project) *Venue: ITC*
13:00-14:00	Lunch (incl.travel time)
18:00 – 22:00	Travel from Tashkent to Pap (Namangan region) Namangan (on train #732-Ф)
22:00 – 23:00	Travel from Pap (Namangan region) to Namangan (on UNDP car)
23:00	Accommodation at 'Shedevr Plaza' hotel
Day 4: Friday, 22 May 2026 (Namangan and Andijan regions)	
11:00 – 12:30	Meeting with AfT implementing partners

	- Ms. Lola Abduhalimova (Head of Association of Business Women, Namangan branch) - Ms. Marifat Nazarova (contractor, programme on support of selected VCs: fruit processing) *Venue: Namangan city, UNDP Namangan office*
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30- 14:30	Visit of “Anor - center of national applied crafts” (participant of Mentorship program and Art tourism VC) - Ms. Marina Djabbarova, Head of ‘Anor - center of national applied crafts’, participant of trade fair – Worldfood Istanbul 2025 - Ms. Munis Muhitdinova, ‘Zeytun Invest’ LLC, participant of Mentorship programme, Tourism VC beneficiary *Venue: Namangan city, Valley of Legends park*
14:30 – 15:00	Travel from Namangan city to Yuksalish district, Namangan Region
15:00-15:30	Visit of Nateko Impex LLC - dried fruits VC actor: fruit drying company - Ms. Javkharoy Inamova, Deputy head *Venue: Namangan region, Yuksalish district, Small industry zone*
15:30 – 17:30	Travel from Namangan region to Andijan city (on UNDP car)
17:30 – 18:00	Visit to Cibus LLC, production of fruit and vegetables juices and concentrates (Andijan) Mr Otabek Ziyayev, Director
18:30	Accommodation in Hotel Chinor
Day 5: Saturday, 23 May 2026 (Andijan and Fergana regions)	
10:00-10:30	Visit of PE Yulbarsova Gullola - tourism VC actor: handicrafts - Ms. Gullola Yulbarsova, Head *Venue: Andijan region, Andijan town, Islamabad village, Str. Muhiddinova, 23*
11:15-11:45	Visit of PE Abdihamidova Madinahon - tourism VC actor: handicrafts - Ms. Abdihamidova Madinahon, Head *Venue: Andijan region, Andijan district, Nayman village, Str. Ilmu tolib, 4*
11:45 – 13:00	Travel from Andijan district to Fergana (on UNDP car)
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:30 - 15:00	Visit of ‘Farming Best Golden Garden’ LLC - Jerusalem artichoke VC actor: cultivation and processing of Jerusalem artichoke - Mr.Golibjon Isroilov, Head *Venue: Fergana, Bahor village, Str.Gafur Gulom, 54*
15:00-15:30	Travel from Fergana city to Fergana region *(on UNDP vehicle)*
15:30 – 16:00	Visit of “Beshlar Agro” LLC - alternative cherry cultivation VC actor: growing early and late cherry varieties - Mr. Mirodil Hojimatov, Head *Venue: Fergana region, Parvoz village, Chershura street*
18:00	Accommodation at the hotel (Fergana)
Day 6: Sunday, 24 May 2026	
13:00 – 14:00	Travel from Fergana to Tashkent Flight UH-402 Silk Avia: 13:00 – 14:00
15:00 – 16:00	Lunch
19:00 – 20:00	Departure from Tashkent to Dushanbe Flight SZ-226 Somon Air: 19:00 – 20:00

Agenda for
Mission of international expert of UNDP Mr. Arkadiy Toritsin
to Dushanbe City, Khatlon and Sughd Regions

Mission period: from 25 to 30 May 2026
Participants: Mr. Arkadiy Toritsin, International Expert of UNDP
Mr.Philippe Chabot- Aid for Trade project Manager

Mr.Zaydulloi Najibullo – Aid for Trade project's Trade Policy Associate
Ms.Zarina Nigmatova – Aid for Trade project's VC Associate

Arrival to Dushanbe on Sunday, 24 May 2026 (Flight SZ-226 Somon Air: 19:00 – 20:00, Tashkent-Dushanbe) and hotel check-in	
Day 1: Monday, 25 May 2026	
9:00-10:00	Meeting at UNDP CO - Ms.Lazima Onta-Bhatta, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP in the Republic of Tajikistan - Mr. Shakarbek Nyatbekov, UNDP CO, Team Leader, SED cluster - Mr.Yusufjon Kholov, UNDP CO, Project Analyst - Mr.Qosimjon Ismoilov, Monitoring & Evaluation Associate *Venue: UNDP CO- 39, Ayni street , Dushanbe*
10:00-11:15	Meeting with AfT project team and gender specialist Ms Takhmina Jumabaeva *Venue: UNDP CO- 39, Ayni street , Dushanbe*
11:30-12:30	Meeting at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Tajikistan (CCI) - Mr. Rajabov Haydar- Deputy Chairperson - Ms. Adolat Mirzoshoeva- Head of International Relation field Department *Venue: CCI - 21 Valamatzoda street, Dushanbe*
12:30 – 13:30	*Lunch*
13:50 – 15:20	Meeting at the Ministry for Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan (MEDT) - Mr.Ziyoiyon Abdullo- Head of the Main Directorate for Trade Policy and Consumer Market - Mr Umedjoni Davlat – Head of the WTO Affairs Department - Ms. Manuchekhra Madjon – Head of the Main Directorate for Investment Policy and Rural Development *Venue: MEDT- 12, Rudaki ave,. Dushanbe*
15:40 -16:40	Meeting at the Agency for Export under the Government of Tajikistan - Mr. Abdughafor Jamolzoda, Deputy Chairperson - Mr. Shokhin Sufizoda – Head of the International Affairs Department *Venue: Agency of Export – 25, Mirzo Tursunzade street, Dushanbe*
17:00 -18:00	Meeting with the Agency of innovation and digital technologies under the Gov. of the Republic of Tajikistan - Mr. Farrukh Soliev- Head of Digital Trade Regulation Department *Venue: Agency of Innovation- 23 Mirzo Tursunzade street, Dushanbe*
Day 2: Tuesday, 26 May 2026	
09:00-10:00	Meeting at the Agakhan Foundation (AKF) – contractor, Value Chain Promotion Programme - Mr.Kishwar Abdulalishiev – Representative of AKF in Tajikistan - Mr.Gholib Urunov – Project Coordinator *Venue: AKF- 37, Rudaki ave,. Dushanbe (3 floor)*
10:00 – 10:40	Meeting at National Association of Small and Medium Business (NASMB) - Ms.Nasiba Aminova- Deputy Chairperson *Venue: NASMB- 37,Rudaki ave, Dushanbe (6 floor)*
11:00-12:20	Meeting at University of Central Asia (UCA) – contractor, Women Entrepreneurship and Business Development Programme - Mr. Farruksho Fraidonov – Project Manager - Mr. Gulsha Jumakhonov – Project Coordinator - Mr.Mirzo Mirzoev- Project Coordinator *Venue: 61/2 Nissor Mukhamad street, Dushanbe*
12:20 – 13:20	Lunch
13:20-15:00	Travel from Dushanbe to Bokhtar, Khatlon region *(on UNDP vehicle)*
15:00-15:30	Visit of OVOP 'Dekhai Man' - Mr.Suhrob Pulatov, Director – (beneficiary of Value Chain Promotion Programme *Venue: 23 Ismoili Somomi street, Bokhtrar, Kahtlon Region*

15:30 – 17:00	Travel from Bokhtar, Khatlon region to Muminabad district, Khatlon region *(on UNDP vehicle)*
17:00 – 17:30	Meeting with Mr. Suhrob Sharipov Dekhkan Farm – (beneficiary of Value Chain Promotion Programme) *Venue:140 Rakhimi street, Muminabad district, Khatlon region*
17:30 – 19:30	Travel back to Dushanbe
Day 3: Wednesday, 27 May 2026 -tentatively **(Kurban Bayram)**	
09:00-11:00	Travel from Dushanbe to Mastchoh, Sughd region *(on UNDP vehicle)*
11:00-11:30	Meeting with Ms.Nizomatmo Sharipova, Head of the beekeepers' apiary (Supported under Women Entrepreneurship and Business Development- honey VC) *Venue: Mastchoh District, Sughd region*
12:00-14:00	Travel from Mastchoh to Khujand *(on UNDP Vehicle)* *Hotel check-in and accommodation*
Day 4: Thursday, 28 May 2026	
09:00-10:00	Meeting at the Executive Authority of the Sughd region - Mr. Shavkat Yakubi- Deputy Chairperson *Venue: 45, Rakhmon Nabiev ave, Khujand*
10:10-11:00	Visit of LLC "Harif " - Mr.Bakhtyor Abduvakhidov, Directror, (beneficiary of Value Chain Promotion Programme *Venue: Bobojon Gafurov, Sughd region*
11:00-12:00	Meeting with Ms.Hoshimova Muborak, Head of Dekhan Farm, F&V production (beneficiary of Women Entrepreneurship and Business Development) *Venue: Buston town, jamoat Palos,Sughd region*
12:00-13:00	Lunch
13:00-14:30	Travel from Khujand to Isfara *(on UNDP vehicle)*
14:30-15:30	Visit of LLC "Mevai Zarrin" (processor and exporter) - Mr. Bakhodur Muminov, General director *Venue: 189/1, Markazi street, jamoat Chilgazi,Isfara*
15:30-16:30	Visit of LLC "IsfaraFood" (processor and exporter) - Mr. Jamshed Buzurukov, General Director - Mr. Daler Dusmatov, Director - Mr. Muminjon Mamadjonov, Marketing and Sales Manager *Venue: 107/3 Ismoili Somoni ave, Isfara*
16:30-17:30	Meeting with International Association of Producers and Exporters of Agricultural Products (MAPEST) - Mr. Abdumubin Fayziev- Chairperson *Venue: 30, Jami street, Isfara*
17:30-19:00	Travel from Isfara to Khujand (*on UNDP vehicle)*
Day 5: Friday, 29 May 2026	
07:00 - 09:00	Travel from Khujand to Asht, Sughd region *(on UNDP vehicle)*
09:00-10:30	Visit of LLC "Mevai Asht (processor and exporter) - Mr.Navruz Aliev – Director, (beneficiary of Value Chains Promotion Programme) *Venue : 23, Aka Sharif Juraev, jamoat Guliston Asht district, Sughd region*
10:30-11:30	Visit of LLC "Apricot Co", F&V produce consolidator - Mr.Pulot Ashurov – Director, (beneficiary of Value Chains Promotion Programme) *Venue : 100, Somoni str, jamoat Shaidon, Asht district, Sughd region*
12:00-13:00	Lunch
13:30 – 15:30	Travel from Asht to Kanibadam *(on UNDP vehicle)*
15:30 – 16:30	Visit of LLC "Nerui Kand" (processor and exporter) - Mr. Navruz Odinaev , General Director *Venue: 34, Sadriddin Ayni ave, Kanibadam Sughd region*
16:30-19:00	Travel from Kanibadam to Khujand

Day 6: Saturday, 30 May 2026	
08:00-10:00	Travel from Khujand to Tajikistan-Uzbekistan Border-Crossing Point (‘Fotihobod’-‘Oybek’ BCP) *(on UNDP vehicle)*
10:00-12:00	Travel from ‘Oybek’ BCP to Tashkent
12:00	Arrival to Tashkent
	Departure from Tashkent

Annex 10.5 Interview protocols and indicative question framework

1. Purpose and application

The evaluation used semi-structured interviews and small-group discussions with stakeholders at the regional, national, institutional and enterprise levels. Consulted stakeholders included UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub and Country Office personnel, the Government of Finland, national ministries and agencies, local authorities, trade-support institutions, implementing and responsible parties, international and regional organizations, business associations, women's organizations, MSMEs, producers, processors and other value-chain actors.

The interviews were guided by a common analytical framework aligned with the evaluation questions, the Project's ToC and results framework, the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and the specific requirements of the Terms of Reference. The framework covered:

- relevance and coherence;
- Project design, assumptions and intervention logic;
- effectiveness and contribution to results;
- regional added value and regional–country linkages;
- cumulative contribution of the Aid for Trade initiative since 2009;
- efficiency, adaptive management and value for money;
- sustainability, institutionalization, replication and scale;
- monitoring, evidence quality and organizational learning;
- gender equality and women's economic empowerment;
- human rights and Leave No One Behind;
- environmental sustainability and environmental and social risk management; and
- lessons, innovations and future programming options.

Questions were not administered as a standardized questionnaire. Before each consultation, the evaluator prepared a tailored interview guide reflecting:

- the interviewee's role, mandate and relationship with the Project;
- the country, component, intervention level and value chain concerned;
- the type and duration of Project support;
- relevant policies, institutions, platforms, services or enterprise investments;
- available documentary and monitoring evidence;
- preliminary findings, assumptions or contribution claims requiring validation;
- evidence gaps emerging during the evaluation; and
- the areas on which the respondent was reasonably positioned to provide informed evidence.

This approach enabled systematic coverage of the evaluation questions while avoiding questions outside the respondent's responsibilities or knowledge. It also allowed the evaluator to follow emerging evidence and examine specific policies, institutional practices, regional mechanisms, technical partnerships, enterprise investments and implementation experiences encountered during the field missions.

The complete set of customized interview guides is not reproduced because separate guides were prepared for individual key informants and adjusted during data collection. The guides, interview notes and evidence-tracking records form part of the evaluation's working documentation. The consolidated framework below presents the principal areas of inquiry applied across stakeholder categories.
Survey questionnaires constituted a separate evaluation instrument and are presented in the relevant survey annex.

External organizations and development partners were consulted as sources of evidence concerning context, complementarity, partnerships and technical cooperation. The evaluation did not assess or rate the performance, mandates or accountability of entities not managed by the Project.

