JOINT
SDG
FUND



COVER PAGE

MPTFO Project Reference Number	*(Leave blank, for automatic population in Quantum)*

Country	Uzbekistan
Region	Europe and Central Asia
Joint programme title:	Accelerating decent jobs and social protection for a just transition to formality in Uzbekistan
Duration:	*24 months*
Anticipated start and end dates:	*10/2024 to 10/2026*
Short description:	*The primary focus of the joint programme is a just transition to formalisation in Uzbekistan.* *The project aims to reduce informal employment, by formalising enterprises and jobs, expanding social insurance to informal and migrant workers, and piloting integrated approaches between employment and social protection.* *Expected results include increased income security, decreased decent work deficit, and increased government revenues, thereby improving the quality and sustainability of essential public services in particular social protection for the most vulnerable and employment promotion. the JP intends in particular to contribute the following two results: (1) access for workers to decent and productive formal employment opportunities and the acceleration of transition of previously informal enterprises and jobs (in particular in the care and construction sectors) to formality, and (2) the extension of inclusive social protection coverage to workers in the informal economy, and those currently outside of the labour force with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, including women, youth, PWDs and migrant works.* *The joint programme aligns with SDG targets on poverty reduction, gender equality, decent work, and public finance stability, contributing to the current UNSDCF outcomes (3 and 4) aimed at improving access to livelihoods and social protection for youth, women, and vulnerable groups.* *By addressing systemic and capacity constraints, the project will create an enabling environment through improved regulatory frameworks, policies (engine room 1), capacity building at scale (engine room 2) and market-ready solutions (engine room 3). It strengthens business ecosystems, leverages public policies to formalise informal workers, and extends social insurance schemes to the missing middle.* *The scale of impact includes increased tax revenue from formalised enterprises, greater coverage and comprehensiveness of social insurance, and enhanced capacity for public service provision to workers in the informal economy and other target vulnerable groups. This is aligned with national priorities, notably "Uzbekistan 2030" and the structural reforms engaged by national authorities to improve the well-being of the population.* *The proposed project unlocks co-financing of the government worth USD 75.35 million (e.g., government-backed loans to entrepreneurs and*

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	co-financing of research), and increases investment and tax revenue of the government by an estimated USD 7 million.
Joint Programme team:	
Resident Coordinator	Sabine Machl, sabine.macjl@un.org
Joint Program RCO focal point	Zarif Jumaev, zarif.jumaev@un.org
Lead PUNO ILO JP Focal point	ILO, Mikhail Pouchkin, Director, Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, pouchkin@ilo.org
UNDP JP Focal point	UNDP, Anas Fayyad Qarman, RR a.i. UNDP in Uzbekistan, anas.qarman@undp.org
UNICEF JP Focal point	UNICEF, Regina Castillo, UNICEF Representative in Uzbekistan, recastillo@unicef.org
UNWOMEN JP Focal point	UN WOMEN, Dr. Ceren Guven-Gures, Country Programme Manager, ceren.gures@unwomen.org

Total budget:	$ 2,263,380
Source of funds:	
UN Joint SDG Fund	$ 1,800,000
PUNO 1 co-funding (ILO)	$ 193,380
PUNO 2 co-funding (UNDP)	$ 75,000
PUNO 3 co-funding (UNICEF)	$ 125,000
PUNO 4 co-funding (UNWOMEN)	$ 70,000
Government co-funding	N/A
International donor co-funding	N/A
Other sources co-funding	N/A

Legal context	The legal basis for the joint programme is the Legal Annex for the signed United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2021-2025).

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT AND SIGNATURES

By signing this Joint Programme document, all signatories commit to work together in a spirit of partnership to achieve the results identified in the results framework, work plan and budget.

Co-Chairs of JP Steering Committee	
Government representative	**UN Resident Coordinator**
Name of Ministry or Department: National Agency for Social Protection *Name of Representative* *Signature* *Date*	*Name:* ***Sabine Machl*** *Signature* DocuSigned by: Sabine Machl 562DF9A5926B418... *Date* 05-Jul-2024
Participating UN Organizations	
Name of Representative: ***Mikhail Pouchkin*** *Signature* *Name of Organization:* ***ILO*** *Date* 04.07.2024	*Name of Representative:* ***Anas Fayyad Qarman, RR a.i.*** *Signature* DocuSigned by: Anas Fayyad Qarman 8C21B6E712D34C9... *Name of Organization:* ***UNDP*** *Date* 05-Jul-2024

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Name of Representative: ***Regina Castillo, Representative, Head of Office*** *Signature* DocuSigned by: Regina Maria Castillo 583BB3BAC3BF4E2... *Name of Organization: UNICEF* *Date* 05-Jul-2024	*Name of Representative:* ***Belan Sanz Luque, Regional Director*** *Signature* DocuSigned by: FF13A20B8A564E8... *Name of Organization: UNWOMEN* *Date* 05-Jul-2024

JOINT PROGRAMME PROFILE

Contribution to Cooperation Framework Outcome(s) and Output(s)	**STRATEGIC PRIORITY B**: Inclusive human capital development leading to health, well-being and resilient prosperity. **Outcome 3.** By 2025, youth, women and vulnerable groups benefit from improved access to livelihoods, decent work and expanded opportunities generated by inclusive and equitable economic growth (national SDGs: 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, and 11) ● Work Employment Readiness, skills (NEET Youth, Women, PWD) ● Enabling business environment (entrepreneurship, youth, startups, tourism, cultural products) ● Non-traditional forms of employment (PWD) ● Active Labour Markets Policies (e.g., Work Assistance, Framework for Youth and Women) **Outcome 4.** By 2025, the most vulnerable will benefit from enhanced access to gender sensitive quality health, education, and social services (national SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 16). ● Social Protection: Build Capacity of the GoU, social partners, and CSOs to introduce and deliver progressively universal social security benefits, multi-sector response to gender-based violence and community-based family services. ● Education: Workforce education, qualifications, standards, and training curriculum
SDG Targets directly addressed by the Joint Programme	SDG 1, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG10, SDG 17
Expected key results of the Joint Programme	**Result 1:** Workers have access to decent and productive formal employment opportunities and the transition of previously informal enterprises and jobs (in particular in the care and construction sectors) is accelerated. **Result 2:** The extension of inclusive social protection coverage to workers in the informal economy, and those currently outside of the labour force with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, is accelerated
Overview of transformative change	
- Integration	Integration across decent work creation, formalisation, and social protection extension is ensured through the combination of mutually reinforcing and complementary interventions across different levels: analysis, policy, and programme targeting enterprises and workers, while incorporating the specific needs and vulnerabilities of target groups. Integration is also reinforced through linkages with the broader GA roadmap and with the other SDG transitions the roadmap prioritises and aims to accelerate, namely the green (climate) and digital transitions.
- Scale	Impact at scale of joint programme outputs is achieved through the implementation of catalytic interventions that kickstart change in the broader business environment, labour market, and social protection system. This is ensured through the expansion of private and public financing, creating new incentives for formalisation and social protection extension, and overall acceleration of decent work

	objectives. To achieve impact at scale, the JP aims for an estimated US$ 75.35 million in parallel co-financing. As a result, the JP aims to reach 300,000 informal workers, 300,000 people with the extension of legal coverage, and 720,000 low income individuals with social assistance.
- Speed	Removing the obstacles, including institutional, financial, administrative, informational, etc., to decent job creation, formalisation, and social protection extension will accelerate progress towards the achievement of relevant SDGs at a much higher pace. Progress will be sped up for target groups, including for women, whose economic inclusion, labour market participation, and social protection coverage will be accelerated. This acceleration will be possible thanks to the expansion of the fiscal space through the achievement, in the first 9 months, of the following activities: increase in the incentives for enterprises to formalise, actuarial analysis of the social insurance system, building of actuarial capacities, analysis of vulnerabilities and barrier for uncovered or under-covered groups.
- Local context-specific	The joint programme aims at ensuring local context-specificity of formalisation and social protection extension interventions through the dissemination of information to local business, working with and building the capacities of social partners at the local level, particularly of local government authorities, and introducing a regional focus to some interventions based on the specific and localised needs/vulnerabilities.
- Sustainability	The sustainability of programme impacts is ensured through the increase in available capital for business development and growth, the expansion of the evidence and data base, which will contribute to accurate decision-making in the long run, as well as the production of actuarial analyses, which will ensure the fiscal sustainability of the social insurance and social protection systems beyond the duration of the programme. Additionally, complementary capacity-building activities of relevant institutions, including of NASP, will ensure programme results are sustained.
Anticipated direct beneficiaries	*Direct beneficiaries* - *Workers in the informal economy reached, including those belonging to vulnerable groups: estimated. 300,000 (or 5% of the informal workforce)* - *People legally covered by social insurance, including those belonging to vulnerable groups: estimated. 300,000.* - *People effectively covered by social insurance, including those belonging to vulnerable groups: estimated. 30,000.* - *Low-income individuals newly covered by social assistance programmes: 720,000 (or 10% of people in the lowest income quintile)* - *Women trained to form cooperatives of care workers: 30.* - *Capacity building initiatives: 300 (150 women, 150 men)* *Indirect beneficiaries* - *Informal construction workers to be formalised: 8,000.* - *Women care workers are formalised through joining cooperatives: a minimum of 300.*
Anticipated financial leverage	*The total amount in USD* - Co-funding (within the JP budget): 463,380 US$ - Co-financing (parallel to JP budget): Estimated US$ 75.35 million
Localization marker score	12

The primary focus on SDG Transitions in the JP *Select all that are incorporated into the JP strategy and results.*	☒ Digital Transformation ☐ Food Systems ☒ Decent Jobs and Universal Social Protection ☐Energy Access and Affordability ☐ Transforming Education ☒ Climate, Biodiversity, Pollution
Main engine room actions that the JP supports *Select all that are incorporated into the JP strategy and results.*	☒ Shifts across policy and regulatory frameworks ☒ Capacity building at scale ☒ Deal room (financing mix) ☒ Pipeline of bankable and market-ready projects

Contributions to Jobs and Social Protection Transition

GA policy priorities addressed by the JP	☒ Social protection extension including access to health care. ☒ Decent jobs creation. ☐ Skills development. ☒ Support to small and microenterprises. ☐ Others please specify: .....
Just transitions that this JP enables	☒ Formalization of employment and enterprises ☐ Agri-food systems transformation. ☐ Just Energy Transitions. ☐ Climate change adaptation and mitigation. ☒ Structural transformation of the economy (specify sectors: .....) ☐ Demographic transition leading to specific care support. ☒ Access to the labour market for specific groups (e.g. youth, women, persons with disabilities) ☐ Others please specify: .....

JOINT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Executive Summary

The Government of Uzbekistan has committed, at the highest levels, to implementing the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions (GA), a UN initiative launched in 2021. Through policy analysis and stakeholder dialogue, national stakeholders have identified four key areas for the GA country roadmap: formalisation, inclusion, transitions to a green and digital economy. This proposed joint programme focuses on the first area: formalisation.

In 2019, the informal economy in Uzbekistan accounted for 52.1% of GDP. Approximately 40% of the employed population is engaged in informal employment, leading to significant missed state revenue—estimated at UZS 30 trillion (USD 2.4 billion) annually. This shortfall undermines the government's ability to fund essential public services including social protection and employment services. Workers in the informal economy often lack social security coverage, with notable disparities between genders and sectors. In the private sector, 61% of women and 73% of men lack social security coverage, with even higher rates in small private enterprises. Vulnerable groups such as women, youth, migrants, and people with disabilities are disproportionately affected by informality and employment vulnerability. Informal employment is characterised by low wages, long hours, unsafe working conditions, and a lack of social and labour protections, with women particularly vulnerable due to their overrepresentation in this sector.

The proposed joint programme aims to accelerate Uzbekistan's transition to formality through two main pathways: improving access to decent work and formal employment and extending social protection

coverage to informal workers and other vulnerable groups through universal, comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable social protection. To achieve these goals, the project will facilitate formal enterprise development and job creation, promote the formalisation of informal workers (particularly in the care and construction sectors), expand social insurance schemes to include informal and migrant workers, and pilot integrated approaches to social protection extension.