2. Indicative interview framework

Area of inquiry	Principal questions explored
Stakeholder role and engagement	What was the stakeholder's role in the Project? What support, partnership or engagement occurred, through which component and at which intervention level? What results was the stakeholder positioned to observe or verify?
Relevance and responsiveness	Did the Project address significant national, institutional, enterprise or value-chain needs? Was support aligned with national priorities, institutional mandates, UNDP frameworks, the SDGs and Finland's priorities? How effectively did the Project adapt to changing economic, political, technological and market conditions?
Project design and Theory of Change	Was the regional–macro–meso–micro model plausible and appropriate? Were assumptions, risks and intermediate pathways sufficiently clear? Under what conditions were policy, institutional and enterprise interventions expected to reinforce one another?
Planned versus actual implementation	Which activities and results were delivered as planned, delayed, revised or not completed? What explains variations among countries, components, institutions and value chains? How did government priorities, institutional restructuring, partner readiness and external conditions affect delivery?
Regional–country linkages	How effectively did regional and country-level interventions reinforce one another? Did regional analysis, platforms, standards work, professional networks and knowledge exchange lead to national institutional use or enterprise-level application? Were country experiences fed back into regional dialogue and cooperation?
Regional added value and UNDP regionality principles	Did the Project generate shared regional tools or knowledge, address cross-border constraints and spillovers, support dialogue on sensitive or emerging issues, enable experimentation that individual countries could not readily undertake alone, or facilitate regional knowledge exchange? What measurable changes occurred beyond participation in regional events?
Regional cooperation and connectivity	Did the Project strengthen cooperation, professional relationships, harmonization, connectivity or integration into regional and global value chains? Were regional mechanisms translated into practical changes in standards, trade intelligence, market access, institutional practice or cross-border business relationships?
Continuity and cumulative contribution since 2009	Which relationships, platforms, institutional capacities, tools or approaches from earlier Aid for Trade phases enabled Phase V results? Is there credible evidence of cumulative, scalable or transformative effects? Which earlier investments became institutionalized and which remained dependent on Project support?
Effectiveness and outcome-level change	What significant intended or unintended changes occurred in behaviour, relationships, practices, capacities, policies, services or enterprise performance? How and to what extent did the Project contribute? What other government, partner, market or contextual factors influenced the observed changes?
Policy and regulatory results	Did Project-supported analysis or expertise influence policies, laws, regulations, strategies, administrative procedures or government programmes? Were proposals adopted, adapted, implemented and financed, or did they remain as studies, recommendations or draft instruments? What facilitated or constrained uptake?

Area of inquiry	Principal questions explored
Institutional capacity and services	Did supported institutions improve their skills, methodologies, tools, systems, mandates or services? Were services more relevant, accessible and responsive to MSMEs? Were supported approaches incorporated into routine operations, and did enterprises use and benefit from them?
Enterprise and value-chain performance	Did support improve productive capacity, aggregation, processing, storage, quality, packaging, certification readiness, supplier relationships, digital marketing, buyer engagement or market access? Did these changes translate into sales, income, exports, competitiveness, resilience or stronger value-chain participation?
Jobs, livelihoods and human development	Did support contribute to permanent, seasonal, formal, decent or green employment? Were jobs maintained and was their quality adequate? Did supported activities strengthen livelihoods, income opportunities, productive assets, resilience or economic security, particularly among rural and vulnerable groups?
Digitalization, e-commerce and trade intelligence	Did enterprises and institutions improve their use of digital tools, e-commerce, market intelligence, data, online platforms or digital sales? Did this improve access to customers and markets? What constraints remained concerning connectivity, digital payments, skills, trade finance, data subscriptions or platform maintenance?
Partnerships and external coherence	Did cooperation with national institutions, Finland, specialized agencies, international financial institutions, implementing partners and private-sector actors provide complementary expertise and avoid duplication? Were roles and comparative advantages clear? Were there missed opportunities to connect technical support with financing, investment or wider implementation?
Finland's contribution beyond financing	How relevant and useful were Finnish expertise, institutions, business networks, exchanges and technical cooperation? Did these inputs generate institutional learning, business relationships, practical follow-up or sustained cooperation? What factors supported or limited their use?
National ownership	Were Project-supported policies, services, tools, platforms and models nationally owned? Did counterparts provide leadership, assigned personnel, financing, policy follow-up or institutional commitments? Were interventions sufficiently driven by government, institutional and beneficiary demand?
Monitoring, evidence and learning	Were indicators, baselines, targets and data sources adequate for the Project's Theory of Change? Were data sufficiently disaggregated by sex, age, disability, location and other relevant characteristics? Did monitoring distinguish delivery, reach, adoption, institutional use, behaviour change, market conversion and durability?
Evidence strength and verification	Which reported results could be independently verified or corroborated through multiple sources? Which remained Project- or partner-reported? Were figures concerning employment, income, sales, exports and service use consistently defined and supported? What important evidence gaps remained?
Efficiency and timeliness	Were management, coordination, staffing, procurement, responsible-party arrangements and technical inputs timely and proportionate? What explains differences in delivery among countries and components? Did the regional-country structure generate synergies, economies of scope or additional transaction costs?
Adaptive management and risk response	How effectively did the Project anticipate and respond to contextual changes, institutional restructuring, delays, market developments and emerging risks? Were workplans, budgets, partnerships and delivery modalities adjusted

Area of inquiry	Principal questions explored
	appropriately? Did monitoring and stakeholder feedback support course correction?
Value for money	Were financial, human and technical resources concentrated on interventions with credible potential for institutional uptake, market results, inclusion, demonstration effects or scale? Were lower-cost delivery options used where appropriate? Did more resource-intensive modalities generate sufficient additional value?
Sustainability and transition	Which policies, capacities, services, tools, partnerships and enterprise practices were likely to continue? Were ownership, institutional mandates, staffing, recurrent financing, maintenance, updating and transition arrangements adequate? Which results remained dependent on external funding or facilitation?
Replication and scale	Which approaches demonstrated potential for replication across institutions, sectors or locations? Were successful pilots translated into routine services, policies, financing arrangements or wider delivery models? What institutional, commercial, financial, social, political or environmental conditions would be required for scale?
Gender equality and GEN2 performance	Did Project results substantiate the GEN2 classification? Did interventions move beyond participation to strengthen women's capabilities, agency, voice, confidence, leadership, bargaining power and influence in enterprises, producer groups, associations, value-chain bodies or policy processes?
Women's access to economic opportunities	Did women-owned enterprises and women workers gain more equitable access to finance, productive assets, technology, trade intelligence, certification, e-commerce, procurement opportunities, suppliers, buyers and markets? Did access translate into improved business performance, decision-making authority or control over resources and income?
Gender-transformative potential	Did supported policies, institutions or market systems address structural gender barriers? What additional institutional accountability, gender-responsive services, financing measures or policy incentives would be required to support progress towards more transformative results or potential GEN3 programming?
Differentiated effects among women	How did results and barriers differ for rural women, young women, migrant women and women with disabilities? Were unpaid care, time constraints, mobility, digital access, social norms and unequal access to assets, information or networks addressed? Were any groups less able to benefit?
Leave No One Behind and human rights	Did the Project identify and respond to the needs of rural populations, small producers, youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups? Were beneficiary selection, outreach, accessibility, reasonable accommodation, feedback and monitoring responsive to multiple and intersecting disadvantages?
Youth and disability inclusion	Did young entrepreneurs and workers experience specific changes in skills, employment, enterprise activity or decision-making? Were persons with disabilities able to access and use enterprise and employment support? Did interventions create commercially relevant and sustainable opportunities, and were representative organizations involved?
Environmental sustainability	Did support promote green and future-proof value chains, renewable energy, resource efficiency, lower-emission or climate-resilient production, reduced losses, circular practices or sustainable tourism? Were environmental changes assessed beyond participation, training and equipment delivery?

Area of inquiry	Principal questions explored
Environmental and social risk management	Were environmental and social risks identified and managed appropriately through UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards and Social and Environmental Screening Procedure? Were labour conditions, occupational safety, climate exposure, resource use, pollution, waste and technology suitability considered in selection, procurement, agreements and monitoring?
Resilience to shocks	Did the Project make institutions, enterprises and value chains more resilient to economic shocks, market disruptions, climate pressures, changing logistics routes or post-COVID restructuring? Which capacities, relationships or investments contributed most to resilience?
Unintended effects	Were there positive or negative effects not anticipated in the Project design, including effects on institutional relationships, trust, market behaviour, gender roles, inclusion, employment, competition, environmental practices or regional cooperation?
Lessons and future directions	Which approaches should be retained, strengthened, adapted, narrowed, replicated or discontinued? Where did UNDP demonstrate a distinctive comparative advantage? What should future programming do differently to generate clearer institutional uptake, market conversion, regional results, sustainability and value for money?

3. Stakeholder-specific emphasis
Although all interviews were informed by the common framework, emphasis varied according to stakeholder role.

UNDP IRH and senior management
Questions focused on the Project's strategic positioning, regional rationale and added value, portfolio coherence, implementation architecture, partnerships, resource allocation, monitoring, adaptive management, cumulative contribution across phases and lessons for future regional programming.

UNDP Country Office management and Project teams
Questions focused on country relevance, implementation performance, national ownership, linkages among policy, institutional and enterprise interventions, country-specific variances, partner performance, monitoring, sustainability and the practical value of regional support.

Government of Finland and Finnish partners
Questions focused on strategic relevance, achievement of intended results, programme oversight, Finland's technical and institutional contribution beyond financing, regional additionality, value for money, sustainability and implications for possible future engagement.

National ministries and public institutions
Questions focused on policy and regulatory contributions, government ownership, institutional mandates, use and implementation of Project-supported advice, inter-agency coordination, service delivery, regional cooperation and the likelihood that supported changes would continue.

Trade-support institutions and business organizations
Questions focused on changes in institutional capacity, service quality, relevance and reach; application of tools and methodologies; enterprise demand; regular use and financing of services; institutionalization; regional networks; and responsiveness to women, youth, persons with disabilities and underserved groups.

Implementing and responsible parties

Questions focused on implementation experience, beneficiary selection, delivery quality, monitoring and verification, equipment and procurement arrangements, operational constraints, enterprise and value-chain results, gender and inclusion, sustainability and lessons from the delivery model.

Enterprises, producers and other beneficiaries
Questions focused on the support received and its practical use; changes in production, quality, resource efficiency, certification, digital engagement and market access; sales, income, exports and employment; beneficiary co-investment; barriers affecting women and disadvantaged groups; continued constraints; and prospects that benefits would endure.

International and regional partners
Questions focused on complementarity, technical contribution, regional cooperation, institutional uptake, duplication or gaps, Project additionality, UNDP's comparative advantage and opportunities to connect technical assistance with broader reforms, financing and investment.

4. Interview conduct and informed consent
Interviews were conducted primarily in English or Russian. Local-language interpretation was used where required and feasible. Consultations were undertaken in person or remotely depending on stakeholder availability and logistical arrangements.
At the beginning of each interview or group discussion, the evaluator used the following oral consent protocol:
Thank you for agreeing to participate. This consultation is part of the independent final evaluation of the UNDP Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V Project. The evaluation examines the Project's performance, results, sustainability and lessons for future programming.
Your participation is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question or end the interview at any time without consequence. I will take notes for evaluation purposes. The information you provide will normally be reported in aggregated or non-attributable form unless you explicitly agree otherwise. Any recording would be made only with your separate permission and used solely to support accurate note-taking. Declining to participate will not affect your relationship with UNDP or any Project partner.
Do you consent to proceed with the interview?
Where recording was considered useful, separate consent was requested.

5. Data protection and confidentiality
The evaluator applied the following data-protection measures:
- participation was voluntary and based on informed consent;
- the purpose and independent nature of the evaluation were explained;
- participants could decline any question or end the consultation;
- personally identifiable information was not disclosed without explicit permission;
- information was normally reported in aggregated or non-attributable form;
- interview notes and any consented recordings were stored securely with restricted access;
- collected information was used solely for evaluation purposes;
- data were anonymized where necessary during analysis and reporting; and
- the same confidentiality standards applied to in-person and remote consultations.

6. Analysis, triangulation and use of interview evidence
Interview evidence was coded and organized against the evaluation questions, criteria, Theory of Change and emerging findings. Particular attention was given to:
- identifying intended and unintended changes in behaviour, relationships, policies, practices and enterprise performance;
- tracing the Project's plausible contribution to those changes;
- identifying other contributing or constraining factors;
- comparing evidence across countries, intervention levels and stakeholder categories;
- examining differences between planned and actual results;

- testing assumptions and alternative explanations; and
- distinguishing immediate outputs, institutional adoption, enterprise use, market conversion and likely durability.

Interview testimony was not treated as sufficient on its own for major evaluative judgements. It was cross-checked, where feasible, against Project documentation, monitoring and financial records, policy and institutional evidence, survey findings, field observations and perspectives from other stakeholder groups.

The evaluation distinguishes among:

- independently verified results;
- results corroborated consistently through multiple evidence sources;
- Project- or partner-reported results that were plausible but not independently audited;
- contribution pathways supported by partial evidence; and
- areas where the available evidence did not support a firm conclusion.

This approach enabled customized, context-sensitive inquiry while maintaining systematic coverage of the full evaluation scope and consistent evidentiary standards across the regional and country components.

Annex 10.6 List of persons interviewed, gender disaggregated

No	Date	Name	Organization/Individual	Category	Gender	Remark
1	14 May 2026	Patrick Haverman; Aidai Arstanbekova; Azamat Usubaliev; Elmira Ibraeva; Emil Iusupov; Meerim Momunzhanova; Tuimakan Subankulova	UNDP Kyrgyzstan / Aid for Trade project team	UNDP	3 M; 4 F	In person (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)
2	14 May 2026	Bermet Ubaidillaeva	Individual – Gender Expert	Consultant / Expert	1 F	In person (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)
3	14 May 2026	Rimma Kiseleva; Akim Keneshbekovich Nasirov; Bakyt Shabdanov; Zair Konurbaev; Aspira Kalieva; Uran Chekirbaev	Ministry of Economy and Commerce; Kyrgyzstandart; Ministry of Agriculture	Government	4 M; 2 F	In person (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)
4	14 May 2026	Tilek Jumaliev; Asel Ibraimova	Kyrgyz Export Development and Promotion Center	Government	1 M; 1 F	In person (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)
5	14 May 2026	Amangeldi Dzhumabaev; Saikal Isaeva	OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek; GIZ	Development Partners	1 M; 1 F	Hybrid (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan/online)
6	14 May 2026	Aleksandra Abdykaparova	Department of Tourism, Ministry of Economy and Commerce	Government	1 F	In person (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)
7	15 May 2026	Timur Dzhakypov	State Customs Service	Government	1 M	In person (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)
8	15 May 2026	Avazbek Kerimbayev; Cholpon Beishenalieva	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic	Business Association	1 M; 1 F	In person (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)
9	15 May 2026	Gulzina Batirkhanova	State Insurance Organization	State-Owned Enterprise	1 F	In person (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)
10	15 May 2026	Cholpon Ashimova; Cholpon Ormusheva; Azzambek Jeenbai Uulu; Aisalkyn Talasbekova; Gulzhan Nazarova	Women's Forum Kurak; Business Association JIA; JohnGalt LLC; ToiArt Ceramics	CSO / Private Sector / Beneficiaries	1 M; 4 F	Hybrid (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan/online)

No	Date	Name	Organization/Individual	Category	Gender	Remark
11	15 May 2026	Aisha Mambetalieva; Nurbek Saparov	Kyrgyz Association of Tour Operators; Association of Electronic Commerce	Business Associations	1 M; 1 F	In person (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)
12	15 May 2026	Zhanybek Pakyrov; Saule Zhumaeva; Aibek Marazhapov	Public Foundation FSDS; Public Foundation TES-Center; Erkin Consult LLC	Implementing Partners	2 M; 1 F	Hybrid (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan/online)
13	15 May 2026	Yuri Rahubin; Nargiza Erkinbaeva	SunPlanet LLC; PA OSOP+1	Private Sector / Beneficiaries	1 M; 1 F	In person (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)
14	16 May 2026	Emma Savitskaya	Dary Tien Shan LLC	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 F	In person (Krasnaya Rechka, Kyrgyzstan)
15	16 May 2026	Asel Dildebaeva; Gulayym Tashtanbaeva	Royal Gate LLC / Mentorship Programme	Private Sector / Beneficiaries	2 F	In person (Bokonbaev, Kyrgyzstan)
16	16 May 2026	Gulbara Shadakova	Taberik Craftswomen's Group	Beneficiary Group	1 F	In person (Jenish, Kyrgyzstan)
17	17 May 2026	Marat Galiev; members of the Issyk-Kul Regional Voluntary Society of Beekeepers (names not specified)	Nektar LLC; Issyk-Kul Regional Voluntary Society of Beekeepers	Private Sector / Beneficiaries	1 M; other participants not specified	In person (Karakol, Kyrgyzstan)
18	17 May 2026	Albina Alimova	IE Alimova; IE Turbatova (the agenda identifies only Albina Alimova by name)	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 F; any additional participant not specified	In person (Karakol, Kyrgyzstan)
19	17 May 2026	Sonun Boronchieva; Kyyal Boronchieva	Society of Persons with Disabilities "Kelechek Sary-Kol"	Beneficiary Group / CSO	2 F	In person (Mikhaylovka, Kyrgyzstan)
20	17 May 2026	Ulan Abdylashev	Issyk-Kul Honey Cooperative	Cooperative / Beneficiary	1 M	In person (Mikhaylovka, Kyrgyzstan)
21	18 May 2026	Begimai Zhekshebekova; Nazgul Omuralieva	PA OSOP+1	Private Sector / Beneficiaries	2 F	In person (Karakol, Kyrgyzstan)
22	19 May 2026	Ravshan Yunusov; Nargiza Khamidova; Mukhabbat Turkmenova	UNDP Uzbekistan	UNDP	1 M; 2 F	In person (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

No	Date	Name	Organization/Individual	Category	Gender	Remark
23	19 May 2026	Farrukh Zakirov; Muzaffar Mirzarakhimov; Nosirkhon Gozikhonov; Maksuda Mukhsinbaeva	Aid for Trade project team, UNDP Uzbekistan	UNDP	3 M; 1 F	In person (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)
24	20 May 2026	Aziz Jumaev; Tengiz Asanov	Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade	Government	2 M	In person (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)
25	20 May 2026	Nazarmurod Ismoilov; Shokhrukh Sherov	Trade Development Company	Government / Export Promotion Agency	2 M	In person (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)
26	20 May 2026	Jakhongir Sultanov	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan	Business Association	1 M	In person (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)
27	20 May 2026	Farrukh Ermatov	Tourism Committee of Uzbekistan	Government	1 M	In person (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)
28	20 May 2026	Askarali Askarov	Agency on Technical Regulation of Uzbekistan	Government	1 M	In person (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)
29	21 May 2026	Zilola Bekmukhamedova; Elena Selezneva	Value-chain support contractor; Green Entrepreneurship Programme contractor	Implementing Partners	2 F	In person (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)
30	21 May 2026	Akmal Azimov; Adkham Akbarov	International Trade Centre	UN Agency / Development Partner	2 M	In person (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)
31	22 May 2026	Lola Abduhalimova; Marifat Nazarova	Association of Business Women, Namangan branch; fruit-processing value-chain contractor	Business Association / Implementing Partner	2 F	In person (Namangan, Uzbekistan)
32	22 May 2026	Marina Djabbarova; Munis Muhitdinova	Anor Center of National Applied Crafts; Zeytun Invest LLC	Private Sector / Beneficiaries	2 F	In person (Namangan, Uzbekistan)
33	22 May 2026	Javkharoy Inamova	Nateko Impex LLC	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 F	In person (Namangan Region, Uzbekistan)
34	22 May 2026	Otabek Ziyayev	Cibus LLC	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 M	In person (Andijan, Uzbekistan)
35	23 May 2026	Gullola Yulbarsova	PE Yulbarsova Gullola	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 F	In person (Andijan, Uzbekistan)

No	Date	Name	Organization/Individual	Category	Gender	Remark
36	23 May 2026	Madinahon Abdihamidova	PE Abdihamidova Madinahon	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 F	In person (Andijan Region, Uzbekistan)
37	23 May 2026	Golibjon Isroilov	Farming Best Golden Garden LLC	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 M	In person (Fergana, Uzbekistan)
38	23 May 2026	Mirodil Hojimatov	Beshlar Agro LLC	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 M	In person (Fergana Region, Uzbekistan)
39	25 May 2026	Lazima Onta-Bhatta; Shakarbek Nyatbekov; Yusufjon Kholov; Qosimjon Ismoilov	UNDP Tajikistan	UNDP	3 M; 1 F	In person (Dushanbe, Tajikistan)
40	25 May 2026	Philippe Chabot; Zaydulloi Najibullo; Zarina Nigmatova; Takhmina Jumabaeva	Aid for Trade project team and gender specialist, UNDP Tajikistan	UNDP	2 M; 2 F	In person (Dushanbe, Tajikistan)
41	25 May 2026	Haydar Rajabov; Adolat Mirzoshoeva	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tajikistan	Business Association	1 M; 1 F	In person (Dushanbe, Tajikistan)
42	25 May 2026	Ziyoiyon Abdullo; Umedjoni Davlat; Manuchekhra Madjon	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	Government	2 M; 1 F	In person (Dushanbe, Tajikistan)
43	25 May 2026	Abdughafor Jamolzoda; Shokhin Sufizoda	Agency for Export under the Government of Tajikistan	Government	2 M	In person (Dushanbe, Tajikistan)
44	25 May 2026	Farrukh Soliev	Agency of Innovation and Digital Technologies	Government	1 M	In person (Dushanbe, Tajikistan)
45	26 May 2026	Kishwar Abdulalishiev; Gholib Urunov	Aga Khan Foundation	Implementing Partner	2 M	In person (Dushanbe, Tajikistan)
46	26 May 2026	Nasiba Aminova	National Association of Small and Medium Business	Business Association	1 F	In person (Dushanbe, Tajikistan)
47	26 May 2026	Farruksho Fraidonov; Gulsha Jumakhonov; Mirzo Mirzoev	University of Central Asia	Implementing Partner	3 M	In person (Dushanbe, Tajikistan)
48	26 May 2026	Suhrob Pulatov	OVOP “Dekhai Man”	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 M	In person (Bokhtar, Tajikistan)

No	Date	Name	Organization/Individual	Category	Gender	Remark
49	26 May 2026	Suhrob Sharipov	Suhrob Sharipov Dekhkan Farm	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 M	In person (Muminabad, Tajikistan)
50	27 May 2026	Nizomatmo Sharipova	Beekeepers' Apiary	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 F	In person (Mastchoh, Tajikistan)
51	28 May 2026	Shavkat Yakubi	Executive Authority of Sughd Region	Government	1 M	In person (Khujand, Tajikistan)
52	28 May 2026	Bakhtyor Abduvakhidov	Harif LLC	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 M	In person (Bobojon Gafurov, Tajikistan)
53	28 May 2026	Muborak Hoshimova	Dekhkan Farm – fruit and vegetable production	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 F	In person (Buston, Tajikistan)
54	28 May 2026	Bakhodur Muminov	Mevai Zarrin LLC	Private Sector	1 M	In person (Isfara, Tajikistan)
55	28 May 2026	Jamshed Buzurukov; Daler Dusmatov; Muminjon Mamadjonov	IsfaraFood LLC	Private Sector	3 M	In person (Isfara, Tajikistan)
56	28 May 2026	Abdumubin Fayziev	International Association of Producers and Exporters of Agricultural Products (MAPEST)	Business Association	1 M	In person (Isfara, Tajikistan)
57	29 May 2026	Navruz Aliev	Mevai Asht LLC	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 M	In person (Asht, Tajikistan)
58	29 May 2026	Pulot Ashurov	Apricot Co LLC	Private Sector / Beneficiary	1 M	In person (Asht, Tajikistan)
59	29 May 2026	Navruz Odinaev	Nerui Kand LLC	Private Sector	1 M	In person (Kanibadam, Tajikistan)
60	9 Jun 2026	Umed Aslanov	Hilfswerk International	Implementing Partner	1 M	Online
61	10 Jun 2026	Umutai Dauletova	UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub	UNDP	1 F	Online
62	11 Jun 2026	Tina Stoum	UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub	UNDP	1 F	Online
63	12 Jun 2026	Vesna Djuteska-Bisheva	UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub	UNDP	1 F	Online

No	Date	Name	Organization/Individual	Category	Gender	Remark
64	15 Jun 2026	Liliana Annovazzi-Jakab	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe	UN Agency / Development Partner	1 F	Online
65	15 Jun 2026	Katja Hirvonen	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland	Donor	1 F	Online
66	16 Jun 2026	Pitchaya Mondoux-Eamon; Martin Lopez	International Trade Centre	UN Agency / Development Partner	1 F; 1 M	Online (joint interview)
67	16 Jun 2026	Dilshod Akbarov	UNDP Aid for Trade in Central Asia project	UNDP	1 M	Online
68	17 Jun 2026	Petri Numminen	Stimulator Oy, Finland	Project Partner / Private Sector	1 M	Online
69	18 Jun 2026	Pem Wangdi	UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub	UNDP	1 F	Online
70	18 Jun 2026	Marit Nilses	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe	UN Agency / Development Partner	1 F	Online

Annex 10.7 Online surveys of meso- and micro-level stakeholders and beneficiaries

1. Purpose and role in the evaluation

The evaluation administered two complementary online surveys:

- a meso-level survey targeting Trade Support Institutions, public institutions, chambers and business associations, certification and standards bodies, women's entrepreneurship organizations, e-commerce actors, training and advisory providers, value-chain facilitators and other institutional partners; and
- a micro-level survey targeting MSMEs, individual entrepreneurs, farmers and dehkan farms, producer groups, processors, exporters, artisans, tourism businesses and other Project-supported value-chain actors.

Separate instruments were used because the expected results differed across the two levels. The meso-level survey examined institutional capacity, service delivery, use and institutionalization of Project-supported tools and approaches, responsiveness to MSMEs, regional added value and prospects for sustainability. The micro-level survey examined the relevance and application of Project support, changes in business capabilities and performance, employment, gender equality, inclusion, green practices and the likely continuity of benefits.

The instruments were revised after the inception phase to reflect the final evaluation matrix, documentary review and evidence needs emerging during the field missions. The revised questionnaires placed greater emphasis on:

- application and continued use of Project-supported knowledge, tools and approaches;
- Project contribution rather than direct attribution;
- progression from capabilities and practice change to commercial results;
- institutional embedding and demand-driven service delivery;
- regional additionality;
- employment and livelihood opportunities;
- women's agency, leadership and decision-making;
- youth, rural populations, persons with disabilities and other groups at risk of exclusion;
- green and resource-efficient practices; and
- risks to the sustainability of results.

The final meso-level instrument contained 26 questions and the micro-level instrument contained 18 questions. Both were designed to take approximately ten minutes to complete. The surveys constituted a supplementary line of evidence and were not intended to replace interviews, field observations, documentary review or monitoring data. Survey findings were therefore not treated as stand-alone proof of outcome-level change.