The project aims to reduce inequality and poverty, enhance social and economic inclusion, and improve social cohesion and general well-being. By formalising enterprises and jobs, and extending social insurance coverage, the project is expected to increase government revenue, thus enhancing the quality and sustainability of vital public services.

The project supports multiple SDG targets, particularly those related to poverty reduction, gender equality, decent work, social protection, and public finance stability. It is well integrated with Uzbekistan's current UNSDCF, contributing to outcomes that benefit youth, women, and vulnerable groups through improved access to livelihoods, decent work, and quality health, education, and social services.

Following the GA's approaches, the project addresses systemic and capacity constraints by creating an enabling environment through improved regulatory frameworks, policies, and market-ready solutions, and enhances the capacity of key actors to support Uzbekistan’s transition to formality. It strengthens business development ecosystems to expand the formal economy, leverages public policies to formalise informal workers, and extends contribution-based social insurance while strengthening social protection systems and sustainability.

The project fosters collaboration among partners, aligning their efforts to achieve the GA roadmap's objectives and goals. It aims to improve public finance by increasing the number of taxpayers and social insurance contributors, thereby boosting the government's capacity to provide essential services. The project initiatives are designed to fit local contexts and generate lasting impacts beyond the project's timeline.

The project beneficiaries include women, youth, workers in the informal economy, migrant workers and other vulnerable groups. Government entities, social partners, and selected civil society organisations will also benefit from capacity-building activities. The JP will coordinate with technical partners, including financial institutions and the broader UNCT to ensure a broad coalition of support and expertise.

In order to achieve significant impact, the JP seeks to secure approximately US$ 75.35 million in co-financing. The projected beneficiaries of programme activities are 300,000 informal workers, 300,000 individuals with extended legal coverage, 720,000 low-income people with increased access to social assistance.

In summary, the proposed project in Uzbekistan aims to significantly reduce informality by enhancing formal employment and extending social protection, thereby contributing to the country's economic and social development. By addressing systemic challenges and leveraging collaborative efforts, the project seeks to create a sustainable impact that aligns with national development objectives, global development goals and ultimately improves the overall well-being of the population.

2. Baseline and Situation Analysis

2.1 CCA and CF context summary

With the GNI per capita at USD2,190, Uzbekistan is a lower-middle income country with a population of

36 million people. The country has set a goal of halving income poverty by 2026 and achieving upper-middle-income status by 2030.

Since 2017, the country has been undertaking extensive structural reforms, opening up and the economy and enhancing the private sector's prospects towards a more competitive market economy. Some of the most significant measures include exchange rate unification in 2018, tax reforms in 2019, and others. Important ongoing reforms include restructuring of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), privatisation, reforms in the energy sector (including of tariffs), and in agriculture, which employs roughly one fourth of the workforce in the country.

In the social protection area, the government has made significant steps to expand the coverage of social benefits schemes, while also improving the delivery systems including through the introduction of digital solutions. The single registry on social protection, introduced 4 years ago, with the support from the UN and World Bank, has helped increase the outreach of social benefits schemes by three times serving as an important cushion in response to COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, the President ordered the establishment of a new National Agency for Social Protection which was mandated to improve the delivery of social protection services, while reducing fragmentation and strengthening coordination.

The comprehensive reforms have helped Uzbekistan's economy maintain high growth rates in recent years, which were only temporarily slowed down by the pandemic in 2020. In 2023, Uzbekistan's economy grew by 6 percent, fuelled by investment, private consumption, and exports, continuing on the pre-pandemic trajectory. Monetary poverty declined to 11% in 2023, lifting 1.6 million people out of poverty.

Despite progress, income inequalities in Uzbekistan, as measured by the Gini coefficient, have grown since 2020, from 0.276 in 2020 to 0.288 in 2023 (or as high as 0.360 according to WB estimates). Inequalities manifest themselves as well in access to basic services such as health, education, drinking water, sanitation, nutrition, energy, and Internet, driven by both economic divergences and persistent gender inequalities, in the economy and labour market, etc.

Informality remains a significant obstacle to inclusive growth and the extension of social protection, and its persistence is due to the structural role it plays in Uzbekistan's economy as a livelihood buffer, as well as the lack of positive incentives for enterprises and workers to transition to the formal economy. The barriers of access to formal employment and social protection are higher for women, migrant workers, the youth, and people with disability, due to continued frictions in accessing the labour market and decent work opportunities.

Of significant concern for macroeconomic stability is the record-level fiscal deficit resulting from increased government spending, subsidies, and generous tax benefits. Although subsidies and tax benefits are gradually being phased out (i.e., in transportation and the energy sectors), the fiscal deficit may again exceed 5 percent of GDP in 2024, which might prompt the reduction of critical investments (e.g., in social sectors), accumulating debt and hindering economic growth.

In September 2023, the Government of Uzbekistan adopted the new "Uzbekistan-2030" Strategy - a comprehensive long-term national development plan with the objective of elevating Uzbekistan to the ranks of upper-middle-income country, which will entail high levels of growth, investments, and structural reform: USD250 billion are envisaged by 2030, of which USD 110 billion is to be mobilised from external sources and another USD 40 billion from public-private partnerships (PPPs).

2.2 Global Accelerator roadmap

The government of the Republic of Uzbekistan (GoU) expressed its interest to join the GA initiative as a pathfinder country in June 2023 at the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference. Subsequently, the Prime Minister issued an official letter to UNRC and ILO DG confirming the commitment on August 23, 2023. The speech by the President at the UN General Assembly reiterated the national commitment.

The GoU has established the National Coordination Council (NCC) on Global Accelerator for Uzbekistan to steer the national process of the GA Roadmap development and its implementation, created a Working Group consisting of technical staff members of relevant agencies to oversee this process, as well as requested the GA country team to support this process. (See following section for details on key stakeholders).

Additionally, the Institute for Macroeconomic and Regional Studies under the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan has been contracted to work on the policy mapping and gaps analysis for the Global Accelerator, whose results have been incorporated into the roadmap.

An initial roadmap was developed by a national drafting team consisting of core members of the Working Group and enriched by broader stakeholder discussions. The final draft was discussed and endorsed by the National Coordination Council in May 2024. The President/Prime Minister/Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan are expected to formally adopt the roadmap in June 2024.

National stakeholders have identified four strategic acceleration points to ensure just transitions and achieve integrated employment and social protection policy objectives, namely: 1/ The **Green transition** to create opportunities in the green labour market and social protection of workers and communities that will be affected by climate change and green policies; 2/ the **Digital transition:** development of agile decent employment policies aligned with fast changes in the labour market entailed by the rise of digital era, decreasing digital divide for vulnerable groups and the extension of social protection coverage to those impacted by the transition; 3/ the **Formalisation** the economy and extension of social protection to workers in the informal economy and 4/**Inclusion:** with integrated policies that ensure fair labour participation and extension of adequate social protection to vulnerable groups including Women, youth, people with disabilities, informal workers, and migrants.

2.3 Opportunities and stakeholders for SDG transition

a) Domain of change*:*

The **domain of change** of the UN JP is the just formalisation of both workers and enterprises, identified by the national GA roadmap as one of four priority areas of intervention, and the subject of the 2020 Presidential Decree to combat the “shadow economy”.

Informal employment in Uzbekistan is pervasive at around 60% of the working age population (approx. over 8 million). Although informal workers experience significant workplace and social protection deficits, precarity and risks, they have been often tacitly recognized and tolerated as a ‘buffer’, offering a valuable source of livelihoods when the formal economy has not been capable of creating sufficient decent jobs. On the other side, few incentives exist for small firms in the informal economy to formalize, due to the fact that registration as a legal entity implies an increase in regulatory requirements, higher taxes and other formal and informal payments.

Some groups, including women, youth, migrants, and people with disability, are disproportionately impacted by informality, employment vulnerability, and lack of access to social protection. For instance, women are disproportionately vulnerable to informality due to gendered segmentation of the labour market, gender-based norms and attitudes. In 2021, 51% of women compared to 38.7% of men were employed informally in non-agricultural sectors. Care responsibilities disproportionally fall on women,

who perform 90% of all unpaid childcare and household work, constraining women's participation in the formal labour market. Uzbek women entrepreneurs are mostly involved in low-return entrepreneurship. Overall, due to the combination of all these obstacles, women have much lower labour market participation, as in 2022 their inactivity rate stood at 33.1% (vs. 18.9% for men). Considerations around inclusion and LNOB in the transition to formality are therefore embedded within the JP and central to its domain of change, thus linking to priority area 4 of the roadmap.

Indeed, in Uzbekistan, formalisation is the convergence point of a series of integrated interventions that can produce a positive impact across all Government-identified priority sectors and support the advancement of the overall GA and GA roadmap objectives. The transition to formality is therefore not just beneficial to one sector or intervention group, but it is rather an acceleration point for system-level transformation that can yield important gains in terms of social protection extension, decent job creation, skill development, and improvement of the business environment, thus unlocking and harnessing both domestic and multilateral revenue streams and financing options.

This is ultimately preparing and enabling the country to achieve the SDG transitions, while promoting inclusion and the LNOB agenda, and more specifically the other priorities as defined in the GA roadmap for Uzbekistan, namely:

- Development of inclusive economy, improvement of coverage and quality of social protection
- Creating "green" jobs and providing social protection to the population against the negative consequences of climate change
- Preparation of the labor market and social protection system for digitization processes

Finally, the UNJP links to the overall objectives of the Global Accelerator, particularly by contributing to the advancement, within the identified domain of change, of objective 2 on “national frameworks for adequate and sustainable financing” and objective 4 “Strengthened national ownership and consensus”.

b) Pathways of change:

Grounded on the analysis presented above, **the problem space** of the JP can be described as consisting of the following clusters of challenges:

1. Persisting high rates of informality, especially among vulnerable populations: the informal economy in Uzbekistan absorbs more than half of existing employment opportunities, due to, in part, a deficit in current formal enterprises and employment opportunities, which leads people seeking to access the labour market to go into informal employment. This is due to a combination of different reasons: lack of incentives to formalise, lack of awareness, prohibitive costs of formalisation, administrative barriers, etc. Some sectors are particularly impacted including the construction and care sectors.

2. Inadequate social protection coverage of workers in the informal economy: social protection coverage in Uzbekistan remains suboptimal, and it is especially low for workers in the informal economy, leaving them disproportionately vulnerable to life cycle risks. Large gaps in social protection coverage remain. In the private sector, 61% of women employees and 73% of men employees lack social security coverage. This problem of informality and that of low social protection coverage are deeply intertwined and mutually reinforcing, as they often share the same root causes and require integrated solutions.

3. Inadequate reach of protection, particularly social assistance, particularly to vulnerable groups: there remains a substantial share of the vulnerable population that is still excluded from the social assistance system. For example, coverage of the social assistance benefits for low-income families is 40% in the lowest income quintile. The eligibility requirements for social benefits still exclude those families that have members of working age and without a (proven) disability, but who are either engaged

in the informal economy or cannot be economically active at all.

4. Constrained fiscal space for policy action on formalisation and social protection extension: the enduring nature of informality of enterprises and jobs and inadequate social protection coverage is also due, in part, to the fact that it directly undermines the state's ability to fund formalisation, employment and social protection policies. As such, the state forgoes significant revenues that could be collected from formalised economic activities, incomes, and enterprises, while the social protection system cannot rely on the contributions of excluded informal workers for its financial sustainability.

In terms of the **solutions space** of the join programme, the identified challenges ought to be addressed through an integrated set of interventions that act on the overlaps between them and leverage synergies to enact change at the systematic level. These include an improved understanding, through **data gathering and analysis**, of the hindering factors to formalisation and social protection extension, as well as of the needs of the different target groups. It also entails **enabling institutional and legal environments** that facilitate transition to formality and social protection extension and strengthening of **financial sustainability** and financing mechanisms for formalisation, employment programs, and social protection extension. Integrated solutions would also contribute to the improvement of the legislative and policy framework, and expanding the government's revenues thus fiscal space for the provision of public services. Finally, design and implementation of **innovative solutions and approaches** to formalise employment and extend social protection coverage to specific sectors and target groups, and **awareness raising campaigns** aimed at closing information gaps around the labour and social rights, obligations, costs, and benefits, are to be implemented.