2. Survey administration and ethical protocol

The questionnaires were administered through Microsoft Forms in Russian and relevant local languages. UNDP Country Offices, Project personnel and implementing partners facilitated distribution through available stakeholder and beneficiary lists and established communication channels.
Each survey began with an explanation that:

- it formed part of an independent final evaluation rather than a Project monitoring exercise;
- participation was voluntary;
- respondents could decline to answer individual questions or discontinue the survey;
- responses would be treated confidentially;
- results would be analysed in aggregated and non-attributable form;
- information would be used solely for evaluation purposes; and

- participation or non-participation would not affect the respondent's relationship with UNDP or any Project partner.

The forms did not require respondents to provide their names. The micro-level questionnaire also used branching for the detailed question on green and sustainable practices, which was shown only to respondents who reported at least some relevant change.

3. Sampling and response profile

The surveys used purposive rather than probability-based sampling. Potential respondents were identified from Project stakeholder and beneficiary records, supplemented by consultations with Country Offices, Project personnel and implementing partners. The evaluator reviewed the proposed coverage to include different countries, institutional categories, intervention types and supported value chains.

The final reproducible dataset contained 172 unique responses.

Survey level	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan	Total
Micro-level respondents	83	11	43	137
Meso-level respondents	9	15	11	35
Total	**92**	**26**	**54**	**172**

The initial meso-level dataset contained 36 submissions. Two Tajikistan records contained identical substantive responses and were submitted approximately five seconds apart. One was removed as an exact duplicate, producing a final sample of 35 unique institutional responses. No other exact or highly similar duplicate records were identified.

4. Data preparation and audit

Responses from the Russian- and local-language forms were harmonized and consolidated into common micro- and meso-level datasets. Response categories, matrix values and multiple-selection options were mapped to a common analytical framework.

The analysis used:

- frequencies and percentages for single-choice questions;
- the percentage of respondents selecting each option for multiple-response questions;
- mean scores for five-point contribution matrices, excluding "not applicable" responses;
- descriptive country comparisons where sample sizes permitted;
- thematic review of open-ended responses; and
- triangulation with interviews, field observations, Project documentation and monitoring evidence.

For multiple-response questions, percentages do not sum to 100 because respondents could select more than one option. Unless otherwise stated, percentages are based on valid responses to the relevant question. Matrix questions are reported using the original five-point scale and include the number of valid responses and "not applicable" selections. Open-ended questions are summarized thematically without attributing responses to individual participants. Source records, language harmonization, coding, calculations and figures were rechecked before finalization.

Source-record reconciliation

An earlier consolidated analytical file contained 137 micro-level records. During the final source audit, 137 corresponding Microsoft Forms submissions could be reproduced from the retained exports: 83 from Kyrgyzstan, 11 from Tajikistan and 43 from Uzbekistan. One Russian-language Kyrgyzstan record included in the earlier analytical file was not present in the subsequently available source export and could not therefore be fully traced to an archived submission.

For auditability, the final annex tables and figures use the 137 reproducible micro-level records. Recalculation changed the principal percentages by no more than approximately 0.6 percentage points and did not alter any evaluative conclusion, country pattern or relative ordering of results. The discrepancy is disclosed for transparency and does not materially affect the interpretation of the survey evidence.

5. Methodological limitations

The surveys were not statistically representative of all Phase V institutions or beneficiaries. Respondents were purposively selected from available stakeholder and beneficiary records, and participation was voluntary. The findings therefore describe the experiences and perceptions of respondents reached through the evaluation rather than population-level effects across the three countries.

The micro-level sample was unevenly distributed and pooled results were influenced by the larger Kyrgyzstan sample. Country comparisons are therefore descriptive, particularly for Tajikistan's micro-level sample of 11 respondents and for all meso-level country subsamples.

Survey evidence was self-reported. Changes in sales, income, production, employment, market access and institutional performance were not independently audited through the surveys and were triangulated with documentary, interview, monitoring and field evidence wherever possible.

The surveys were not designed to support longitudinal comparison with Phase IV because there was no sufficiently large and consistent panel of respondents across the two phases.

Four additional qualifications were applied:

1. **Language harmonization.** Two Kyrgyz-language response categories in the micro-level relevance question required recoding according to their verified questionnaire order. This did not materially alter the conclusion that a large majority of respondents rated the support as very or highly relevant.
2. **Continuity response scale.** One Kyrgyz-language option in the question on the likely continuation of benefits was not fully consistent with its position in the five-point response scale. Semantic coding and sensitivity analysis excluding the affected language version produced closely comparable results, confirming that the positive conclusion on expected continuity was robust.
3. **Employment questions.** Employment findings differed across two questions. The general business-change checklist asked whether respondents had experienced increased employment, while the separate employment question distinguished temporary, permanent, retained and other employment-related changes. Because the questions measured different concepts, their results are reported separately. The general business-change result is used as the more conservative headline, and neither result is treated as a verified employment estimate.
4. **Future-support selections.** Microsoft Forms did not enforce the intended maximum of three responses in the future-support questions. Some respondents therefore selected more than three options. These findings are interpreted as frequencies of identified demand rather than as a definitive ranking of priorities.

6 Interpretation

Taken together, the surveys provide a coherent supplementary line of evidence that Phase V support was generally relevant, applied in practice and associated with reported changes among enterprises and institutions. At the micro level, results show a progression from relevance and application towards improved capabilities, production, quality and selected commercial outcomes, with fewer respondents reporting later-stage results such as certification, exports and sustained buyer relationships. At the meso level, respondents reported stronger institutional capacity, service quality and use of Project-supported approaches, although full integration into routine operations remained less consistent and dependent on budgets, staffing and technical ownership. These findings corroborate and qualify evidence from interviews, field visits, monitoring records and Project documentation but are not used independently to attribute results to the Project or generate statistically representative estimates.

7. Reporting conventions

Questions are reproduced using the standardized English wording of the final survey instruments. Response categories were harmonized across the Russian and local-language forms and are presented using the corresponding English labels. For single-choice questions, percentages use all nonblank responses as the denominator, including "not applicable," "not sure" and "too early to assess" where these were selected. Any headline percentage in the main report that excludes non-substantive categories must state its valid-response denominator explicitly. Multiple-response questions show the share of nonblank respondents selecting each option and therefore do not sum to 100. Matrix questions show the full 1–5 distribution and the mean excluding "not applicable."

Question 13 of the micro survey was intended to be displayed through branching after Question 12; however, the exported language forms contained 134 nonblank Question 13 records. These are reported as recorded, without retrospective filtering. Microsoft Forms also did not enforce the intended maximum of three selections for the future-support questions; these distributions indicate frequencies of identified demand rather than ranked priorities.

3. Question-by-question audit table

Level	Q	Question / matrix item (standardized English wording)	Response distribution (harmonized English categories)
Micro	1	In which country is your business based?	Kyrgyzstan: 83 (60.6%); Tajikistan: 11 (8.0%); Uzbekistan: 43 (31.4%). Nonblank n = 137.
Micro	2	Which best describes your business or activity?	Micro enterprise: 7 (5.1%); Small enterprise: 19 (13.9%); Medium enterprise: 9 (6.6%); Cooperative / producer group: 14 (10.2%); Individual entrepreneur: 43 (31.4%); Farmer / dehkan farm: 11 (8.0%); Processor / exporting company: 10 (7.3%); Artisan / tourism-related business: 19 (13.9%); Other / specified: 5 (3.6%). Nonblank n = 137.
Micro	3	Which sector or value chain best describes your business?	Agriculture / farming: 14 (10.2%); Agri-processing / food processing: 11 (8.0%); Dried fruits / nuts / berries: 24 (17.5%); Fresh or frozen products: 2 (1.5%); Honey / beekeeping: 26 (19.0%); Legumes / mung beans / other pulses: 1 (0.7%); Jerusalem artichoke / topinambur or other niche crops: 0 (0.0%); Tourism / handicrafts / creative products: 38 (27.7%); Textiles / garments / sewing: 7 (5.1%); Other services: 9 (6.6%); E-commerce / online sales: 2 (1.5%); Green business / entrepreneurship / resource efficiency: 2 (1.5%); Other / specified: 1 (0.7%). Nonblank n = 137.
Micro	4	What type of Project support did your business receive?	Training / mentoring / coaching: 82 (59.9%); Business planning or management support: 42 (30.7%); Standards, certification or quality-improvement support: 36 (26.3%); Digital trade / e-commerce / online-sales support: 30 (21.9%); Trade or market information: 29 (21.2%); Business networking / trade fairs / caravans / buyer linkages: 30 (21.9%); Equipment / technology / productive-asset support: 72 (52.6%); Packaging, labelling or branding support: 18 (13.1%); Support related to women's entrepreneurship: 49 (35.8%); Support related to green practices or resource efficiency: 17 (12.4%); Support to access finance, grants or co-financing: 34 (24.8%); Support to strengthen links with farmers, suppliers, processors or buyers: 16 (11.7%); Other / specified: 3 (2.2%). Nonblank n = 137; multiple responses permitted.
Micro	5	How relevant and useful was the Project support to your business?	Not relevant or useful: 1 (0.7%); Slightly relevant or useful: 6 (4.4%); Moderately relevant or useful: 15 (10.9%); Very relevant and useful: 72 (52.6%); Highly relevant and useful: 40 (29.2%); Not sure / not applicable: 3 (2.2%). Nonblank n = 137.
Micro	6	Have you applied the knowledge, tools or advice received through the Project in your business?	Yes, regularly: 106 (77.4%); Yes, occasionally: 20 (14.6%); Not yet, but I plan to: 7 (5.1%); No: 0 (0.0%); Not applicable: 4 (2.9%). Nonblank n = 137.

Level	Q	Question / matrix item (standardized English wording)	Response distribution (harmonized English categories)
Micro	7.1	To what extent has the Project contributed to changes in the following areas for your business? — Product or service quality	1 Not at all: 2 (1.5%); 2 To a limited extent: 4 (2.9%); 3 To some extent: 28 (20.4%); 4 To a considerable extent: 36 (26.3%); 5 To a great extent: 65 (47.4%); Not applicable: 2 (1.5%); Mean: 4.17 (valid scale n = 135).
Micro	7.2	To what extent has the Project contributed to changes in the following areas for your business? — Production volume or productivity	1 Not at all: 1 (0.7%); 2 To a limited extent: 7 (5.1%); 3 To some extent: 37 (27.0%); 4 To a considerable extent: 40 (29.2%); 5 To a great extent: 48 (35.0%); Not applicable: 4 (2.9%); Mean: 3.95 (valid scale n = 133).
Micro	7.3	To what extent has the Project contributed to changes in the following areas for your business? — Packaging, branding or presentation	1 Not at all: 7 (5.1%); 2 To a limited extent: 14 (10.2%); 3 To some extent: 35 (25.5%); 4 To a considerable extent: 37 (27.0%); 5 To a great extent: 33 (24.1%); Not applicable: 11 (8.0%); Mean: 3.60 (valid scale n = 126).
Micro	7.4	To what extent has the Project contributed to changes in the following areas for your business? — Compliance with standards or market requirements	1 Not at all: 5 (3.6%); 2 To a limited extent: 9 (6.6%); 3 To some extent: 37 (27.0%); 4 To a considerable extent: 41 (29.9%); 5 To a great extent: 40 (29.2%); Not applicable: 5 (3.6%); Mean: 3.77 (valid scale n = 132).
Micro	7.5	To what extent has the Project contributed to changes in the following areas for your business? — Access to customers or markets	1 Not at all: 3 (2.2%); 2 To a limited extent: 10 (7.3%); 3 To some extent: 40 (29.2%); 4 To a considerable extent: 41 (29.9%); 5 To a great extent: 38 (27.7%); Not applicable: 5 (3.6%); Mean: 3.77 (valid scale n = 132).
Micro	7.6	To what extent has the Project contributed to changes in the following areas for your business? — Use of digital tools or online channels	1 Not at all: 10 (7.3%); 2 To a limited extent: 10 (7.3%); 3 To some extent: 36 (26.3%); 4 To a considerable extent: 33 (24.1%); 5 To a great extent: 38 (27.7%); Not applicable: 10 (7.3%); Mean: 3.62 (valid scale n = 127).
Micro	7.7	To what extent has the Project contributed to changes in the following areas for your business? — Business skills, confidence or decision-making	1 Not at all: 2 (1.5%); 2 To a limited extent: 5 (3.6%); 3 To some extent: 29 (21.2%); 4 To a considerable extent: 44 (32.1%); 5 To a great extent: 50 (36.5%); Not applicable: 7 (5.1%); Mean: 4.04 (valid scale n = 130).
Micro	7.8	To what extent has the Project contributed to changes in the following areas for your business? — Links with suppliers, farmers, processors or buyers	1 Not at all: 5 (3.6%); 2 To a limited extent: 10 (7.3%); 3 To some extent: 36 (26.3%); 4 To a considerable extent: 43 (31.4%); 5 To a great extent: 33 (24.1%); Not applicable: 10 (7.3%); Mean: 3.70 (valid scale n = 127).
Micro	7.9	To what extent has the Project contributed to changes in the following areas for your business? — Green or resource-efficient practices	1 Not at all: 8 (5.8%); 2 To a limited extent: 9 (6.6%); 3 To some extent: 39 (28.5%); 4 To a considerable extent: 29 (21.2%); 5 To a great extent: 43 (31.4%); Not applicable: 9 (6.6%); Mean: 3.70 (valid scale n = 128).
Micro	7.10	To what extent has the Project contributed to changes in the following areas for your business? — Ability to cope with market, price, climate or other shocks	1 Not at all: 9 (6.6%); 2 To a limited extent: 8 (5.8%); 3 To some extent: 42 (30.7%); 4 To a considerable extent: 37 (27.0%); 5 To a great extent: 31 (22.6%); Not applicable: 10 (7.3%); Mean: 3.57 (valid scale n = 127).