A key enabler to the formulation and implementation of solutions for the UNJP is **tripartite+ social dialogue**, which is an essential precondition for national ownership, and therefore sustainability, of any identified solution. Social dialogue can therefore ensure active participation and buy-in not only from government institutions, but also from the other direct recipients of the UNJP interventions: employers and workers.

c) Key stakeholders:

Key national stakeholders, including government and social partner representatives, are convened in the **GA's National Coordination Council (NCC),** formed by the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan to steer the national process of the GA Roadmap development and its implementation. The NCC is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. It consists of representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction, the National Agency for Social Protection, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations, the Ministry of Healthcare, the Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Digital Technologies, the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan, and the Confederation of Employers of Uzbekistan, within the framework of inclusive social dialogue.

The NCC is supported by the **GA Working Group** consisting of technical staff members of the main stakeholders, namely the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the National Agency for Social Protection, the Ministry for Employment and Poverty Reduction, Federation of Trade Unions and Confederation of Employers. The role of the Working Group is to analyse policy gaps, discuss the roadmap development, and inform the NCC, among other tasks.

Engagement with social partners and, especially, civil society organisations (CSOs) will be continued and sustained throughout JP implementation, with these organisations playing an active role in the design and delivery of planned interventions, depending on the activity (more details on entry points for engagement in Annex 9).

The National Centre of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Human Rights will be regularly consulted throughout the implementation of the UNJP to ensure relevance of the activities and the results to the national human rights protection agenda and norms.

Other government stakeholders for this JP include: the Special Commission on Shadow Economy Reduction, The State Tax Committee, Khokimiyats (district/regional government), the Pension Fund, and the Agency for External Labour Migration.

Finally, the **GA country team**, consisting of UN agencies and development partners, including the World Bank and GIZ, supports the coordination and implementation of the GA priorities and of the UN joint programme in Uzbekistan, through the provision of technical advice, analytical support, and delivery of interventions.

3. Programme strategy and theory of change

3.1. Systemic Theory of Change

JOINT SDG FUND

GA Results select Framework Indicators

Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex.

Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable.

Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source.

Percentage increase in the number of decent jobs in targeted sectors in the roadmap, disaggregated by age, sex, and other relevant dimensions.

Percentage of the population with more comprehensive social protection (additional risks covered).

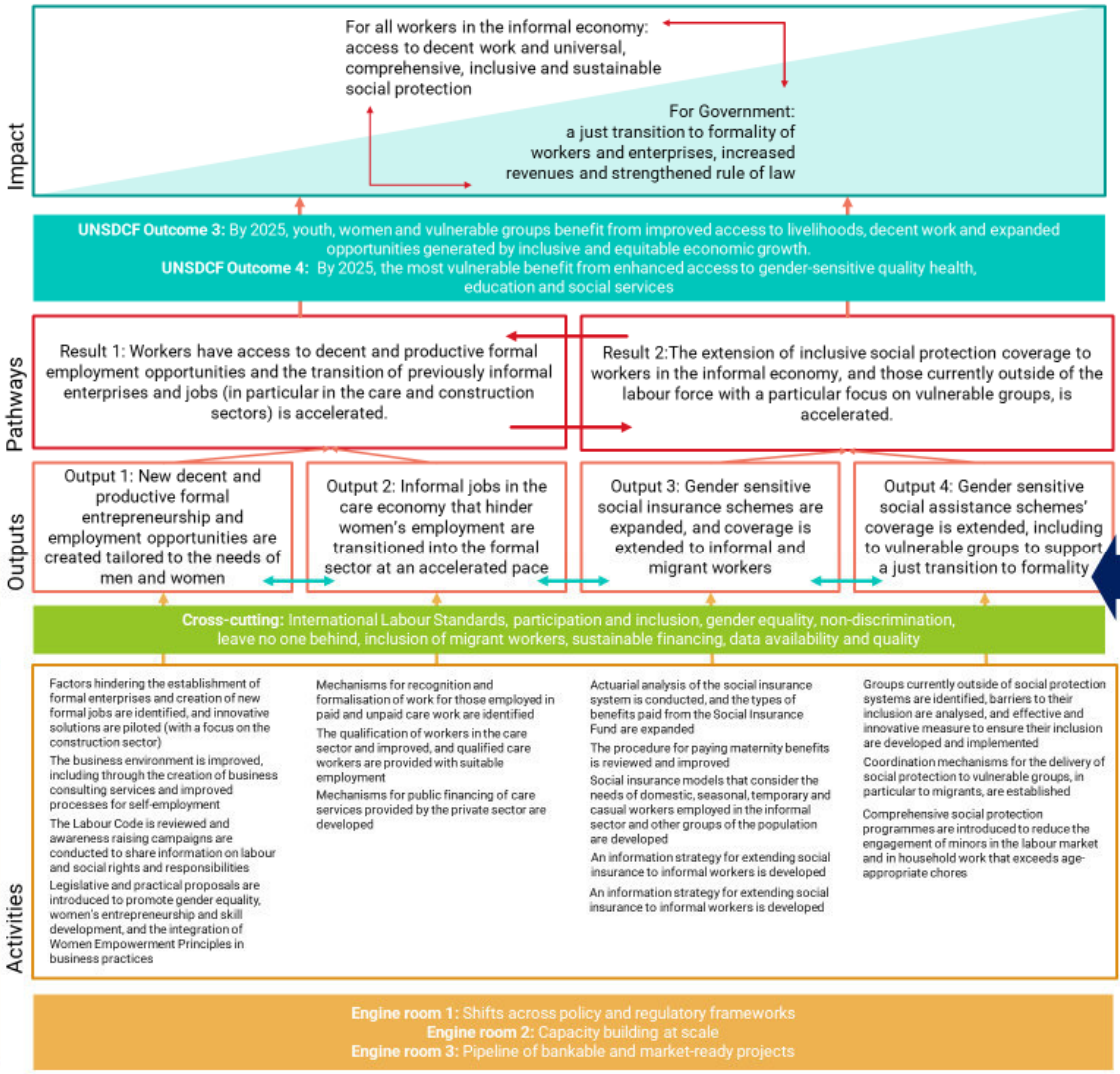
Percentage of the population with higher benefits (adequacy).

Percentage of policies/reforms (both integrated policy packages and standalone policies) that are fully operational within two years of adoption

Percentage of policies/reforms (both integrated policy packages and standalone policies) that are fully operational within two years of adoption

Select JP Output Indicators

Women and youth's completion of business acceleration programs
Analysis of successful self-employment programs
Number of people reported that they know about labour and social rights and responsibilities
Availing normative framework to ensure gender equality and non-discrimination at work
Number of female care workers who strengthened their capacities and skills
Number of mechanisms developed for public financing of care services for female employees provided by private sector
Number of persons and percentage increase in effective population coverage by social protection (with some sex disaggregation, and disaggregation by branch of SS), including children, people with disabilities, migrants
Number of persons and percentage increase in legal coverage for social protection



Assumptions

A sustained economic jobs-rich growth is observed

Measures to address the fiscal deficit do not have negative impact on government investments in formalization outcomes

No other major exogenous shocks have a disruptive effect on economic growth, poverty, decent work, and social protection

Continuing political and resource commitments

Institutions are functional and able to aid the implementation of laws, policies, and compliance mechanisms

Consensus and buy-in at different levels of governance is established

Financing is adequate for effective institutional anchoring, enforcement of laws, and implementation policies and activities

The rule of law, including property rights and labour rights are enforced to the extent needed for the implementation of the interventions

Multilateral cooperation and policy coherence, among development partners and with national stakeholders, is effectively realised

The **ultimate impact** of the UN Joint Programme (JP) is two-fold:

- **For workers in Uzbekistan**, in particular workers in the informal economy, it means increased access to decent work and universal, comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable social protection which aims at reducing income inequality and enhancing social and economic inclusion, better social cohesion and improved general well-being of the population

- **For the government of Uzbekistan**, an accelerated just transition to formality of workers and enterprises, increased revenues and improved legislative and policy framework.

The joint programme is bound to have transformative impacts**,** and generate benefits at scale, for the economy, and ultimately for the country as a whole. Indeed, an accelerated transition towards formality will have a multiplier effect on a range of sustainable development goals. Firstly, that is because of an increase in the fiscal space, due to new opportunities for revenue generation and contribution payment, which will lead to a reinvigorated ability for national institutions to formulate and implement policies. Secondly, it is due to the enhancement of the enterprise ecosystem, increased productivity, a more skilled and better protected workforce, and smoother access to sustainable financing opportunities. Overall, the specific impact of the UN JP is expected to contribute more broadly to inclusive growth, equality, poverty reduction, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Uzbekistan.

In order for this transformative impact to be realised challenges and gaps identified within the problem space are addressed by a network of integrated solutions, through **two main pathways of change,** comprised of interventions that are interrelated and mutually supportive, thus all converging and contributing to achieving the transition to formality, decent work creation, and the extension of social protection. These are:

Pathway 1. Creation of new decent and productive formal employment opportunities for workers in Uzbekistan, as well as the acceleration of the transition of previously informal enterprises and jobs (in particular in the care and construction sectors).

Pathway 2. The acceleration of the extension of inclusive social protection coverage to workers in the informal economy, and those currently outside of the labour force with a particular focus on vulnerable groups.

Importantly, the two pathways result from the convergence measures identified by the GA roadmap under priority 1 “Increasing the share of the formal sector of the economy through the development of employment and social protection programs”, particularly measures 1.1 and 1.4 for Pathway 1, and measures 1.2 and 1.3 for Pathway 2.

(See graphic for further detail on the pathways).

While these two pathways are conceptually distinct with a discrete set of targeted activities, they are in reality intertwined and the results they aim to achieve are mutually enabling and reinforcing. For instance, a sustained increase in the volume of the formal economy, through new formal job creation and formalisation of previously informal employment, leads to an extension of the contribution basis and of revenue-collection, thus enhancing the national social protection system along several dimensions, namely coverage, adequacy, and sustainability. Social protection extension, on the other hand, can strengthen opportunities to benefit from formalisation for workers in the informal economy, intervening at the level of the incentive structure and addressing some of the root causes for the persistence of informality in the economy of Uzbekistan.

Furthermore, several interventions pursued under one pathway have clear and direct positive impacts for the advancement of the other, and these include any analysis of the legal and policy framework, diagnostics on informality, identification of informal/uncovered population groups, formulation of innovative models or approaches to formalisation/social protection extension, development of mechanisms for sustainable financing, etc.

The JP's theory of change is built on an **integrated approach** to achieve transformative results. This integrated approach to transition to formality builds on the shared understanding that interventions are more effective when they are combined to tackle different drivers of informality, enabling them to address the diversity as well as the scale of the informal economy, and supported by social dialogue.

At different levels through the theory of change of the JP, some critical **assumptions** are made for the viability, feasibility, and overall effectiveness of the pathways proposed. At the highest, impact level, it is assumed that macroeconomic factors remain favourable to formalisation, decent job creation, and the extension of social protection, including economic growth, the maintenance of the fiscal space for social spending, continued political and resource commitments, and the absence of major exogenous shocks. At the solutions level, it is assumed that legal, governance, and financing frameworks are functional, and fully enforced, to enable the implementation of planned interventions. (See graphic for further details on the assumptions).

Finally, assumptions are made over multilateral **cooperation and policy coherence**, both among development partners delivering the technical assistance, and with national stakeholders. This is a particularly important set of assumptions, as it constitutes the premise of engagement at the national level not only for the JP, but for the GA more broadly, as evidenced by the fact that "Enhanced multilateral cooperation" is the third pillar of the GA's Implementation Strategy. Therefore, it is assumed that inter-institutional partnerships for policy and programme coordination are strong and will be strengthened as a consequence of the JP, including in terms of alignment of development and financial assistance, and multi-stakeholder coalition building.

In agreement with the Government of Uzbekistan and national stakeholders, the JP focuses exclusively on one SDG transition: Decent jobs and Universal Social Protection. This decision is anchored in the fact that the creation of decent jobs at the expansion of social protection for a just transition to formality is crucial in ensuring the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and laying the foundations for other SDG transitions, particularly the green/climate and digital transitions. Indeed, through the expansion of the formal economy and of the fiscal space, the JP lays the groundwork for a shift towards a carbon-free, sustainable, and digitalised economy, by ensuring the provision of essential guarantees against social risks affecting income and health in the context of climate change and digitalisation, thus favouring social acceptability of resulting policy choices.

Specifically, the transition from the informal to the formal economy can advance:

- **SDG 1: No poverty**, through the extension of social protection systems (1.3) and the mobilisation of further resources to implement anti-poverty measures (1.6 and 1.7).
- **SDG 5: Gender equality**, through promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate (SDG 5.4).
- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**, through the promotion of full employment with equal pay (8.5), youth employment, education, and training (8.6), and safe working environments (8.8).
- **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities**, through the elimination of income disparities (10.1), the promotion of equal opportunities (10.3), and the adoption of policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality (10.4)

3.2. Description of the Transformative impact

The Joint Programme integrates efforts across government, private sector, social partners, and non-profits to promote formalization and extend social protection. It includes policy interventions, union initiatives, community actions, and training to empower informal workers, particularly women and youth, in targeted sectors. By enhancing access to social insurance and removing barriers, the JP aims to legally integrate vulnerable groups into social protection systems, aligning with broader sustainable development goals such as climate and digital transitions. Expected results at scale include reaching 300,000 informal workers, expanding legal coverage to 300,000 individuals, and providing social assistance to 720,000 low-income people, ultimately fostering economic growth, reducing poverty, and advancing gender equality.

Key pillars of transformative change	Key elements of the joint programme demonstrating transformative change
Integration	The JP fosters an integrated approach to the promotion of formalisation and social protection extension, by aligning efforts across government, private sector, social partners and non-profits, breaking down silos and ensuring cohesive support for self-employment. It combines policy level interventions, initiatives of trade unions, actions of community-level actors, and practical training to empower informal workers belonging to target groups (e.g. women, youth) and/or employed in target sectors. Similarly, the support of a comprehensive social insurance system intends to legally integrate groups which did not have access to social protection provisions, starting from undertaking a comprehensive analysis of access barriers to social protection for vulnerable groups, followed by capacitating national partners to deliver sustainable, and adequate social protection programmes for workers in the informal economy and their families. Integration is also reinforced through linkages with the broader GA roadmap and with the other SDG transitions the roadmap prioritises and aims to accelerate, namely the green (climate) and digital transitions.
Scale	Impact at scale, in terms of decent job creation and formalisation, is achieved by providing financial support to business entities operating in various forms of ownership, and clients with modern, high-quality and fast banking products. By catalysing actions and securing financing from diverse stakeholders, the project aims to support thousands of new entrepreneurs, significantly amplifying its impact. Additionally, integration of labour conditions (especially formalisation) in public procurement procedures will produce economy-wide incentives for enterprises and entrepreneurs to formalise their business and their workforce. Extending a human right based approach by broadening the social protection access to a larger population and facilitating vulnerable groups to access social protection programmes will enable and empower them to benefit from accelerated job creation and employment formalisation implying catalytic, transformative impact on their wellbeing and quality of life. Finally, the recognition of domestic work efforts can transform the labour market for domestic workers by setting new standards that may become benchmarks for employment practices nationally. Increasing care services, eliminating discriminatory barriers for women, creating awareness on the importance of the care economy and accelerating

	employment of women will have transformative results both for the national economy as well as for the target enterprises and workers. To achieve impact at scale, the JP aims for an estimated US$ 75.35 million in parallel co-financing. As a result, the JP aims to reach 300,000 informal workers, 300,000 people with the extension of legal coverage, and 720,000 low income individuals with social assistance.
Speed	Alleviating business constraints and enhancing the efficiency of local government administration will help boost businesses and induce more investment, which will generate more formal and decent jobs with social protection provisions, increase income of workers, and reduce poverty faster. This will be mirrored by supporting vulnerable groups in accessing national social protection and benefiting from the opportunities created by the accelerated creation of decent jobs and employment formalisation. Women business acceleration programs, as well as mainstreaming of tools for private sector such as 'Women's Empowerment Principles' accompanied by nationwide awareness raising campaigns, can shorten the time required to achieve relevant SDGs by empowering women economically, fostering inclusive economic growth, and initiating systemic changes that support sustainable development. This acceleration will be possible thanks to the expansion of the fiscal space through the achievement, in the first 9 months, of the following activities: increase in the incentives for enterprises to formalise, actuarial analysis of the social insurance system, building of actuarial capacities, analysis of vulnerabilities and barrier for uncovered or under-covered groups.
Sustainability	Sustainability will be strengthened through programs connecting enterprise leaders, and in particular women entrepreneurs, with funding opportunities, such as grants, loans, and venture capital, that might otherwise be inaccessible. This increased access to capital can spur business growth and development, sustaining programme results in the long term. Availing evidence-based data on recognition and formalisation of work and costing of unpaid care work enable more informed decision making. Increased women's labour force participation will contribute to inclusive economic growth. Additionally, when it comes to awareness and compliance with the Labour Code, the commentary will be available to labour officials, law enforcement officers, labour inspectors, court judges, arbitrators, practitioners, employers, trade unions, law students, and academicians in the long run. Actuarial models of the financial sustainability of social security programmes will enhance accountability, including financial accountability, transparency, and predictability in the administration of each of the target social security programs. With the development of actuarial models for social protection schemes, NASP will be equipped with a tool enabling the monitoring of financial sustainability of these schemes. The implementation of the social insurance law with the finalisation of its executive regulations will enable it to have a comprehensive legal framework to reduce the social protection coverage gaps. Policy recommendations on strengthening inclusion of vulnerable groups into the social protection programmes will be evidence based and developed under close collaboration with the national partners, which will ensure their relevance, ownership, and sustainable implementation.

Local context-specific	The JP aims at ensuring local context-specificity of formalisation interventions by disseminating information on regulatory requirements and benefits of formalising, knowledge products can motivate local businesses to formalise. Working with the private sector at local level, contributing nationwide awareness raising campaigns tailored to local context will boost joint efforts. New standard operating procedures and tools to issue construction permits will be developed to fit the capacity of local government administration entities. Some interventions will have a specific regional focus, determined by localised higher levels of need. Measures that will be designed under the Joint Programme will aim to benefit the local dimensions in the first place, and then be used to design interventions applicable at a nationwide scale.

3.3. Joint programme results

Result 1: Workers have access to decent and productive formal employment opportunities and the transition of previously informal enterprises and jobs (in particular, in the care and construction sectors) is accelerated.

Output 1: New decent and productive formal entrepreneurship and employment opportunities are created tailored to the needs of men and women.

Activity 1.1 Identify factors that hinder the conduct of formal business activities and develop proposals. Streamlined procedures required for companies to obtain a construction permit.

Conduct a study to identify businesses' regulatory compliance challenges, leading to the development of a streamlined compliance assistance program with online tools and resources. Assessing the availability of financial products will reveal the gaps. Research credit accessibility will inform the development of new products which are currently missing in the market. Identify entry points for shortening and streamlining procedures to obtain construction permits. Develop recommendations and submit new standard operating procedures for the Government's considerations. Develop practical tools, including a proposal for an IT system, to improve efficiency of administrative processes.

Activity 1.2 Develop a commentary of the newly adopted Labor Code and make it accessible to all employers and employees.

Collaborate with a reputable institution to develop a peer-reviewed commentary of the Labour Code. Disseminate the Commentary through networks of labour administration, social partners, legal professionals, and academic institutions.

Activity 1.3 Promote formalisation through Comprehensive Support, Training Programs, and Business Environment Improvement.

Empower women and youth aspiring to entrepreneurship through comprehensive technical support, including capacity building, incubation, and acceleration programs. Facilitate women and youth's access to essential financial resources such as grants, loans, and other supportive services, thereby enabling them to launch and sustain their business ventures effectively. Develop successful entrepreneurship skills and improve the ability to create effective products

and services by providing effective tools and mechanisms for entrepreneurship development. The training participants will develop business plans using the acquired skills for further consideration and identification of the best business ideas/projects aimed at sustainable development goals by the selection committee.

Activity 1.4 Introduce services for consulting business entities on formal activities at the Business Development Bank.

Support in enhancing the quality benchmarks of the BDB by elevating service levels, securing a leadership position, and streamlining management and operational processes; broadening the spectrum of banking services through the development of an information technology system tailored to contemporary needs, fostering an exemplary corporate culture, and boosting labour productivity; Strengthening the resilience of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and social enterprises by devising robust financial instruments and equitable financing mechanisms; Offering technical assistance to state development banks and commercial banks to evaluate and improve the capabilities and services of their Consulting Centers, thereby improving support to SMEs.

Activity 1.5 Conduct information campaigns to raise awareness of employers (entrepreneurs) and citizens about labour and social rights and responsibilities.

Awareness-raising campaign to educate a wider audience of SMEs about formality generally and the importance and benefits of formalisation. This campaign will disseminate information through knowledge products, and digital content, aiming to foster a widespread cultural shift towards sustainability and responsible business practices within the SME community.

Activity 1.6 Increase women's entrepreneurship through skills development.

Ensure a more supportive environment for women. Provide digital and financial literacy skill sets to women, increase entrepreneurial skills as well as e-commerce. In line with these efforts to equalise demand and supply, the public and private sector mapping process will be led simultaneously.

Activity 1.7 Ensure gender equality and non-discrimination at work. Preparing legislative and practical proposals that covers both public and private sectors.

Legislative scanning accompanied by its interpretation to practice will be assessed and accordingly legislative and implementation related proposals will be developed.

Activity 1.8 Increase implementation of Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) for private sector and increase women's labour force participation.

Activity 1.9 Formalise informal construction enterprises and workers.

Run awareness raising campaigns to promote formalisation of informal construction companies and workers. Pilot integration of labour conditionalities in large public construction contracts, obliging contractors to promote formalisation of construction workers who work on the construction sites. Build the capacity of trade union inspectors who specialise in the construction sector.

Output 2: Informal jobs in the care economy that hinder women's employment are transitioned into the formal sector at an accelerated pace.

Activity 2.1 Researching the mechanisms of recognition and formalisation of work of those employed in paid and unpaid domestic and care work.

Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to determine their specific requirements, including the analysis of the existing legislative framework to understand the legal backdrop and assessing gender-specific aspects of informal domestic work. Generate sex-disaggregated data to help determine the monetary value of unpaid work and inform relevant policy areas. Support the development of sample digital employment agreements for cleaners, home care workers, and nannies, providing clear guidelines for both employers and employees. Conduct awareness-raising campaigns will be conducted, particularly targeting domestic workers who are women and youth, to ensure they are informed about their rights and the resources available to them.

Activity 2.2: Formalisation and organisation of informal care workers through Social and Solidarity Economy.

Assess the possibility of establishing a care cooperative that caters for care needs. Investigate new ways of organising informal care workers under workers' organisation and represent their interest in social dialogue platforms (including national, sectoral, and regional Tripartite Councils). Increase the capacity and quality of care workers and improve their contribution to formal economy.

Result 2: The extension of inclusive social protection coverage to workers in the informal economy and those currently outside of the labour force with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, is accelerated.

Output 3: Gender sensitive social insurance schemes are expanded, and coverage is extended to informal and migrant workers.

Activity 3.1 Improving the social insurance system based on actuarial analyses.

Conduct actuarial analysis of the social insurance system. Strengthen actuarial capacity of NASP and other national social protection partners with the objective of a transfer of the actuarial models towards a full ownership by national institutions, as well as the interpretation of the models for the preparation of actuarial reports. Conduct a comparative analysis between the forthcoming social insurance law and the Conventions No 102 and No 183, to facilitate the ratification by Uzbekistan, and explore the possibility of supporting with feasibility studies, drafting executive regulations and operationalisation of the schemes, as needed.