Level	Q	Question / matrix item (standardized English wording)	Response distribution (harmonized English categories)
Micro	8	Since receiving Project support, has your business experienced any of the following changes?	Increased sales or income: 71 (51.8%); Increased production or output: 72 (52.6%); Improved product or service quality: 66 (48.2%); Improved packaging, branding or labelling: 31 (22.6%); Improved standards or certification readiness: 24 (17.5%); Improved access to finance or investment readiness: 26 (19.0%); Improved confidence to negotiate with buyers or partners: 46 (33.6%); Access to new customers or markets: 54 (39.4%); New export opportunities: 25 (18.2%); New buyer contacts through fairs, caravans or B2B events: 25 (18.2%); Improved use of digital channels / e-commerce: 37 (27.0%); Stronger links with suppliers, farmers, processors or buyers: 21 (15.3%); Increased employment: 53 (38.7%); More stable or year-round work: 28 (20.4%); Reduced costs, waste, water use or energy use: 26 (19.0%); Increased confidence in business planning or decision-making: 40 (29.2%); No significant change yet: 7 (5.1%); No change yet, but I expect changes later: 9 (6.6%); Other / specified: 6 (4.4%). Nonblank n = 137; multiple responses permitted.
Micro	9	Did Project support contribute to changes in employment in your business?	No change in employment: 4 (2.9%); Created temporary or seasonal jobs: 44 (32.1%); Created permanent jobs: 23 (16.8%); Created both permanent and seasonal jobs: 35 (25.5%); Helped maintain existing jobs: 11 (8.0%); Increased income for existing workers/family members without creating new jobs: 6 (4.4%); Too early to assess: 11 (8.0%); Not applicable: 3 (2.2%). Nonblank n = 137.
Micro	10	Which groups benefited from jobs, income or business opportunities linked to your business?	Women: 95 (69.3%); Young people: 59 (43.1%); Rural residents: 63 (46.0%); Low-income households: 48 (35.0%); Persons with disabilities: 24 (17.5%); Family members: 52 (38.0%); Farmers or suppliers: 28 (20.4%); Seasonal workers: 53 (38.7%); No specific group benefited: 1 (0.7%); Not applicable: 4 (2.9%); Other / specified: 2 (1.5%). Nonblank n = 137; multiple responses permitted.
Micro	11	If relevant, did Project support strengthen women's role in managing, deciding or expanding the business?	Yes, significantly: 79 (58.1%); Yes, somewhat: 38 (27.9%); Only to a limited extent: 9 (6.6%); No: 1 (0.7%); Too early to assess: 5 (3.7%); Not applicable: 4 (2.9%). Nonblank n = 136; blank = 1.
Micro	12	Did Project support help your business introduce or strengthen green or sustainable practices?	Yes, significantly: 66 (48.2%); Yes, somewhat: 46 (33.6%); Only to a limited extent: 6 (4.4%); No: 6 (4.4%); Too early to assess: 5 (3.6%); Not applicable: 8 (5.8%). Nonblank n = 137.
Micro	13	Which green or sustainable practices were introduced or strengthened?	More efficient use of water: 40 (29.9%); More efficient use of energy: 44 (32.8%); Renewable energy or solar energy: 22 (16.4%); Reduced waste: 37 (27.6%); Recycling or waste sorting: 18 (13.4%); Eco-friendly packaging: 33 (24.6%); Reduced use of chemicals: 19 (14.2%); Improved drying, storage or processing efficiency: 23 (17.2%); Improved food safety or hygiene practices: 36 (26.9%); Organic or eco-certification: 15 (11.2%); Climate-resilient production practices: 19 (14.2%); Sustainable tourism or cultural heritage preservation: 34 (25.4%); Not applicable: 15 (11.2%); Other / specified: 4 (3.0%). Nonblank n = 134; blank = 3; multiple responses permitted.

Level	Q	Question / matrix item (standardized English wording)	Response distribution (harmonized English categories)
Micro	14	How important was the Project in contributing to the changes in your business?	The changes would likely have happened anyway: 7 (5.1%); The Project played a minor supporting role: 8 (5.8%); The Project made a meaningful contribution together with other factors: 48 (35.0%); The Project was one of the main drivers of change: 46 (33.6%); The Project was the main factor: 21 (15.3%); Not sure: 7 (5.1%). Nonblank n = 137.
Micro	15	Looking ahead, how likely is it that the benefits from Project support will continue in your business?	Very unlikely: 1 (0.7%); Unlikely: 11 (8.0%); Uncertain: 9 (6.6%); Likely: 75 (54.7%); Very likely: 41 (29.9%). Nonblank n = 137.
Micro	16	What are the main risks that could limit continuation of benefits?	Regulatory or administrative barriers: 24 (17.6%); Limited finance or working capital: 31 (22.8%); Weak market demand: 36 (26.5%); Difficulty maintaining equipment: 19 (14.0%); High certification or compliance costs: 26 (19.1%); High input or energy costs: 24 (17.6%); Limited access to buyers or markets: 26 (19.1%); Logistics or transport problems: 33 (24.3%); Digital platform, payment or delivery challenges: 15 (11.0%); Shortage of skilled workers: 31 (22.8%); Limited time or staff capacity to apply new knowledge: 26 (19.1%); Raw-material supply problems: 18 (13.2%); Climate, weather or water-related risks: 36 (26.5%); Family or care responsibilities: 17 (12.5%); Limited follow-up support: 13 (9.6%); Other / specified: 7 (5.1%). Nonblank n = 136; blank = 1; multiple responses permitted.
Micro	17	In your view, what was the most important result of Project support for your business?	Substantive response: 94 (68.6%); blank: 43 (31.4%). Verbatim responses are retained in the evaluation records and are not reproduced to protect confidentiality.
Micro	18	What type of support would be most useful in the future?	Equipment or technology: 71 (51.8%); Business mentoring or coaching: 40 (29.2%); Certification or standards support: 33 (24.1%); Packaging, branding or labelling: 27 (19.7%); Access to finance or grants: 80 (58.4%); Market access or buyer linkages: 39 (28.5%); Trade fairs, exhibitions or B2B events: 41 (29.9%); Export-readiness support: 36 (26.3%); Digital tools, online sales or e-commerce: 20 (14.6%); Green technologies or resource efficiency: 35 (25.5%); Support for women entrepreneurs: 59 (43.1%); Support for youth or start-ups: 24 (17.5%); Support to strengthen supplier or value-chain linkages: 16 (11.7%); Support with logistics, transport or export procedures: 20 (14.6%); Follow-up after training / post-training advisory support: 25 (18.2%); Other / specified: 3 (2.2%). Nonblank n = 137; multiple responses permitted.
Meso	1	Which type of institution or organization do you represent?	Government / national public institution: 2 (5.7%); Export-promotion / trade-development institution: 11 (31.4%); Chamber of commerce / business association: 7 (20.0%); Sector / producer / exporter association: 2 (5.7%); Certification, standards or quality-infrastructure institution: 0 (0.0%); E-commerce / digital-trade actor: 1 (2.9%); Women's entrepreneurship / mentorship organization: 8 (22.9%); Training / advisory-service provider: 0 (0.0%); Regional or local government institution: 0 (0.0%); Value-chain implementing partner / facilitator: 1 (2.9%); Other / specified: 3 (8.6%). Nonblank n = 35.
Meso	2	In which country is your institution based?	Kyrgyzstan: 9 (25.7%); Tajikistan: 15 (42.9%); Uzbekistan: 11 (31.4%). Nonblank n = 35.

Level	Q	Question / matrix item (standardized English wording)	Response distribution (harmonized English categories)
Meso	3	What was your institution's main role in the Project?	Providing services to MSMEs / entrepreneurs: 13 (37.1%); Supporting export promotion or market access: 17 (48.6%); Providing trade or market information: 10 (28.6%); Supporting certification, standards or export readiness: 9 (25.7%); Supporting e-commerce, digital trade or online sales: 5 (14.3%); Supporting women's entrepreneurship or mentorship: 15 (42.9%); Supporting youth entrepreneurship or start-ups: 7 (20.0%); Supporting green entrepreneurship or sustainable production: 11 (31.4%); Supporting value-chain development or coordination: 6 (17.1%); Supporting policy analysis, legislative drafting or regulatory reform: 1 (2.9%); Coordinating beneficiaries or local implementation: 4 (11.4%); Supporting policy dialogue, working groups or institutional coordination: 2 (5.7%); Other / specified: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 35; multiple responses permitted.
Meso	4	What type of Project support did your institution receive?	Training / capacity-building: 23 (65.7%); Technical assistance / expert advice: 15 (42.9%); Trade or market-intelligence tools: 11 (31.4%); Digital tools, portals or platforms: 9 (25.7%); Support to improve service design or delivery: 2 (5.7%); Support related to certification, standards or quality infrastructure: 7 (20.0%); Support related to e-commerce, digital marketing or marketplace access: 7 (20.0%); Support for mentorship, coaching or entrepreneurship programmes: 10 (28.6%); Support for trade fairs, B2B events or market linkages: 18 (51.4%); Support for regional outreach or local coordination: 8 (22.9%); Support for partnerships, networking or regional cooperation: 9 (25.7%); Equipment, training tools or institutional resources: 0 (0.0%); Other / specified: 1 (2.9%). Nonblank n = 35; multiple responses permitted.
Meso	5	To what extent was the Project support relevant to your institution's needs?	Not relevant: 0 (0.0%); Slightly relevant: 0 (0.0%); Moderately relevant: 3 (8.6%); Very relevant: 15 (42.9%); Highly relevant: 17 (48.6%); Not sure / not applicable: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 35.
Meso	6	Which needs did the Project support address?	Improving services for MSMEs: 18 (51.4%); Improving export-advisory services: 14 (40.0%); Improving access to trade or market information: 16 (45.7%); Strengthening certification or standards-related support: 8 (22.9%); Strengthening e-commerce or digital-trade support: 9 (25.7%); Improving outreach to regional or rural businesses: 11 (31.4%); Improving services for women-led businesses: 9 (25.7%); Improving support for youth, start-ups or vulnerable groups: 7 (20.0%); Strengthening value-chain linkages: 10 (28.6%); Improving coordination with other institutions: 8 (22.9%); Strengthening monitoring, feedback or client follow-up: 7 (20.0%); Other / specified: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 35; multiple responses permitted.
Meso	7.1	To what extent has the Project strengthened your institution in the following areas? — Ability to provide more relevant services to MSMEs	1 Not at all: 1 (2.9%); 2 To a limited extent: 1 (2.9%); 3 To some extent: 5 (14.3%); 4 To a considerable extent: 14 (40.0%); 5 To a great extent: 13 (37.1%); Not applicable: 1 (2.9%); Mean: 4.09 (valid scale n = 34).
Meso	7.2	To what extent has the Project strengthened your institution in the following areas? — Ability to provide practical, market-oriented advice	1 Not at all: 0 (0.0%); 2 To a limited extent: 0 (0.0%); 3 To some extent: 6 (17.1%); 4 To a considerable extent: 15 (42.9%); 5 To a great extent: 13 (37.1%); Not applicable: 1 (2.9%); Mean: 4.21 (valid scale n = 34).

Level	Q	Question / matrix item (standardized English wording)	Response distribution (harmonized English categories)
Meso	7.3	To what extent has the Project strengthened your institution in the following areas? — Use of trade / market information in advisory work	1 Not at all: 0 (0.0%); 2 To a limited extent: 3 (8.6%); 3 To some extent: 7 (20.0%); 4 To a considerable extent: 16 (45.7%); 5 To a great extent: 8 (22.9%); Not applicable: 1 (2.9%); Mean: 3.85 (valid scale n = 34).
Meso	7.4	To what extent has the Project strengthened your institution in the following areas? — Ability to support market access or export readiness	1 Not at all: 0 (0.0%); 2 To a limited extent: 0 (0.0%); 3 To some extent: 5 (14.3%); 4 To a considerable extent: 10 (28.6%); 5 To a great extent: 16 (45.7%); Not applicable: 4 (11.4%); Mean: 4.35 (valid scale n = 31).
Meso	7.5	To what extent has the Project strengthened your institution in the following areas? — Ability to support certification, standards or compliance readiness	1 Not at all: 1 (2.9%); 2 To a limited extent: 2 (5.7%); 3 To some extent: 7 (20.0%); 4 To a considerable extent: 9 (25.7%); 5 To a great extent: 13 (37.1%); Not applicable: 3 (8.6%); Mean: 3.97 (valid scale n = 32).
Meso	7.6	To what extent has the Project strengthened your institution in the following areas? — Ability to support e-commerce or online market access	1 Not at all: 0 (0.0%); 2 To a limited extent: 2 (5.7%); 3 To some extent: 9 (25.7%); 4 To a considerable extent: 12 (34.3%); 5 To a great extent: 10 (28.6%); Not applicable: 2 (5.7%); Mean: 3.91 (valid scale n = 33).
Meso	7.7	To what extent has the Project strengthened your institution in the following areas? — Ability to support women-led businesses	1 Not at all: 1 (2.9%); 2 To a limited extent: 2 (5.7%); 3 To some extent: 2 (5.7%); 4 To a considerable extent: 13 (37.1%); 5 To a great extent: 15 (42.9%); Not applicable: 2 (5.7%); Mean: 4.18 (valid scale n = 33).
Meso	7.8	To what extent has the Project strengthened your institution in the following areas? — Ability to support youth, start-ups or vulnerable groups	1 Not at all: 1 (2.9%); 2 To a limited extent: 3 (8.6%); 3 To some extent: 8 (22.9%); 4 To a considerable extent: 14 (40.0%); 5 To a great extent: 6 (17.1%); Not applicable: 3 (8.6%); Mean: 3.66 (valid scale n = 32).
Meso	7.9	To what extent has the Project strengthened your institution in the following areas? — Ability to support green entrepreneurship or sustainable production	1 Not at all: 1 (2.9%); 2 To a limited extent: 3 (8.6%); 3 To some extent: 7 (20.0%); 4 To a considerable extent: 14 (40.0%); 5 To a great extent: 8 (22.9%); Not applicable: 2 (5.7%); Mean: 3.76 (valid scale n = 33).
Meso	7.10	To what extent has the Project strengthened your institution in the following areas? — Ability to collect feedback from MSMEs and adapt services accordingly	1 Not at all: 0 (0.0%); 2 To a limited extent: 1 (2.9%); 3 To some extent: 11 (31.4%); 4 To a considerable extent: 12 (34.3%); 5 To a great extent: 8 (22.9%); Not applicable: 3 (8.6%); Mean: 3.84 (valid scale n = 32).
Meso	7.11	To what extent has the Project strengthened your institution in the following areas? — Cooperation with other institutions or partners	1 Not at all: 1 (2.9%); 2 To a limited extent: 1 (2.9%); 3 To some extent: 6 (17.1%); 4 To a considerable extent: 17 (48.6%); 5 To a great extent: 8 (22.9%); Not applicable: 2 (5.7%); Mean: 3.91 (valid scale n = 33).
Meso	7.12	To what extent has the Project strengthened your institution in the following areas? — Capacity to continue improved services after Project support	1 Not at all: 0 (0.0%); 2 To a limited extent: 1 (2.9%); 3 To some extent: 5 (14.3%); 4 To a considerable extent: 16 (45.7%); 5 To a great extent: 13 (37.1%); Not applicable: 0 (0.0%); Mean: 4.17 (valid scale n = 35).
Meso	8	Compared with before Project support, how would you assess the current quality and relevance of your institution's services to MSMEs or value-chain actors?	Significantly weaker: 0 (0.0%); Somewhat weaker: 2 (5.7%); About the same: 3 (8.6%); Somewhat stronger: 6 (17.1%); Significantly stronger: 22 (62.9%); Not sure / not applicable: 2 (5.7%). Nonblank n = 35.