Activity 3.2 Extending the types of benefits paid from the Social Insurance Fund.

Undertake costing analysis of various scenarios of broader packages of social benefit as per international social protection standards, as well as identify international best practices to extend coverage, in particular for low-income workers, informal economy workers and other vulnerable groups, on the basis of actuarial models and depending on government requests.

Activity 3.3 Development of social insurance models that take into account the needs of the population groups employed in the informal economy, households, seasonal, temporary and one-time workers and others.

Produce an in-depth informality analysis to identify the challenges for workers currently in the informal economy to participate in contributory social protection schemes, and consider

possible ways of overcoming such barriers, including legal, financial, administrative and awareness barriers. Conduct consultations with representatives of these workers and – where available - employers, policy options for the extension of coverage and the progressive formalisation of enterprises and employment could be discussed to ensure adequacy, adaptability, and participation, with particular attention to enterprises and workers in the informal economy with low contributory capacity. Based on national social dialogue, design and develop an updated package of interventions integrating employment and social protection to respond to the specific needs of informal workers, with sector-specific considerations. Depending on available resources, support with the integration of all databases containing lists of vulnerable categories, allowing to identify recipients according to the extent and cause of their vulnerability; avoid administrative function duplication; and avoid duplication in the provision of the same social services

Activity 3.4 Development and implementation of the information strategy of social insurance coverage of employees in the informal economy.

Develop an information and communication strategy focused on addressing changes in the social insurance legal basis in the country for the working-age population.

Output 4: Gender sensitive social assistance schemes' coverage is extended, including to vulnerable groups, to support a just transition to formality.

Activity 4.1 Undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of existing social protection programmes, identifying vulnerable groups who are currently out of the social protection system, assessing the magnitude of their exclusion, and identifying barriers to inclusion.

Undertake a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of existing social cash transfers in protecting vulnerable groups and promoting their economic activation, focusing the on poorest 40% of the population. Identify vulnerable groups who are currently out of the social protection system. Examine the existing procedures, eligibility rules and delivery mechanisms in identifying possible barriers for inclusion. Evaluate the design, adequacy, and coverage of social protection programmes in enabling and incentivizing vulnerable groups to engage in economic activities and employment. Inform policy adjustments and enhance the reach and effectiveness of social welfare investments. Inform the development of effective and innovative measures on improving inclusion of vulnerable groups into social protection.

Activity 4.2 Development of effective and innovative measures to support inclusion of the vulnerable groups (women, youth, returning migrants, people with disabilities, families living in remote areas and ethnic minorities) into social protection programs.

Design policy recommendations on revising design, procedures, and delivery mechanisms to extend substantially coverage of the social protection programmes for the vulnerable groups through improving the programmes' accessibility, including access of women working in the informal economy to maternity benefits, and access to child benefits for low-income families. Ensure that the proposed policy recommendations will result in such designs, procedures and delivery mechanisms that can be effectively extended in the case of emergencies and shocks, through the development of provisions for inclusion into the national emergency response framework, whenever relevant. Conduct a strong advocacy campaign on the implementation of policy recommendations.

Activity 4.3 Introduction of comprehensive social protection programmes to reduce engagement of minors in the informal economy, specifically in economic activities and household chores that are

exceeding age-appropriate thresholds.

> Undertake a comprehensive analysis of causes of child labour, including examination on whether the national poverty reduction interventions and programmes contain effective safeguarding mechanisms for children from being engaged into economic activities or household chores to the extent exceeding their age-appropriate thresholds. The knowledge and evidence generation will then transform into the development of the drafts of legal documents enhancing protection of children in Uzbekistan from labour as well as the design of cash transfers, which would reduce incentives to engage children into labour.

Activity 4.4 Establishing appropriate interagency coordination mechanisms through digitalization in delivery of multifaceted, comprehensive social protection for the vulnerable groups (women, youth, returning migrants, people with disabilities, families living in remote areas and ethnic minorities).

> Establish appropriate interagency coordination mechanisms in delivery of multifaceted, comprehensive social protection for the vulnerable groups, including for the identification of the needs, establishing individual social support plans and facilitation to the inclusion into relevant social protection programmes. Design digital solutions on improving connectedness between the social protection providers, enhancing their abilities to refer and direct beneficiaries to each other, where community level (mahalla 7) workforce implements overall coordination in provision of social protection. Develop technical and functional requirements for the integration of the Single Registry and Social Protection Platform with the Interagency Platform “Single National Employment System” and other relevant databases and systems and conduct a technical analysis of the existing database and systems relevant to social protection delivery. Ultimately, develop a costed and timed action plan on integrating the Single Registry and Social Protection Platform with the Interagency Platform “Single National Employment System” and other relevant databases/systems.

3.4. LNOB framework and Human Rights Mechanisms

Embedded in the design of the JP is the understanding that a real risk exists that a transition to formality which only aims at improving “averages" without benefiting the furthest behind will inevitably reproduce and exacerbate existing inequalities. For this reason, LNOB principles have been integrated at all levels.

In the case of women, because of the enduring barriers they face in accessing the formal labour market and social protection, all outputs incorporate activities that are aimed to generate evidence on challenges affecting them, and design solutions to directly respond. These include advancing gender equality and non-discrimination at work under output 1, empowerment and skill development also under output 1, targeted interventions in the care sector (which overwhelmingly employs women) under output 2, strengthening social protection, with particular attention given to maternity benefits under output 3, and the lowering of the barriers of access to maternity and family benefits, and the overall expansion of social protection, especially childcare, under output 4.

Migrant workers are also disproportionately affected by the persistence of informality, employment vulnerability, and lack of social protection coverage, which is also a consequence of their relatively higher participation in highly informal economies (agriculture, care, construction…) a lack of portability in their labour and social security rights, which the JP specifically addresses under outputs 3 and 4. Children, persons with disabilities, and older persons are also explicitly included through the strengthening of social protection targeted at them, and overall extension of coverage (outputs 3 and 4).In particular, for children, the planned interventions would have particular regard for the reduction of child labour (explicitly under output 4). Finally, the youth stand to benefit horizontally from all outputs of the JP.

As LNOB principles are transversal to programme design, and not ascribed only to particular activities, the

JP ultimately aims at implementing (1) a truly intersectional approach that simultaneously and coherently intervenes on all identified dimensions of vulnerability, and (2) a meaningfully participatory approach that increases the inclusion of vulnerable group not only in the processes of this JP, but more importantly in society as a whole.

The JP will contribute towards the objectives of several human rights mechanisms, most importantly:

- Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR),
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
- Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW), and Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD),
- ILO Committee of Experts on C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

List of marginalized and vulnerable groups[1]	Dedicated Output
Women and girls	Output 1, 2. 3, 4
Children	Output 3, 4
Youth	Output 1, 2, 3, 4
Persons with disabilities	Output 3, 4
Older persons	Output 3, 4
Migrant workers and returnees	Output 1, 3, 4

3.5. Sustainability plan and exit strategy

The Joint Programme will sustain its impact beyond the lifespan of the interventions. This is achieved by enhanced institutional capacity of key national and local partners, establishment of schemes that continue to be operational after the closure of the project, lasting behavioural changes, and bringing in further investment. Formalisation of informal enterprises and workers and inclusive labour market and society are both long-term policy objectives firmly enshrined in national development strategies. The project intervenes carefully identified acceleration points and ushers in intended transformative changes. Building robust institutional capacities and legal frameworks to support ongoing and future labour market transitions including green and digital transitions will ensure the long-term impact and sustainability. Sustainability is ensured across the following dimensions:

- **Community sustainability:** development of gender-response business environment at the community level, through community-level capacity building, vertical and horizontal knowledge-sharing and awareness raising campaigns, enhancement of local service provisions for business and workers, etc.
- **Financial sustainability**: working with international financial institutions plan to develop an integrated financing framework, align streams of international funding flows and the state budget with the roadmap and channel available funding toward GA roadmap implementation, reducing costs through the reform of management, operation, and administrative processes, ensuring the sustainability of social protection systems through actuarial analysis, expand revenue-generating activities and revenue collection domestically, etc.
- **Institutional sustainability**: capacity building of relevant institutions, including NASP and key

[1] The other marginalized and vulnerable groups include, amongst other, minorities (incl. Ethnic, religious, linguistic...), people of African Descent, persons deprived of their liberty, peasants and rural workers, human rights defenders (incl. NGOs, journalists, union leaders, whistleblowers...), migrants, stateless persons, LGBTIQ+ persons (sexual orientation and gender identity), persons living with (HIV/AIDS, leprosy...), persons with albinism, victims or relatives of victims of enforced disappearances, victims of (slavery, torture, trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse...). List as per the standard 20 LNOB groups according to the Implementation Guide for the Output Indicator Framework for measuring the United Nations contribution towards the Sustainable Development Goals: https://1102656428-files.gitbook.io/~/files/v0/b/gitbook-x-prod.appspot.com/o/spaces%2F-MbDdHe_y0zwBb9YTe4W%2Fuploads%2F4114YgYQuQo7qKb5ycyL%2FG%20-%20221031-%20Implementation%20Guide.pdf?alt=media&token=e54c735a-c0a6-4984-8025-2f8b777d1d89.

ministries, social partners, improving and implementing standard operating procedures, enhancing inter-institutional coordination on policy coherence, delivery, and financing, establishing long-term partnerships, facilitating knowledge transfers across institutions, embedding recommendations and best practices to ensure continued adherence.

4. Adaptive implementation and Management arrangements

The government of the Republic of Uzbekistan has established the **National Coordination Council (NCC)** on Global Accelerator for Uzbekistan to steer the national process of the GA Roadmap development and its implementation. (Please see Section 2.3 Opportunities and stakeholders for SDG transition for further details on composition).

The overall strategic guidance and day-to-day coordination of the GA-related activities will be under the leadership of the National Coordination Council, representing the GoU. Each PUNO will be responsible for implementation of activities for which they are leading, as per their comparative advantages, while as Lead PUNO, the ILO will be responsible for the coordination of the JP activities, monitoring, reporting, evaluation, and learning, and serve as liaison between the UNCT and the GA Coordination Council, in coordination with the GA country team. The ILO will work with the other PUNOs to ensure programmatic synergy and operational coordination for the implementation of the JP. Furthermore, ILO will coordinate with UNSDCF Results Group 2 and will further coordinate the activities of the JP with the broader UNCT, ensuring that all relevant agencies can engage in the GA processes, and to encourage streamlining of UN programming beyond the PUNOs in support to the GA.

The JP PUNOs are part of the GA Country Team, consisting of UN agencies (in particular ILO, UNDP, UNICEF and UN WOMEN) and development partners (GIZ and the World Bank) who support the GA's roadmap implementation and organise GA-related high-level consultations with key national stakeholders as well as the National Steering Committee, support the drafting of the GA's roadmap, its integrated financing strategy and its implementation. The JP's PUNOs will regularly meet within the GA country team, share progress and coordinate with the rest of the GA country team, including new members as they join.

4.1. Adaptive programme implementation

Outline of the implementation approach:

The JP is characterised by an integrated implementation approach working coherently towards the achievements of three fundamental milestones (outlined below in further detail), which are mutually reinforcing interventions that progressively build on each other's impact. Adaptation and risk-mitigation measures are embedded in the phased approach of the JP, which prioritises rooting policy and programme action in an analysis of state's capacities, the business environment, and the landscape of existing needs and vulnerabilities (milestone 1), before moving on to ensuring inclusion of target populations (milestone 2), and proceeding with full implementation (milestone 3). This progressive approach systematically addresses the risks outlined in Annex 4, ensuring resilience and adaptiveness.

Milestone 1: Developing a foundational analysis and implementing initial improvements for the strengthening of the state's budget stability through formalisation of enterprises and social insurance sustainability.

Within the timeframe of the first milestone the JP can tackle some "low hanging fruits", estimated within the first 9 months, which can accelerate progress and build the foundation for change to be effectively implemented. One of these low hanging fruits is the increase in the incentives for enterprises to formalise, and on the other, as well as improving mechanisms for self-employed workers to register and

formalise. This will strengthen the state's budget stability and increase its revenue generating powers, in order to progressively expand the fiscal space for future reforms. Similarly, the JP will conduct an actuarial analysis of the social insurance system, so as to strengthen its financial sustainability, and building of actuarial analysis capacities which will build capacity at scale of national stakeholders and ensure the sustainability of the forthcoming schemes and/or strengthened and reformed under this JP. The analysis of the vulnerabilities and barriers for uncovered or under-covered specific groups is also crucial for the achievements of subsequent outputs.

Milestone 2: Ensuring the inclusion of target populations, through the improvement of design, business processes, outreach, etc., in formalisation and social protection extension efforts.

Activities carried out within the timeframe of milestone 2 include: generating a commentary on the labour code and raising awareness of employers and citizens about their rights and responsibilities, with those aiming to foster productivity, including fostering women's entrepreneurship through improved business skills and, gender responsive legislative framework and women empowerment practices, implementing improvements to the social protection system, including maternity benefits, for workers in the informal economy, as well as measures to support the inclusion of informal workers, with emphasis on women, youth, migrant workers, people with disabilities, as well as of children and older people.

Milestone 3: Full implementation and operationalization of solutions for decent job creation and the extension of social protection to informal economy workers previously uncovered and targeted vulnerable groups.

By the achievement of the third milestone and consequently the completion of programme objectives, the JP aims at full implementation of designed solutions, which includes piloting innovative approaches to foster the creation of decent jobs especially in the construction and care sectors, fostering the care sector's transition to formality through, on the supply side, the recognition of those employed in paid and unpaid domestic and care work and improving their qualifications and on the demand side, exploring mechanisms to finance care services provided by the private sector, establishing coordination mechanisms for the continued delivery of the interventions and the coordinated administration of social protection benefits.

Roles and responsibilities (see next subheadings for further detail):

- National Project Coordinator:
  - Designated by ILO
- JP Management Team:
  - Ensures joint planning, synergies, and cohesive implementation across PUNOs.
  - ILO
    - Focal person: National Officer (social protection)
    - National Officer (employment) and an administrative assistance to support implementation
    - Engages other experts as needed
  - UN Women:
    - Focal person: Country Programme Manager for Uzbekistan.
    - Mobilizes experts, coordinates activities, and strengthens gender lens.
  - UNICEF:
    - Focal person: Social Policy Specialist.
    - Engages other experts as needed.
  - UNDP:
    - Focal person: Project Manager and an Administrative Financial Associate
  - Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO):

- Provides strategic guidance and support for strategic planning, resource mobilisation, communications, partnership recognition, and M&E.
- RC heads JP's Steering Group, along with heads of PUNOs, convening quarterly strategic meetings or as needed for oversight and milestone preparations.

Key communication and visibility actions (see Annex 8 for further details):

1. Ensuring visibility of key milestones, activities, and events of the joint programme, and more broadly of the programme's outputs, results, and impact of the JP over the project lifetime.
2. Informing relevant audiences, in a clear, accurate, and tailored way, of implemented solutions, including benefits and services made available as a result of the JP.
3. Ensuring visibility of the work that the government, PUNOs, and other stakeholders of the JP are doing in terms of formalisation and social protection extension, so that entry points for further collaboration, alignment of efforts, and acceleration of progress can be easily identified.

4.2. Management Arrangements

The JP Team - For the coordination and implementation of the JP, the ILO will designate a National Project Coordinator (50%), who will be responsible for the day-to-day work of the JP, including planning, coordination, and liaison with PUNOs and stakeholders, procurement and management of external experts and service providers, monitoring and joint reporting in particular updating the JP results framework, develop and maintain a joint plan and strategy, consolidate annual narrative report based on inputs from PUNOs and organise and support the JP Steering Group and support as needed meetings of the National Coordination Council related to the JP.

A **JP management Team** will be established to ensure joint planning, synergies, and cohesive implementation across PUNOs. Ceren Guven Gures, Country Programme Manager for Uzbekistan from UN Women's will be the focal person for JP and will mobilise relevant experts to coordinate and implement JP activities and strengthen gender lens in the process. For UNICEF, social policy specialist Umid Aliev will be focal person for the JP, and will engage other experts, as needed. UNDP's Inclusive Growth Cluster lead Ravshan Yunusov will be the focal person for this JP. A project manager on Improving the business environment for formalisation (full time, NPSA-9) and Administrative Financial associate (full time, NPSA-6) will be hired for implementation of UNDP's interventions.

The JP Team will be further supported by national, regional, and global technical specialists from the PUNOs, and the GA Technical Support Facility.

RCO will work closely with the JP team and provide strategic guidance and support to the project. relating to strategic planning, resource mobilisation, communications, partnership recognition, and M&E. The RC will head the JP's Steering Group and convene quarterly strategic meetings of PUNO HOAs, or as the need arises, as part of internal oversight and to prepare for milestone activities of the JP.

The JP will ensure close coordination with development and technical partners, IFIs and build on existing fora/mechanisms for synergies. The JP will ensure partner recognition and seek to apply and promote South-South and triangular cooperation.

5. Monitoring, accountability, financial management, and public disclosure

Reporting on the Joint SDG Fund will be focused on concrete results and grounded in evidence. The RCO focal point and lead PUNO is responsible for coordinating and drafting a concise annual report (using the Fund Secretariat template/guidance), which is submitted to the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat through the RC by January 31st of the following year. Additionally, a final narrative report must be

prepared and submitted to the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat through the RC no later than two (2) months after the operational closure of the Joint Programme activities.

The JP Steering Committee, co-chaired by the RC, is mandated to oversee and monitor the implementation of the joint programme, with the involvement of Joint SDG Fund Secretariat to which it must submit data and information upon request. Additionally, the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat may request additional insights, such as policy papers, value-for-money analysis, case studies, infographics, or blogs/articles, as needed.

PUNOs will be required to include information on complementary funding received from other sources (both UN cost sharing, and external sources of funding/financing) for the activities supported by the Fund, including in kind contributions and/or South-South Cooperation initiatives, in the report.

PUNOs at Headquarters level shall provide the Administrative Agent with the following statements and reports prepared in accordance with its accounting and reporting procedures, consolidate the financial reports, as follows:

Annual financial reports as of 31st December each year with respect to the funds disbursed to it from the Joint SDG Fund Account, to be provided no later than four months after the end of the applicable reporting period; and
A final financial report, after the completion of the activities financed by the Joint SDG Fund and including the final year of the activities, to be provided no later than 30 April of the year following the operational closing of the project activities.

The JP will be using a pass-through fund management modality where UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office will act as the Administrative Agent. The programmatic UN entity of the Facility shall assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent of the Joint SDG Fund (Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office). Such funds will be administered by each UN Agency, Fund, and Project in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures. The entity shall establish a separate ledger account for the receipt and administration of the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent.

A minimum of 5% of the JP budget is allocated for monitoring, reporting, evaluation, audit, and communications. Indirect costs of the Participating Organizations recovered through project support costs will be 7%, with exception of WFP and UNHCR which should be 6,5%. All other costs incurred by each PUNO in carrying out the activities for which it is responsible under the Fund will be recovered as direct costs. Procedures on financial transfers, extensions, financial and operational closure, and related administrative issues are stipulated in the Operational Guidance of the Joint SDG Fund. PUNOs and partners must comply with Joint SDG Fund brand guidelines, which includes information on donor visibility requirements.

ANNEX 1: Mapping of related projects, investments and other development initiatives

Name of project / investment / initiative	Key expected results	Relevance for the JP	Implementing partners	Budget and funding source	Timeframe
Uzbekistan: Strengthening the Social Protection System Project	- modernising the social safety net objective is to improve the effectiveness of key social interventions by better identifying the poor and vulnerable and providing timely and predictable benefits to address their needs. -improving the effectiveness of active labour market programs objective is to support a larger number of jobseekers access formal job opportunities through improved effectiveness of the public employment services (ESC) and expanded active labour market policy (ALMPs) targeted to vulnerable jobseekers implemented by the ESCs in partnership with the private sector. - support the government in monitoring labour market interventions and managing the overall International Development Association (IDA)	This project aligns with the JP's goals of extending inclusive social protection and improving the effectiveness of labour market programs.	World Bank	USD 50.00 million	2020-12/2024
Innovative Social Protection System for inclusion of Vulnerable People Project	The project aims to improve access to and quality of social care, activation, and GBV services by strengthening NASP's capacity for the integrated provision of social services and benefits, including to better respond to shocks. The introduction of alternative community-based modality to deliver social and activation services (the district-level TSSCs) and social service quality standards, along with the improved integration of the social protection delivery system, is expected to enhance the inclusion of vulnerable groups, increase their resilience to shocks (climate induced and others), and improve their well-being and labour market prospects.	This project supports the JP's aim to extend social protection coverage and improve social service quality for vulnerable groups.	World Bank	USD 100.00 million	2024-2029

Addressing socio-economic inequalities in a time of global and regional instabilities	The project aims to enhance the capacities of the Government of Uzbekistan in addressing socio-economic inequalities and multidimensional poverty, reducing social protection gaps through the promotion of the care economy aiming at inclusive and gender-balanced growth, and supporting job creation and employment opportunities through the prism of the Future of Work systems approach.	This project contributes to the JP's focus on job creation, reducing social protection gaps, and addressing socio-economic inequalities.	UNDP	USD 531,000	2022- 12/2024
Empowering the Youth to Embrace the Digital Economy and Digital Entrepreneurship	The goal of the project is to empower young people, especially women, with digital entrepreneurship skills, tools and enabling environment to increase their employment opportunities, competitiveness and resilience to COVID-19 and similar crises, and thus, to reduce inequality, ensure inclusive, innovative and sustainable economic growth, and job creation.	This project aligns with the JP's goals of job creation, empowering youth and women, and fostering digital entrepreneurship for inclusive economic growth.	UNDP	USD 3,040,000	2022-12/2025
Business Support Project	Business Support Project, aimed at fostering sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Uzbekistan. The launch event marks the beginning of a five-year journey towards enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises across four key sectors: information and communications technology (ICT), tourism, textiles, and the green economy.	This project aims to facilitate investment and foster business-to-business relationships. This initiative underscores the U.S. Government's continued commitment to supporting Uzbekistan's economic development and regional economic integration.	USAID	$17.7 million over five years	2024-2029
Supporting Implementation of Strategy 2030 OP 2 in a Post-COVID- 19 Environment-Gender Mainstreaming in Project Preparation, Supporting Monitoring, and Reporting on Gender Equality	Subproject 13 will facilitate gender mainstreaming in projects in Central and West Asia to help address the negative economic and social impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Gender design features aligned with Operational Plan 2 will be integrated across all sectors with special attention to the challenging sectors for gender mainstreaming and in modalities such as policy-based loans and sector	Increased support to gender mainstreaming, especially in the challenging sectors of energy, finance, public sector management, and transport to ensure women's inclusion in the recovery and rebuilding efforts and to strengthen women's	ADB	$1.09 million	2022-2026

Results in CWA Operations	development programs. It will also explore opportunities to include actions relevant to areas of the SDG 5 transformative agenda.	resilience against current and future external shocks.			
The "Social Protection Innovation and Learning" project in Uzbekistan	This project is part of a longer-term approach to building sustainable social protection systems and sits within the wider strategic partnership between the World Bank and GIZ, Social Protection Innovation and Learning (SPIL). Together, the partners aim to enhance the impact of investments on system strengthening as well to strengthen donor coordination.	The overall objective is to support the Government of Uzbekistan to build sustainable and adaptive social protection systems.	GIZ		11.2022 - 10.2025