Level	Q	Question / matrix item (standardized English wording)	Response distribution (harmonized English categories)
Meso	9	What changes have taken place in your institution as a result of Project support?	New services introduced: 14 (41.2%); Existing services improved: 23 (67.6%); Services delivered more efficiently: 11 (32.4%); Better use of trade or market information: 13 (38.2%); Better use of digital tools or platforms: 11 (32.4%); Stronger certification or standards-related support: 6 (17.6%); Stronger trade-fair, B2B or buyer-linkage support: 16 (47.1%); Stronger engagement with women entrepreneurs: 18 (52.9%); Stronger outreach to regional or rural businesses: 9 (26.5%); Stronger cooperation with national, regional or international partners: 15 (44.1%); Improved monitoring, feedback or client tracking: 6 (17.6%); No significant change: 0 (0.0%); Other / specified: 1 (2.9%). Nonblank n = 34; blank = 1; multiple responses permitted.
Meso	10	Are the Project-supported services, tools or approaches currently being used by your institution?	Yes, regularly: 21 (60.0%); Yes, occasionally: 7 (20.0%); Only during Project-supported activities: 5 (14.3%); Not yet, but we plan to use them: 2 (5.7%); No: 0 (0.0%); Not sure / not applicable: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 35.
Meso	11	In your view, did the Project-supported services contribute to observable changes among MSMEs, entrepreneurs, producers or value-chain actors?	No observable changes: 0 (0.0%); Small changes: 1 (2.9%); Moderate changes: 6 (17.1%); Significant changes: 17 (48.6%); Very significant changes: 11 (31.4%); Too early to assess: 0 (0.0%); Not sure / not applicable: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 35.
Meso	12	What types of changes, if any, have you observed among MSMEs, entrepreneurs, producers or value-chain actors?	Improved ability to meet buyer requirements: 20 (58.8%); Improved business planning or management: 13 (38.2%); Improved product quality: 22 (64.7%); Improved packaging or labelling: 5 (14.7%); Improved certification or compliance readiness: 13 (38.2%); Improved production processes or productivity: 9 (26.5%); Improved access to market information: 16 (47.1%); Improved confidence to approach buyers, exporters or support institutions: 10 (29.4%); New customers or buyers: 13 (38.2%); New export opportunities: 16 (47.1%); Increased participation in trade fairs or B2B events: 15 (44.1%); Increased online sales or digital visibility: 4 (11.8%); Stronger value-chain linkages: 13 (38.2%); Stronger access to finance or investment readiness: 3 (8.8%); Increased sales or turnover: 11 (32.4%); Increased employment: 14 (41.2%); More opportunities for women entrepreneurs or women workers: 16 (47.1%); More opportunities for youth, persons with disabilities or vulnerable groups: 4 (11.8%); Improved green or resource-efficient practices: 11 (32.4%); Not sure / not applicable: 0 (0.0%); Other / specified: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 34; blank = 1; multiple responses permitted.
Meso	13	Which groups benefited most from the services or support linked to your institution?	Established exporters: 14 (41.2%); Emerging exporters: 13 (38.2%); MSMEs / small businesses: 17 (50.0%); Farms / dehkan farms / agricultural producers: 15 (44.1%); Processing enterprises: 10 (29.4%); Women-led businesses: 18 (52.9%); Youth-led businesses / start-ups: 6 (17.6%); Rural businesses: 16 (47.1%); Tourism or handicraft businesses: 6 (17.6%); E-commerce or digital-trade businesses: 6 (17.6%); Businesses seeking certification or standards compliance: 4 (11.8%); Persons with disabilities or vulnerable groups: 3 (8.8%); Other / specified: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 34; blank = 1; multiple responses permitted.

Level	Q	Question / matrix item (standardized English wording)	Response distribution (harmonized English categories)
Meso	14	How important was the Project in contributing to the changes observed in your institution?	The changes would likely have happened anyway: 0 (0.0%); The Project played a minor supporting role: 2 (5.7%); The Project made a meaningful contribution together with other factors: 18 (51.4%); The Project was one of the main drivers of change: 12 (34.3%); The Project was the decisive factor: 3 (8.6%); Not sure: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 35.
Meso	15	What was the main added value of the regional nature of the Project for your institution?	Access to regional knowledge, good practices or peer learning: 22 (64.7%); Exposure to international or regional standards: 20 (58.8%); Participation in regional dialogue or platforms: 15 (44.1%); Better understanding of regional / export-market opportunities: 15 (44.1%); Study visits or exposure to institutional models from other countries: 20 (58.8%); Access to regional trade intelligence or market information: 9 (26.5%); Cross-border business contacts or B2B opportunities: 16 (47.1%); Support to address shared regional trade or market-access bottlenecks: 7 (20.6%); Stronger cooperation with institutions in other countries: 9 (26.5%); Mainly visibility or networking, but limited practical effect: 0 (0.0%); No significant added value: 0 (0.0%); Not applicable: 0 (0.0%); Other / specified: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 34; blank = 1; multiple responses permitted.
Meso	16	Did Project support help your institution better serve women-led businesses or women entrepreneurs?	Yes, significantly: 16 (45.7%); Yes, somewhat: 14 (40.0%); Only to a limited extent: 1 (2.9%); No: 1 (2.9%); Too early to assess: 2 (5.7%); Not sure / not applicable: 1 (2.9%). Nonblank n = 35.
Meso	17	In what ways did the Project help your institution support women-led businesses or women entrepreneurs?	Outreach to women entrepreneurs: 10 (29.4%); Mentorship / coaching: 15 (44.1%); Business-planning support: 13 (38.2%); Access-to-finance information or facilitation: 8 (23.5%); Market access or buyer linkages: 16 (47.1%); Export-readiness support: 14 (41.2%); Certification or standards guidance: 4 (11.8%); E-commerce or digital-marketing support: 6 (17.6%); Leadership or confidence-building: 10 (29.4%); Peer learning or networking: 7 (20.6%); Support for women in green sectors: 7 (20.6%); Support to women's participation in trade fairs / B2B / export promotion: 12 (35.3%); Support to women's leadership in associations, cooperatives or value chains: 4 (11.8%); Not applicable: 2 (5.9%); Other / specified: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 34; blank = 1; multiple responses permitted.
Meso	18	Did Project support help your institution serve youth, start-ups, persons with disabilities or other vulnerable groups?	Yes, significantly: 9 (25.7%); Yes, somewhat: 17 (48.6%); Only to a limited extent: 3 (8.6%); No: 2 (5.7%); Too early to assess: 2 (5.7%); Not sure / not applicable: 2 (5.7%). Nonblank n = 35.
Meso	19	To what extent did Project support strengthen green or sustainable business services?	Not at all: 1 (2.9%); To a limited extent: 1 (2.9%); To some extent: 18 (51.4%); To a considerable extent: 9 (25.7%); To a great extent: 4 (11.4%); Not applicable: 2 (5.7%). Nonblank n = 35.
Meso	20	Which green or sustainability-related areas were supported?	Green entrepreneurship: 16 (47.1%); Resource efficiency: 5 (14.7%); Sustainable production practices: 9 (26.5%); Organic standards or eco-certification: 10 (29.4%); Energy efficiency: 6 (17.6%); Water-saving practices: 6 (17.6%); Waste reduction or recycling: 14 (41.2%); Eco-packaging: 8 (23.5%); Responsible business conduct: 6 (17.6%); Climate-resilient value chains: 7 (20.6%); Climate-smart agriculture or adaptation practices: 12 (35.3%); Sustainable tourism or cultural-heritage preservation: 7 (20.6%); Not applicable: 3 (8.8%); Other / specified: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 34; blank = 1; multiple responses permitted.

Level	Q	Question / matrix item (standardized English wording)	Response distribution (harmonized English categories)
Meso	21	How likely is it that the main improvements supported by the Project will continue after Project completion?	Very unlikely: 0 (0.0%); Unlikely: 1 (2.9%); Uncertain: 4 (11.4%); Likely: 26 (74.3%); Very likely: 4 (11.4%). Nonblank n = 35.
Meso	22	Are Project-supported services or tools embedded in your institution's regular work?	Yes, fully embedded in regular operations: 13 (37.1%); Partly embedded, but still dependent on external / Project support: 14 (40.0%); Used mainly for specific events or activities: 4 (11.4%); Introduced, but not actively used: 4 (11.4%); No: 0 (0.0%); Not applicable: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 35.
Meso	23	What are the main risks to sustainability?	Lack of formal mandate or unclear institutional responsibility: 1 (2.9%); Limited budget: 23 (67.6%); Staff turnover: 10 (29.4%); Weak institutional ownership: 3 (8.8%); Insufficient demand from MSMEs: 1 (2.9%); Limited regional outreach capacity: 2 (5.9%); Weak follow-up with beneficiaries: 5 (14.7%); Digital-tool or platform-maintenance costs: 10 (29.4%); Certification, data-platform or subscription costs: 5 (14.7%); Limited technical capacity: 15 (44.1%); Institutional restructuring: 3 (8.8%); Dependence on donor-funded events or activities: 6 (17.6%); Weak cooperation among institutions: 6 (17.6%); Market volatility or weak private-sector demand: 5 (14.7%); Other / specified: 2 (5.9%). Nonblank n = 34; blank = 1; multiple responses permitted.
Meso	24	What was the most important result of Project support at institutional level?	Substantive response: 35 (100.0%); blank: 0 (0.0%). Verbatim responses are retained in the evaluation records and are not reproduced to protect confidentiality.
Meso	25	What remains the main gap or challenge that future support should address?	Substantive response: 30 (85.7%); blank: 5 (14.3%). Verbatim responses are retained in the evaluation records and are not reproduced to protect confidentiality.
Meso	26	What type of support would be most useful in a future phase?	Policy dialogue / public-private dialogue support: 11 (31.4%); Institutional strengthening: 13 (37.1%); Market intelligence and export-advisory services: 13 (37.1%); Certification and standards support: 14 (40.0%); E-commerce and digital-trade support: 12 (34.3%); B2B, trade-fair and buyer-linkage support: 18 (51.4%); Regional outreach to MSMEs: 6 (17.1%); Women's entrepreneurship and mentorship: 9 (25.7%); Youth entrepreneurship / start-ups: 6 (17.1%); Green entrepreneurship / sustainability services: 12 (34.3%); Value-chain coordination: 10 (28.6%); Monitoring, feedback and results tracking: 2 (5.7%); Regional cooperation and cross-country learning: 9 (25.7%); Other / specified: 0 (0.0%). Nonblank n = 35; multiple responses permitted.

Annex 10.8 Literature reviewed

Aga Khan Foundation. (2026). *Monitoring of Aid for Trade value-chain interventions in Khatlon*. [Internal monitoring report].

Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V final evaluation: Field mission and stakeholder interview notes—Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. (2026). [Unpublished evaluation evidence].

Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V final evaluation: Micro- and meso-level stakeholder surveys—Audited consolidated analysis. (2026). [Unpublished evaluation dataset and analysis].

Banciu, O.. (2023). *Final evaluation of the UNDP project "Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase IV" (2018–2023)*. United Nations Development Programme Istanbul Regional Hub.

Basnett, Y., & Engel, J.. (2013). *Aid for trade in practice: Addressing political economy barriers to improve development outcomes*. In Assessing aid for trade. Commonwealth Secretariat.

Go, E.. (2018). *Contribution and effectiveness of trade facilitation measures: A structured literature review*. Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank Group.

International Trade Centre. (2025). *2025 annual evaluation synthesis report*. Independent Evaluation Unit.

KPMG Tax and Advisory LLC. (2024). *Analysis of green products' value chains and export opportunities in Kyrgyzstan: With a focus on Jalal-Abad, Issyk-Kul, Naryn and Osh regions*. United Nations Development Programme.

KPMG Tax and Advisory LLC. (2024). *Analysis of green products' value chains and export opportunities in Tajikistan: With a focus on Sughd, Khatlon and districts of republican subordination*. United Nations Development Programme.

KPMG Tax and Advisory LLC. (2024). *Analysis of green products' value chains and export opportunities in Uzbekistan: With a focus on Fergana, Andijan and Namangan regions*. United Nations Development Programme.