ANNEX 2: Integrated results framework

Joint Programme Outcomes			
CF Outcome statement 1: By 2025, youth, women and vulnerable groups benefit from improved access to livelihoods, decent work and expanded opportunities generated by inclusive and equitable economic growth.			
Outcome 1: Workers' access to decent and productive formal employment opportunities and the transition of previously informal enterprises and jobs (in particular in the care and construction sectors) are accelerated.			
Outcome indicator 1.1: Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex	Baseline: Total 39.6%, Women 47.4%, Men 34.0% (2022)	Target: Total 38.8%, Women 46.5%, Men 33.3% (2026)	Means of verification: National statistics (https://nsdg.stat.uz/en/goal/11)
Outcome indicator 1.2: Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person	Baseline: 4.6% (arithmetic mean of the period 2013-2022)	Target: 4.7% (2026)	Means of verification: National statistics (https://nsdg.stat.uz/en/goal/11)
CF Outcome statement 2: By 2025, the most vulnerable benefit from enhanced access to gender-sensitive quality health, education and social services			
Outcome 2: The extension of inclusive social protection coverage to workers in the informal economy, and those currently outside of the labour force with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, is accelerated.			
Output indicator 2.1: Number of persons and percentage increase in effective population coverage by social protection (with some sex disaggregation, and disaggregation by branch of SS),	Baseline: last Social Security Inquiry in 2021	Target: higher effective coverage than baseline	Means of verification: Comparison between the last Social Security Inquiry (SSI) in 2021 and SSI 2025

including children, people with disabilities, migrants			
Output indicator 2.2: Number of persons and percentage increase in legal coverage for social protection	Baseline: segmented and partial legal coverage	Target: Integrated and comprehensive legal coverage	Means of verification: Legal coverage in the Social Insurance law

Joint Programme Outputs			
Output 1 New decent and productive formal entrepreneurship and employment opportunities are created tailored to needs of men and women			
Output indicator 1.1: Number of newly established enterprises in Uzbekistan.	Baseline: 0 (2024)	Target: 20 (2026)	Means of Verification: Means of verification: Reports, media materials
Output indicator 1.2: Number of beneficiaries that were outreached on benefits of formalization.	Baseline: 0 (2024)	Target: 100,000 (2026)	Means of Verification: user data from online platforms and channels where information campaigns' materials are disseminated.
Output 2 Informal jobs in the care economy are transitioned into the formal sector at an accelerated pace, advancing women's empowerment			
Output indicator 2.1: Needs analysis of domestic workers	Baseline: None, 2024	Target: 1 report	Means of verification: Reports, media materials
Output indicator 2.2: Number of female care workers who strengthened their capacities and skills	Baseline: 0	Target: 250	Means of verification: Number of female participants attended and finalised trainings
Output indicator 2.3: Number of mechanisms developed for public financing of care services for female employees provided by private sector	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: utilised mechanisms
Output 3 Gender sensitive social insurance schemes are expanded, and coverage is extended to informal and migrant workers			
Output indicator 3.1: Number of actuarial studies conducted for the financial sustainability of social insurance and extension to uncovered informal workers	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: available actuarial analyses

Output 4 Gender sensitive social assistance schemes are extended, and coverage is extended among vulnerable groups to support the just transition to formality			
Output indicator 4.1: share of families in the lowest income quintile receiving social assistance benefits	Baseline: 30%	Target: 40%	Means of verification: national household survey, stakeholders' reports.
Output indicator 4.2: Number of households reached by cash transfers through JP-supported programmes	Baseline: 1.3 million	Target: 1.8 million	Means of verification: administrative data from Single Registry of Social Protection

Alignment with GA objectives

COMPONENT/ACTIVITY	CHECK "X" if proposal addresses
I. Integrated and well-coordinated national public policies and strategies *(as part of the development of the national Global Accelerator roadmaps)*	
1. Support diagnostics/ stocktaking/ policy appraisals of existing national social protection, employment, just transition strategies, policies, schemes	
2. Support partner countries in identification and development of integrated policies, strategies, programs	X
II. National frameworks for adequate and sustainable financing of social protection and employment interventions	
1. Support existing and new financing strategies to improve the use of existing resources and to mobilise domestic and international resources in a sustainable and equitable way.	X
III. Strengthened national social protection and employment programmes and systems	
1. Build robust, sustainable, adaptive, and gender-responsive national social protection systems through national social dialogue	X
2. Develop / implement employment policies and programmes to facilitate access to decent work opportunities	X
IV. Strengthened national ownership and consensus building	
1. Support national dialogue for the development of national Global Accelerator roadmaps	X
2. Develop capacities for collective action on social protection and decent jobs	X
3. Provide coordinated technical and policy advice	X
4. Support the adoption of a common results framework and data collection and reporting mechanisms (in line with the Global Accelerator framework)	

V. Innovation and new knowledge, evidence, and tools	
1. Support knowledge generation	X
2. Develop evidence-based tools and knowledge products	X

ANNEX 2.1: Integrated results framework – Joint SDG Fund global indicators

Joint Programme contribution to Joint SDG Fund global indicators (as relevant)			
Engine room 1. Shifting policy/regulatory frameworks			
Number of new or enhanced the integrated policy solutions and regulatory changes formulated to accelerate SDGs with Joint SDG Fund support.	Baseline: 0 0 (ILO)	**Target**: 1 Activity 1.7 **Target:** 3 Activity 1.9 **Target:** 1 Activity 3.1	Means of verification: Public tender documents that include labour conditionalities Adoption of the social insurance law Adoption of an executive regulation of the social insurance law
Number of targeted countries where the integrated policy solutions and regulatory changes are implemented to promote equal access to and use of services, goods and resources by women and girls with Joint SDG Fund support.	Baseline:0	**Target**:1 Activity 2.1 Activity 1.7 **Target: 1** Activities 4.2 and 4.3	Means of verification: reports, media materials, knowledge products Reforms of maternity provisions
Number of individuals benefiting from the integrated policy solutions and regulatory changes implemented with Joint SDG Fund support, disaggregated by population segments (e.g. sex, age, persons with disabilities, etc.) with a focus on Leaving No One Behind.	Baseline:0	**Target**: 3 Activity 2.1 **Target:** 7,000 women Activity 1.6 **Target**: 1,000,000	Means of verification: Activity 4.2: Single Registry administrative data

		direct beneficiaries Activity 4.2	
Engine room 2. Capacity building at scale			
Number of governmental (both at central and sub-central levels) and non-governmental organizations including social partners with enhanced capacity to design, implement and finance integrated policies, regulations and innovative solutions for SDG acceleration, with Joint SDG Fund support.	Baseline:0 engi	**Target:** 120 Activity 1.4 **Target**: 50 private enterprises Activity 1.8 **Target:** 30 Activity: 2.2	Means of verification: Evaluation reports of the training programmes
Number of tools, procedures and mechanisms (e.g. SOPs, training module, incentive structures) developed or implemented, focused on building capacities for SDG acceleration with Joint SDG Fund support (disaggregated by central and local actors).	Baseline:0	**Target**: 2 Activity 1.1 **Target**: 2 Activity 1.4 **Target**: 2 Activity 1.1 **Target**: 1 Activity 1.5 **Target**: 1 Activity 1.1b **Target**: 1 Activity 1.2 **Target:** 1 Activity 3.1 **Target**: 1 Activity 3.2 **Target**: 1 Activity 4.2	Means of verification: reports, knowledge products, meeting minutes Official document showing adoption of the new SOP (ILO) Finalised Commentary available for download on a government web site Actuarial training courses provided to social protection institutions Actuarial model developed for NASP (Activity 3.1)
Number of experts identified and deployed to support RCs/UNCTs on SDG acceleration with Joint SDG Fund support.	Baseline:	Target:	Means of verification:

Engine room 3. Developing market-ready pipeline of actions.			
Number of integrated multi-sectoral financing solutions or instruments created and launched with Joint SDG Fund support, disaggregated by theme/type.	Baseline:	Target:	Means of verification:
Number of actions, projects, businesses or organizations identified for inclusion in market-ready pipeline with Joint SDG Fund support.	Baseline: 0	**Target: 1 0** Activity 1.3	Means of verification: reports, knowledge products, meeting minutes
Ratio of actions, projects, businesses or organizations securing funding and receiving investments, in relations to those identified with Joint SDG Fund support.	Baseline:	Target:	Means of verification:
Engine room 4. Devising a financing mix (deal room)			
Amount in US$ of financing leveraged for integrated multi-sectoral solutions, with support from the Joint SDG Fund (disaggregation by type of investors – e.g. Gov, private, PPP, DFIs/IFIs).	Baseline:	Target:	Means of verification:
Ratio of financing leveraged for integrated multi-sectoral solutions against the committed funds provided by the Joint SDG Fund.	Baseline:	Target:	Means of verification:
Number of investors providing direct financing to integrated multi-sectoral solutions developed, with support from the Joint SDG Fund (disaggregation by type of investors – e.g. Gov, private, PPP, DFIs/IFIs).	Baseline:0	Target:1	Means of verification: Joint Programme Reports

ANNEX 2.2: Work plan

Joint Programme Work Plan

Outcome/Output	Geographic focus	Start	End	PUNO	SDG Targets	Gender Equality Marker	Human Rights Marker	QCPR function	Budget (US$)
Result 1. Workers' access to decent and productive formal employment opportunities and the transition of previously informal enterprises and jobs (in particular in the care and construction sectors) are accelerated									
Output 1: New decent and productive formal entrepreneurship and employment opportunities are created tailored to needs of men and women	national	September 2024	September 2026	**ILO**, UNDP, UN WOMEN	8.2, 8.3, 8.8	2	2	2, 3, 4	703,500

Output 2: Informal jobs in the care economy that hinder women's employment are transitioned into the formal sector at an accelerated pace	national	September 2024	September 2026	**UNWOMEN**, ILO, UNDP	5	3	2	4	336,500
Result 2. The extension of inclusive social protection coverage to workers in the informal economy, and those currently outside of the labour force with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, is accelerated									
Output 3: Gender sensitive social insurance schemes are expanded, and coverage is extended to informal and migrant workers	national	September 2024	September 2026	**ILO**	1.3	2	2	2, 3, 4	365,000
Output 4: Gender sensitive social assistance schemes are extended, and coverage is extended among vulnerable groups to support the just transition to formality	national	September 2024	September 2026	**UNICEF**	1.3, 10.1 and 10.4	2	2	3, 4,	365,000

ANNEX 3: Budget per UNSDG Categories

UNSDG BUDGET CATEGORIES	ILO		UNDP		UNICEF		UNWOMEN		TOTAL	
	Joint SDG Fund (USD)	PUNO Contribution (USD)	Joint SDG Fund (USD)	PUNO Contribution (USD)	Joint SDG Fund (USD)	PUNO Contribution (USD)	Joint SDG Fund (USD)	PUNO Contribution (USD)	**Joint SDG Fund (USD)**	**PUNO Contribution (USD)**
1. Staff and other personnel	236,600	193,380 (Specialist staff)	90,000	75,000 (Specialist staff, Supplies, Commodities, Materials Equipment, Vehicles, and Furniture, Contractual services)	70,000	125,000 (Specialist staff)	85,000	70,000 (Specialist staff)	486,600	463,380
2. Supplies, Commodities, Materials	6,150		0		0		0		6,150	
3. Equipment, Vehicles, and Furniture (including Depreciation)	5,000		0		0		2,000		7,000	
4. Contractual services	479,988		152,468		95,000		84,915		807,371	
5.Travel	40,000		30,000		25,000		10,000		105,000	
6. Transfers and Grants to Counterparts	0		60,000		151,120		0		211,120	
7. General Operating and other Direct Costs	36,000		18,000		0		5,000		59,000	
Total Direct Costs	**803,738**		**350,468**		**341,120**		**186,915**		**0**	
8. Indirect Support Costs (7% of total direct costs – except for WFP and UNHCR which should apply 6.5% of total direct costs)	*56,262*		24,532		*23,880*		*13,085*		*117,759*	
TOTAL Costs	**860,000**	**193,380**	**375,000**	**75,000**	**365000**	**125000**	**200,000**	**70,000**	**1,800,000**	**463,380**