Kyrgyz Association of Tourism Operators. (2026). *Institutional results profile prepared for the Phase V evaluation*. [Unpublished institutional profile].

Numminen, P.. (2021, May 31). *UNDP Aid for Trade familiarization tour to Kyrgyzstan and B2B meetings, 13–19 May 2021: Final report*. [Internal report].

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, & World Trade Organization. (2024). *Aid for trade at a glance 2024*.

UN Women. (2020). *Good practices in gender-responsive evaluations*. Independent Evaluation and Audit Services.

United Nations Development Programme. (2019). *Food safety management system improvement programme with use of Finnish experience*. [Internal programme document].

United Nations Development Programme. (2021). *Draft country programme document for Uzbekistan (2021–2025) (DP/DCP/UZB/4)*. Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services.

United Nations Development Programme. (2021). *UNDP social and environmental standards*.

United Nations Development Programme. (2021). *UNDP's social and environmental screening procedure*.

United Nations Development Programme. (2022–2026). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V project documentation package*. [Internal project records, including annual workplans, budget revisions, financial reports, Combined Delivery Reports, quality-assurance assessments, risk registers and monitoring records].

United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Design and appraisal stage quality assurance report*. [Internal quality-assurance record].

United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Monitoring and evaluation plan*. [Internal project document].

United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Organigramme per country and terms of reference for project staff*. [Internal project document].

United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Project document*.

United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Country programme document for Tajikistan (2023–2026) (DP/DCP/TAJ/3)*. Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services.

United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Country programme document for the Kyrgyz Republic (2023–2027) (DP/DCP/KGZ/4)*. Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services.

United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Gender equality strategy 2022–2025*.

United Nations Development Programme. (2022–2025). *Regional and country-level market assessments, value-chain studies and analytical products produced under Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V*. [Project knowledge products].

United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Social and environmental screening template: Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V*. [Internal project document].

United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *UNDP Aid for Trade: Study tour to Finland, 23–27 January 2022*. [Internal mission document].

United Nations Development Programme. (2023–2025). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V Project Board meeting minutes*. [Internal meeting records, including meetings of 4 May 2023, 16 May 2024, 3–5 June 2025 and 22 October 2025].

United Nations Development Programme. (2023, October 26). *Amendment No. 1 to the 2023 annual work plan: Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V—Tajikistan*. [Internal project document].

United Nations Development Programme. (2023, August 28–29). *Programme for the Kyrgyz–Finnish Business Forum 2023*. [Event programme].

United Nations Development Programme. (2024). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2023 annual progress report*. [Internal project report].

United Nations Development Programme. (2024). *Quality assurance—Implementation procedure (ASM-05225): Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V*. [Internal quality-assurance record].

United Nations Development Programme. (2025). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2024 annual progress report*. [Internal project report].

United Nations Development Programme. (2025). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Revised results framework*. [Internal project document].

United Nations Development Programme. (2025–2026). *Back-to-office reports on AKF- and UCA-supported activities in Sughd and Khatlon*. UNDP Tajikistan Country Office.

United Nations Development Programme. (2025–2026). *Beneficiary briefs and monitoring reports for supported value chains and enterprises in Kyrgyzstan*. [Internal project documentation].

United Nations Development Programme. (2025). *Investing in gender equality: UNDP Gender Marker—Tracking gender-related investments and expenditures in Quantum*. [Guidance note].

United Nations Development Programme. (2025–2026). *Monitoring, technical-verification and field-visit reports for Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan*. [Internal monitoring documentation].

United Nations Development Programme. (2025). *Output-verification field visit report: Namangan, Andijan and Fergana regions, 30 June–2 July 2025*. UNDP Uzbekistan.

United Nations Development Programme. (2025). *Regional programme document for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (2026–2029)*.

United Nations Development Programme. (2025). *Request for no-cost extension of Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V*. [Letter to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 8 September 2025].

United Nations Development Programme. (2025). *Terms of reference: International consultant for project evaluation—Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V*. [Internal terms of reference].

United Nations Development Programme. (2025–2026). *Updated risk registers: Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V*. [Internal project records].

United Nations Development Programme. (2026). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report*. [Internal project report].

United Nations Development Programme. (2026). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Gender mainstreaming review matrix*. [Internal review matrix].

United Nations Development Programme. (2026). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Targets and results as of 30 June 2026*. [Internal monitoring matrix].

United Nations Development Programme. (2026, July 13). *Progress report—financial: January–June 2026, Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V*. [Draft internal financial report].

United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). *Outcomes of the Kyrgyz–Finnish Business Forum 2023*. [Internal results note].

United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). *UNDP SES toolkit*. Retrieved July 29, 2026, from https://ses-toolkit.info.undp.org/

United Nations Development Programme Independent Evaluation Office. (2024). *Evaluation of UNDP support to private sector development and structural transformation*.

United Nations Development Programme Uzbekistan. (2025). *Informal employment in Uzbekistan*. [Project-supported analytical report].

United Nations Development Programme Uzbekistan. (2025). *Women's entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan: Assessment and recommendations*. [Project-supported analytical report].

World Bank. (2019). *Grow with the flow: An independent evaluation of the World Bank Group's support to facilitating trade 2006–17*. Independent Evaluation Group.

Annex 10.9 Signed UNEG Code of Conduct for the Evaluator

Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form

To be signed by all consultants as individuals (not by or on behalf of a consultancy company) before a contract can be issued.

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: ARKADI TOPITSIN

Name of Consultancy Organisation (where relevant): ____________________

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at (place) on (date) Concord, ON Canada April 8, 2026

Signature: ____________________

---

[i] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V: Project document: Organigramme per country and terms of reference for project staff.

[ii] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V: Project document

[iii] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Gender equality strategy 2022–2025. UNDP; United Nations. (1979). Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. United Nations Treaty Series, 1249, 13; United Nations. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

[iv] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), & World Trade Organization (WTO). (2024). Aid for Trade at a Glance 2024. OECD Publishing and WTO; World Bank. (2019). Grow with the flow: An independent evaluation of the World Bank Group's support to facilitating trade 2006–17. Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank.

[v] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Terms of Reference: International consultant for Project Evaluation — Aid for Trade in Central Asia Phase V

[vi] Go, E. (2018). Contribution and effectiveness of trade facilitation measures: A structured literature review. Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank Group; World Bank. (2019). Grow with the flow: An independent evaluation of the World Bank Group's support to facilitating trade 2006–17. Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Terms of reference: International consultant for Project evaluation, UNDP "Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V" Project.

[vii] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V: 2024 annual progress report*; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V: 2025 annual progress report*.

[viii] United Nations Development Programme. (2024). Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V: 2023 annual progress report; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V: 2024 annual progress report.

[ix] United Nations Development Programme. (2025, September 8). Request for no-cost extension of the Aid for Trade in Central Asia: Phase V. Letter to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

[x] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Project document; United Nations Development Programme. (2024–2026). Annual progress reports and related project documentation; Evaluation Team. (2026). Field mission and stakeholder interview notes: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

[xi] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V: Project document
[xii] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Regional programme document for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (2026–2029)
[xiii] United Nations Development Programme. (2024–2026). Annual progress reports, annual workplans and country-component documentation; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews with national authorities and trade-support institutions in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
[xiv] United Nations Development Programme. (2022–2025). Regional and country-level market assessments, value-chain studies and analytical products produced under Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V.
[xv] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Country programme document for the Kyrgyz Republic (2023–2027)(DP/DCP/KGZ/4). Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services
[xvi] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Country programme document for Tajikistan (2023–2026)(DP/DCP/TAJ/3). Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services; United Nations Development Programme. (2021).
[xvii] Draft country programme document for Uzbekistan (2021–2025)(DP/DCP/UZB/4). Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services.
[xviii] United Nations Development Programme. (2023, May 4). Minutes of the Aid for Trade Phase IV and Phase V Project Board meeting; United Nations Development Programme. (2024, May 16). Minutes of the Aid for Trade in Central Asia Project Board meeting; United Nations Development Programme. (2025, October 22). Minutes of the Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V Project Board meeting.
[xix] Key informant interviews with government institutions, UNDP, trade-support institutions, technical partners, implementing partners, business associations and participating enterprises in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, May–June 2026. Individual comments are not attributed in accordance with the evaluation's confidentiality protocols
[xx] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Project document; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Revised results framework; Evaluation Team. (2026). Field mission and stakeholder interview notes: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
[xxi] United Nations Development Programme. (2024–2026). Annual progress reports, annual workplans and implementation documentation for Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V.
[xxii] United Nations Development Programme. (2024). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2023 annual progress report. UNDP; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2024 annual progress report. UNDP; evaluation interviews with ITC and UNECE representatives, June 2026.
[xxiii] United Nations Development Programme. (2024). Aid for Trade in Central Asia (Phase V): 2023 annual progress report; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia (Phase V): 2024 annual progress report.
[xxiv] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V: 2024 annual progress report; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia – Phase V: 2025 annual progress report
[xxv] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Project document; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia (Phase V): 2024 annual progress report; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia (Phase V): 2025 annual progress report; Evaluation Team. (2026). Stakeholder interview and validation notes: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
[xxvi] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia (Phase V): 2024 annual progress report; United Nations Development Programme. (2024, May 16). Aid for Trade in Central Asia Project Board meeting minutes.
[xxvii] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia (Phase V): 2024 annual progress report; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia (Phase V): 2025 annual progress report; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews with UNDP Country Offices, national institutions and technical partners
[xxviii] United Nations Development Programme. (2025, June 3). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V Project Board meeting minutes.
[xxix] United Nations Development Programme. (2025, June 3). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V Project Board meeting minutes; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia (Phase V): 2025 annual progress report.
[xxx] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Project document (pp. 13–16, 31); United Nations Development Programme. (2025, June 3). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V Project Board meeting minutes (pp. 5–6); United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia (Phase V): 2025 annual progress report (pp. 91–92); Evaluation Team. (2026). Tajikistan and Uzbekistan stakeholder interview notes.
[xxxi] Government of Finland. (2021). Report on development policy extending across parliamentary terms (Publications of the Finnish Government 2021:29). Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.
[xxxii] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). UNDP Aid for Trade: Study tour to Finland, 23–27 January 2022 [Internal mission document]; United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Project document [Project document].
[xxxiii] United Nations Development Programme. (2023, August 28–29). Programme for the Kyrgyz–Finnish Business Forum 2023 [Event programme]; United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). Outcomes of the Kyrgyz–Finnish Business Forum 2023 [Internal results note]; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase

V: 2024 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report].

[xxxiv] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2024 annual progress report [Internal project report].

[xxxv] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2025, October 22). Minutes of the Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V Project Board meeting [Internal meeting record].

[xxxvi] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report

[xxxvii] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2024 annual progress report (Kyrgyzstan output). UNDP; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report (Kyrgyzstan output).

[xxxviii] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2024 annual progress report (Kyrgyzstan output). UNDP; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report (Kyrgyzstan output). UNDP; Kyrgyz Association of Tourism Organizations. (2026). Institutional results profile prepared for the Phase V evaluation.

[xxxix] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report (Tajikistan output). UNDP; evaluation interviews and field observations with MEDT, the Agency for Export, regional authorities, implementing partners, farmers, aggregation actors and processors in Dushanbe, Khatlon and Sughd, May 2026.

[xl] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2024 annual progress report (Uzbekistan output). UNDP; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report (Uzbekistan output). UNDP; evaluation interviews with MIIT, the Agency for Technical Regulation, trade-support institutions, implementing partners and enterprises in Tashkent, Namangan and Andijan, June 2026.

[xli] Evaluation interview with representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, May 2026.

[xlii] Evaluation interview with representatives of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, May 2026

[xliii] Evaluation interviews with representatives of the Agency for Export and the Agency of Innovation and Digital Technologies under the Government of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, May 2026.

[xliv] Evaluation interviews with representatives of the Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade and the International Trade Centre, Tashkent, June 2026

[xlv] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Updated risk register. UNDP.

[xlvi] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report. UNDP; evaluation interview with the International Trade Centre, June 2026

[xlvii] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2024 annual progress report*. UNDP; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). *Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report*. UNDP; evaluation interviews with KyrgyzExport and the Phase V Kyrgyzstan team, Bishkek, May 2026.

[xlviii] Evaluation interviews with KyrgyzExport, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and sector associations, Bishkek, May 2026.

[xlix] Evaluation interviews with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Agency on Technical Regulation of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, June 2026

[l] Evaluation interview with the Trade Development Company, Tashkent, June 2026

[li] KPMG Tax and Advisory LLC. (2024). Analysis of green products' value chains and export opportunities in Kyrgyzstan: With a focus on Jalal-Abad, Issyk-Kul, Naryn and Osh regions. UNDP; KPMG Tax and Advisory LLC. (2024). Analysis of green products' value chains and export opportunities in Tajikistan: With a focus on Sughd, Khatlon and districts of republican subordination. UNDP; KPMG Tax and Advisory LLC. (2024). Analysis of green products' value chains and export opportunities in Uzbekistan: With a focus on Fergana, Andijan and Namangan regions. UNDP

[lii] Evaluation interviews and field observations with implementing partners, honey processors, cooperatives and beekeepers in Bishkek and Issyk-Kul, May 2026; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report. UNDP.

[liii] Evaluation interviews and field observations with the Aga Khan Foundation, aggregation-centre operators, dehkan farmers, One Village One Product (OVOP) actors and processing enterprises in Khatlon and Sughd, May 2026.

[liv] Evaluation interviews with implementing partners and supported enterprises in Tashkent, Namangan and Andijan, June 2026; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report. UNDP

[lv] United Nations Development Programme. (2026, July 13). Progress report—financial: January–June 2026, Aid for Trade in Central Asia (Phase V) [Draft internal financial report]

[lvi] United Nations Development Programme. (2022–2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V project documentation package, including the Project Document, annual workplans and budget revisions, annual and financial reports, Combined Delivery Reports, Project Board minutes, quality-assurance assessments, risk registers, monitoring reports and field records. UNDP.

[lvii] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Project document: Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V. UNDP; United Nations Development Programme Istanbul Regional Hub. (2023–2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia Project Board meeting minutes. UNDP.

[lviii] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Organigramme per country and terms of reference for project staff: Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V. UNDP

[lix] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Updated risk register: Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V. UNDP.
[lx] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Back-to-office report: Monitoring visit to AKF-supported activities in Sughd. UNDP Tajikistan Country Office; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Back-to-office report: Monitoring visit to AKF-supported activities in Khatlon. UNDP Tajikistan Country Office
[lxi] United Nations Development Programme. (2025–2026). Aid for Trade Phase V monitoring, technical-verification and field-visit reports for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. UNDP.
[lxii] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Monitoring and evaluation plan: Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V. UNDP
[lxiii] United Nations Development Programme. (2025–2026). Aid for Trade Phase V monitoring, technical-verification and field-visit reports for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. UNDP.
[lxiv] United Nations Development Programme. (2025–2026). Back-to-office reports on monitoring of AKF- and UCA-supported activities in Sughd and Khatlon. UNDP Tajikistan Country Office.
[lxv] United Nations Development Programme. (2024). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2023 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2024 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; UNDP Aid for Trade Phase V final evaluation. (2026). Key informant interviews and field observations
[lxvi] United Nations Development Programme Istanbul Regional Hub. (2024). Minutes of the Aid for Trade Phase IV and Phase V Project Board meeting, 16 May 2024; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report.
[lxvii] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; Evaluation team. (2026). Interviews with national institutions and quality-infrastructure bodies
[lxviii] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report[Internal project report]; UNDP Aid for Trade Phase V final evaluation. (2026). Interviews with women entrepreneurs, enterprise beneficiaries and business organizations
[lxix] United Nations Development Programme. (2024–2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V annual progress reports [Internal project reports]; Evaluation team. (2026). Interviews with ITC, UNECE, CAWG members, tourism institutions and regional stakeholder
[lxx] United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2024 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; Evaluation team. (2026). Analysis of the Project results framework and enterprise-level results
[lxxi] UNDP Aid for Trade Phase V final evaluation. (2026). Field observations and key informant interviews with supported enterprises, producer groups, aggregators, processors and implementing partners in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
[lxxii] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report; confidential evaluation interviews and field observations with supported enterprises and producer groups, May 2026.
[lxxiii] United Nations Development Programme. (2024). Analysis of green products, value chains and export opportunities in Tajikistan, with a focus on Sughd, Khatlon and the Districts of Republican Subordination; confidential evaluation interviews with e-commerce institutions, business-support organizations and supported enterprises, May 2026.
[lxxiv] Evaluation team. (2026). Interviews and group discussions with women entrepreneurs, rural producers, women's business organizations and enterprise-support partners
[lxxv] United Nations Development Programme. (2024). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2023 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2024 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Phase V—Targets and results as of 30 June 2026 [Internal monitoring matrix]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Field-mission and stakeholder-interview notes: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
[lxxvi] World Bank. (2019). Grow with the flow: An independent evaluation of the World Bank Group's support to facilitating trade 2006–17. Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank; Go, E. (2018). Contribution and effectiveness of trade facilitation measures: A structured literature review. Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank Group.
[lxxvii] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Phase V—Targets and results as of 30 June 2026 [Internal monitoring matrix]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews with the Ministry of Economy and Commerce, State Customs Service, KyrgyzExport, tourism-sector institutions and quality-infrastructure bodies in Kyrgyzstan
[lxxviii] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2025, October 22). Aid for Trade in Central Asia Phase V Project Board meeting minutes [Internal meeting record]; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Phase V—Targets and results as of 30 June 2026 [Internal monitoring matrix]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Agency for Export, trade-support institutions and other national partners in Tajikistan
[lxxix] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme Uzbekistan. (2025). Women's entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan: Assessment and recommendations; United Nations Development Programme Uzbekistan. (2025). Informal employment in Uzbekistan; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Phase V—Targets and results as of 30 June 2026 [Internal monitoring matrix]; Evaluation

Team. (2026). Interviews with MIIT, the Agency on Technical Regulation, research institutions, trade-support organizations and private-sector stakeholders in Uzbekistan

[lxxx] Evaluation Team. (2026). Key informant interviews with senior government officials, trade-support institutions, development partners and private-sector representatives in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

[lxxxi] United Nations Development Programme. (2024). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2023 annual progress report[Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2024 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Field-mission and stakeholder-interview notes: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

[lxxxii]Evaluation team: Micro- and meso-level stakeholder surveys—Audited consolidated analysis. (2026). [Unpublished evaluation dataset and analysis]. Data were collected from late June to mid-July 2026.. The micro survey comprised a purposive sample of 137 respondents and is used as corroborating rather than representative evidence.

[lxxxiii] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2025–2026). Beneficiary briefs and monitoring reports for supported value chains and enterprises in Kyrgyzstan [Internal project documentation]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews and field observations with supported enterprises, tourism providers, artisan groups and implementing partners in Kyrgyzstan

[lxxxiv] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; Aga Khan Foundation. (2026). Monitoring of Aid for Trade value-chain interventions in Khatlon [Internal monitoring report]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews and field observations with producers, consolidators, processors and implementing partners in Tajikistan

[lxxxv] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Technical monitoring and output-verification reports for grant-supported enterprises in the Fergana Valley [Internal monitoring documentation]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews and field observations with supported enterprises and implementing partners in Uzbekistan

[lxxxvi] Evaluation Team. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V final evaluation: Field mission and stakeholder interview notes—Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan [Unpublished evaluation evidence]; Grushevsky, A. (2011). Evaluation of Component II of Phase I of the Wider Europe Aid for Trade Project: Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Support to economic development along trade corridors. United Nations Development Programme; Torosyan, G. (2019). Aid for Trade project in Central Asia, Phase III (2014–2018): Evaluation report. United Nations Development Programme; Banciu, O. (2023). Final evaluation of the UNDP project Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase IV (2018–2023). United Nations Development Programme, Istanbul Regional Hub.

[lxxxvii] Grushevsky, A. (2011). Evaluation of Component II of Phase I of the Wider Europe Aid for Trade Project: Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Support to economic development along trade corridors. United Nations Development Programme.

[lxxxviii] Grushevsky, A. (2011). Evaluation of Component II of Phase I of the Wider Europe Aid for Trade Project: Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Support to economic development along trade corridors. United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Development Programme. (2016). Wider Europe: Aid for Trade for Central Asia, South Caucasus and Western CIS (Phase II): Final evaluation report.

[lxxxix] United Nations Development Programme. (2016). Wider Europe: Aid for Trade for Central Asia, South Caucasus and Western CIS (Phase II): Final evaluation report.

[xc] Torosyan, G. (2019). Aid for Trade project in Central Asia, Phase III (2014–2018): Evaluation report. United Nations Development Programme; Banciu, O. (2023). Final evaluation of the UNDP project Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase IV (2018–2023). United Nations Development Programme, Istanbul Regional Hub.

[xci] Torosyan, G. (2019). Aid for Trade project in Central Asia, Phase III (2014–2018): Evaluation report. United Nations Development Programme; Evaluation Team. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V final evaluation: Field mission and stakeholder interview notes—Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan [Unpublished evaluation evidence].

[xcii] Torosyan, G. (2019). Aid for Trade project in Central Asia, Phase III (2014–2018): Evaluation report. United Nations Development Programme.

[xciii] Banciu, O. (2023). Final evaluation of the UNDP project Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase IV (2018–2023). United Nations Development Programme, Istanbul Regional Hub.

[xciv] Evaluation Team. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V final evaluation: Field mission and stakeholder interview notes—Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan [Unpublished evaluation evidence].

[xcv] Grushevsky, A. (2011). Evaluation of Component II of Phase I of the Wider Europe Aid for Trade Project: Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Support to economic development along trade corridors. United Nations Development Programme; Torosyan, G. (2019). Aid for Trade project in Central Asia, Phase III (2014–2018): Evaluation report. United Nations Development Programme; Banciu, O. (2023). Final evaluation of the UNDP project Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase IV (2018–2023). United Nations Development Programme, Istanbul Regional Hub.

[xcvi] UN Women. (2020). Good practices in gender-responsive evaluations. Independent Evaluation and Audit Services; United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Gender equality strategy 2022–2025*. UNDP; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Investing in gender equality: UNDP Gender Marker—Tracking gender-related investments and expenditures in Quantum: Guidance note for UNDP staff. UNDP

[xcvii] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Project document; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Gender mainstreaming review matrix: Aid for Trade [Internal review matrix]; United Nations Development Programme. (2023–2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V annual progress reports
[xcviii] Evaluation team: Micro- and meso-level stakeholder surveys—Audited consolidated analysis. (2026). [Unpublished evaluation dataset and analysis]. Data were collected from late June to mid-July 2026. The purposive surveys are used as corroborating rather than representative evidence.
[xcix] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2025, October 22). Aid for Trade in Central Asia Phase V Project Board meeting minutes [Internal meeting record]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews with women entrepreneurs, mentors, business-support organizations and Project personnel in Kyrgyzstan
[c] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme Uzbekistan. (2025). Women's entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan: Assessment and recommendations; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews with women entrepreneurs, business associations, implementing partners and Project personnel in Uzbekistan
[ci] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews with the University of Central Asia, women entrepreneurs, implementing partners and Project personnel in Tajikistan
[cii] United Nations Development Programme. (2025–2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V annual progress reports [Internal project reports]; United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Gender mainstreaming review matrix: Aid for Trade [Internal review matrix]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews with public institutions, women's business organizations, implementing partners and Project personnel across Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
[ciii]Evaluation team: Micro- and meso-level stakeholder surveys—Audited consolidated analysis. (2026). [Unpublished evaluation dataset and analysis]. Data were collected from late June to mid-July 2026.
[civ] United Nations Development Programme. (2025–2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V annual progress reports and beneficiary briefs [Internal project documents]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Field-mission and stakeholder-interview notes
[cv] United Nations Development Programme. (2025–2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V annual progress reports, Project Board minutes and beneficiary briefs [Internal project documents]; Evaluator. (2026). Field observations and beneficiary interviews
[cvi] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: Project document. KPMG Tax and Advisory LLC. (2024). Analysis of green products' value chains and export opportunities in Kyrgyzstan: With a focus on Jalal-Abad, Issyk-Kul, Naryn and Osh regions. United Nations Development Programme; KPMG Tax and Advisory LLC. (2024). Analysis of green products' value chains and export opportunities in Tajikistan: With a focus on Sughd, Khatlon and districts of republican subordination. United Nations Development Programme; KPMG Tax and Advisory LLC. (2024). Analysis of green products' value chains and export opportunities in Uzbekistan: With a focus on Fergana, Andijan and Namangan regions. United Nations Development Programme.
[cvii] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; Aga Khan Foundation. (2026). Monitoring of Aid for Trade value-chain interventions in Khatlon [Internal monitoring report]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews and field observations with producers, consolidators, processors and implementing partners in Tajikistan [Unpublished evaluation evidence].
[cviii] United Nations Development Programme. (2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V: 2025 annual progress report [Internal project report]; United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Technical monitoring and output-verification reports for grant-supported enterprises in the Fergana Valley [Internal monitoring documentation]; Evaluation Team. (2026). Interviews and field observations with supported enterprises and implementing partners in Uzbekistan [Unpublished evaluation evidence].
[cix] United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Social and environmental screening template: Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V, [Internal project document]; United Nations Development Programme. (2022–2026). Aid for Trade in Central Asia—Phase V project documentation package [Internal project records, including quality-assurance assessments, risk registers, monitoring reports and beneficiary-feedback records].
[cx] United Nations Development Programme. (2021). UNDP social and environmental standards; United Nations Development Programme. (2021). UNDP's social and environmental screening procedure; United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). UNDP SES toolkit
[cxi] Basnett, Y., & Engel, J. (2013). Aid for Trade in Practice: Addressing Political Economy Barriers to Improve Development Outcomes. In Assessing Aid for Trade. Commonwealth Secretariat.
[cxii] United Nations Development Programme. (2021). UNDP social and environmental standards.
[cxiii] United Nations Development Programme. (2021). UNDP's social and environmental screening procedure.
[cxiv] Such as accelerated digitalization and e-commerce, restructuring of global value chains, and extensive use of big data for trade and market intelligence
cxv Given that this is the final phase of a programme that has been implemented continuously since 2009, the assessment should also reflect on the cumulative and transformative effects of the initiative over time, drawing on available evidence and findings from previous Project phases - including Phase III and IV (since 2014 when the Project focused specifically on Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan).
[cxvi] Youth is defined as 'persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years' (as defined by the United Nations).
[cxvii] The UNDP regionality principles are: (a) promotion of regional public goods based on strengthened regional cooperation and integration; (b) management of cross-border externalities and spillovers that are best addressed collaboratively on an intercountry

basis; (c) advancement of awareness, dialogue and action on sensitive and/or emerging development issues that benefit strongly from multi-country experiences and perspectives; (d) promotion of experimentation and innovation that overcome institutional, financial and/or informational barriers that may be too high for an individual country to surmount; and (e) generation and sharing of development knowledge, experience and expertise, so that countries can connect to, and benefit from, relevant experiences from across the region and beyond.

cxviii Outcome Harvesting is a participatory evaluation approach that identifies, verifies, and analyzes the changes in behavior, relationships, activities, or practices (outcomes) that have occurred, whether expected or unexpected, and works backward to determine how and to what extent an intervention contributed to these changes. Rather than measuring progress against predefined indicators, it "harvests" evidence of what actually happened and explores causal linkages to the Project's actions, providing insight into contribution, influence, and contextual dynamics.