ANNEX 4: Risk Matrix

Risks	***Categories***	***Risk Level:*** *(Likelihood x Impact, as per instructions)*	***Likelihood:*** *Certain - 5 Likely - 4 Possible – 3 Unlikely - 2 Rare – 1*	***Impact:*** *Essential – 5 Major - 4 Moderate - 3 Minor – 2 Insignificant - 1*	***Mitigation measures***	***Risk owner***
National and local governance capacity gaps for enforcement and implementation	*4.1. Governance 3.8. Capacity development of national partners*	*12*	*3*	*4*	***Medium:*** *embedding of capacity building activities throughout all programme outputs*	*ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN*
Low buy in from national government representatives, social partners, and enterprises	*3.9. Engagement of national partners in decision-making 5.1. Government commitment; 7.2. Alignment with UN Strategic priorities*	*8*	*2*	*4*	***Low:*** *establishment of an inclusive and representative process starting from the GA roadmap formulation to the representative management arrangements overseeing the implementation of the JP (NCC, Working Group, GA Country Team…)*	*ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN*
Low implementation capacity of other decentralised public authorities	*3.8. Capacity development of national partners*	*8*	*4*	*2*	***Low:*** *localised capacity building activities*	*UNICEF*
Organisational issues and/or insufficient capacities of the newly established National Agency for Social Protection	*3.8. Capacity development of national partners 7.3. Capacities of the partners*	*12*	*3*	*4*	***Medium:*** *capacity building activities will be delivered to NASP staff as well as close collaboration with other development partners to ensure*	*ILO, UNICEF*

					complementarity and delivery capacity	
Low understanding of formalisation requirements, processes, rights and responsibilities	*3.8. Capacity development of national partners*	*9*	*3*	*3*	***Low:** mainstreaming of awareness raising throughout all outputs, through communication campaigns aimed at closing informational gaps*	*ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN*
Resistance to gender-responsive interventions due to persisting gender-based stereotyping in the workplace	*1.2. Gender*	*8*	*2*	*4*	***Low:** mainstreaming of gender equality and non-discrimination practices in both employment and social protection activities, throughout all outputs*	*ILO, UNDP, UNWOMEN*
Insufficient fiscal space to ensure viability and financial sustainability of extending social insurance coverage to workers in the informal economy, especially to those with low contributory capacity	*2.1. Cost recovery* *2.4. Fluctuation in credit rate, market, currency* *5.1. Government commitment* *5.2. Political will*	*16*	*4*	*4*	***Low:** Actuarial models will be developed to assess costing needs and financial sustainability of proposed extension matched with fiscal space analysis and options to finance extension*	*ILO*

The ongoing attempts of the Government to address the national budget deficit limiting the fiscal space available for the expansion of coverage of social assistance programmes.	*2.1 Cost recovery* *5.1 Government commitment* *5.2 Political will*	*12*	*Possible*	*Major*	***Medium:** strong advocacy on the essential role of social assistance in supporting vulnerable groups and thus keeping sufficient fiscal space for such programmes; continuous monitoring of the government's budgets' planning and implementation in social assistance.*	*UNICEF*
Persistence of societal/cultural/legal obstacles impeding vulnerable groups from fully benefiting from the programme activities, including activities targeted at them	*1.1. Human rights*	*12*	*3*	*4*	***Medium:** to undertake effective advocacy discussions on the level of characteristics of child labour in Uzbekistan and its impact on children's wellbeing and development*	*UNICEF (on child labour)*
Incomplete information on target groups and low quality of labour market data, especially for informal workers, people with disability, and migrant workers	*7.3. Capacities of the partners*	*12*	*4*	*3*	***Medium:** development of assessments, analyses, and evidence-gathering, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups throughout all outputs*	*ILO, UNDP, UNICEF and UNWOMEN*
Lack of interest from workers and/or employers with contributory capacity to register under social protection schemes	*3.9. Engagement of national partners in decision-making*	*12*	*3*	*4*	***Medium:** tripartite consultations, strengthened social dialogue and strengthened capacity of social partners to engage in assessing proposed schemes and parameters and*	*ILO*

					engage with their membership	
Delays in data collection due to lack of cooperation from businesses	*3.7. Partnership* *5.4. Change/ turnover in government*	*2*	*2*	*4*	***Low:*** Engage businesses early and continuously, offer incentives for participation, and ensure clear communication on benefits.	*UNDP*
Resistance from businesses to formalize due to perceived high costs	*4.6. Due diligence of private sector partners* *5.4. Change/ turnover in government*	*2*	*2*	*4*	***Low:*** Provide clear information on the long-term benefits of formalisation, offer financial incentives, and reduce initial formalisation costs.	*UNDP*
Inadequate uptake of consulting services by businesses	*3.8. Capacity development of national partners* *5.4. Change/ turnover in government*	*2*	*2*	*4*	***Low:*** Launch an awareness campaign about the benefits of consulting services, provide free initial consultations, and ensure services are accessible and relevant.	*UNDP*
Inaccurate data leading to ineffective self-employment programs	*4.11. Innovating, piloting, experimenting.* *5.4. Change/ turnover in government*	*2*	*2*	*4*	***Low:*** Implement robust data collection and validation processes, collaborate with local organisations to gather accurate data, and continuously monitor and adjust programs based on feedback.	*UNDP*

Low engagement from target audience	*1.11. Stakeholder engagement* *5.4. Change/ turnover in government*	*1*	*2*	*2*	***Low:*** Utilise multiple communication channels, tailor messages to different audience segments, and engage community leaders to increase reach and effectiveness.	*UNDP*
Insufficient data on informal domestic workers	*4.11. Innovating, piloting, experimenting,* *5.4. Change/ turnover in government*	*2*	*2*	*4*	***Low:*** Partner with local academia, community organisations to collect data, use anonymous surveys to increase participation, and ensure confidentiality to encourage honest responses.	*UNDP*
Informalisation of the labour market because of a high number of migrant workers returning to Uzbekistan due to geo-political situations	*1.6. Labour conditions/standards*	*9*	*3*	*3*	***High: A wave of return migration may become politicised and shift attention of policy makers away from the JP. We explain to the government that the JP helps expand decent work opportunities and absorb returned migrants in the local labour market.***	*ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women*

ANNEX 5: Localization marker

SDG Localisation Marker Score

Dimensions	Criteria or eligibility	Responses	Explanation	Means of verification
Programme Design	• Does the programme or initiative explicitly include results and/or expected outcomes directly related to advancing SDG localization?	Yes	The programme aims to accelerate decent job creation and social protection extension, directly contributing to multiple SDGs.	Project document, results framework
	• Is at least 70% or more of the programmatic budget allocated specifically to activities that enhance advocacy, actions or monitoring related to SDG localization?	No	The budget is primarily focused on interventions that support SDG localization.	Budget allocation sections in the document
	• Were local and regional governments actively engaged and consulted during the programme design phase?	Yes	The National Coordination Council and various government ministries are involved in the programme.	Governance structure outlined in the document
	• Were local service providers and/or other local actors and stakeholders actively engaged and consulted during the programme design phase?	Partially	The programme involves partnerships with local service providers and other stakeholders.	Stakeholder engagement sections in the document
Advocacy	• Has the programme or initiative planned to develop new knowledge material, research, publication or relevant resources related to SDG localization, specifically building on local experience?	Yes	Development of guidelines, commentaries, and advocacy materials on formalisation and social protection.	Work plan and advocacy sections
	• Has the programme or initiative planned to develop specific events, campaigns, communications or capacity-building activities on SDG localization, especially targeted at local or regional governments, local service providers, or other local actors and stakeholders?	No	Various campaigns and capacity-building activities are planned to raise awareness and build skills related to SDG localization.	Campaign and training plans in the document
Actions	• Does the joint programme or initiative incorporate mechanisms, spaces or activities designed to bolster coherent policies, regulations, plans, programmes, and service-delivery approaches or models by local and regional governments and/or local service providers, facilitating their meaningful contributions to the SDGs and addressing the principles of leaving no one behind?	Yes	The programme includes policy recommendations and new standard operating procedures.	Policy recommendation sections
	• Does the joint programme or initiative have an inclusive and participatory multi-stakeholder approach, involving civil society, academia, citizens, the private sector and/or others to jointly implement transformative initiatives toward localizing the SDGs? This could include, for example, mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial	Yes	The programme involves multiple stakeholders, including government, civil society, and the private sector.	Stakeholder engagement framework

	resources to support the achievement of the SDGs at the local level.			
	• Does the joint programme or initiative include a multi-level governance approach to address the SDG challenges through collaboration between different levels of government, as well as with international organizations, and local communities? This approach recognizes that effective action requires coordinated efforts at various scales, from local and regional to national and global.	Yes	The programme is overseen by a National Coordination Council with representation from various levels of government.	Governance structure outlined in the document
	• Does the joint programme or initiative feature mechanisms or activities aimed at improving the transparent and accountable financing of SDG localization? This may include the development of decentralized financing policies, the creation of market-ready pipeline of local actions, expansion of local fiscal space, resource mobilisation by local or regional governments, participatory budgeting approaches, etc.	No	The programme includes measures to ensure financial transparency and effective allocation of resources.	Financial management sections
Accountability & Sustainability	• Does the joint programme or initiatives include dedicated results, supported by a robust accountability framework, to systematically collect and report on contributions to SDG localization, both at the outcome and output levels?	Yes	The programme has a monitoring and evaluation framework to track and report on SDG localization contributions.	M&E framework
	• Does the joint programme or initiative include a dedicated plan to ensure the sustainability, leveraging of financial resources and replication/expansion of the SDG actions in additional localities, developed in collaboration with local and regional governments, local service providers and other local actors and stakeholders?	Yes	The programme includes sustainability strategies and plans for scaling successful interventions.	Sustainability plan sections
Criteria for Scoring • Marker 3: Between 9 and 12 criteria marked as Yes. • Marker 2: Between 4 and 8 criteria marked as Yes. • Marker 1: Between 1 and 3 criteria marked as Yes. • Marker 0: None of the criteria marked as Yes.		Total # of Yes	8	Marker 2

Please see refer to the detailed guidance on applying the marker here: https://www.jointsdgfund.org/publication/sdg-localization-marker

ANNEX 6: Gender Equality and Human Rights markers

Gender Equality Marker

Gender Equality Marker

Please copy the output as per in the workplan and add the Gender Equality marker score and justify the scoring. Please refer to the UNSDG guidance here: https://help.uninfo.org/un-info/results-framework/results-framework-structure/suboutput-level/guidance-on-applying-tags-and-markers/guidance-on-applying-the-gender-equality-human-rights-and-sustaining-peace-markers

Joint Programme Outputs	GEM Score	Justification
Output 1. New decent and productive formal entrepreneurship and employment opportunities are created tailored to needs of men and women	2	GEWE is a significant objective of the output's overall intent including capacity building targeting only women to increase their labour force participation.
Output 2. Informal jobs in the care economy that hinder women's employment are transitioned into the formal sector at an accelerated pace	3	Output is focusing on narrowing gender inequalities, transforming prejudicial gender norms at workplace and also empowering of women to value the care work they carry over and increase their employment
Output 3. Gender sensitive social insurance schemes are expanded, and coverage is extended to informal and migrant workers	2	GEWE is one of the main objectives of the output's overall intent. It includes assessments of the social insurance schemes with gender lens and expand the coverage to eliminate inequalities.
Output 4. Gender sensitive social assistance schemes are extended, and coverage is extended among vulnerable groups to support the just transition to formality	2	GEWE is an integral part of the output which offers gender sensitive social protection services.

Human Rights Marker

Please copy the output as per in the workplan and add the Human Rights marker score and justify the scoring. Please refer to the UNSDG guidance here: https://help.uninfo.org/un-info/results-framework/results-framework-structure/suboutput-level/guidance-on-applying-tags-and-markers/guidance-on-applying-the-gender-equality-human-rights-and-sustaining-peace-markers

Joint Programme Outputs	HRM Score	Justification
Output 1. New decent and productive formal entrepreneurship and employment opportunities are created tailored to needs of men and women	2	This output significantly contributes to the human rights realization as it addresses **3 out of 6** elements of the Human Rights Marker. The output targets the existing patterns of discrimination, inequality and marginalisation for women and youth in participation in economic activities. Specifically, the output will empower women and youth to engage into formal entrepreneurship or employment through facilitation to accessing financing, capacity building on entrepreneurship and work skills, referral to incubation and acceleration programs. The output activities will be undertaken in close engagement of women and youth as participants of the studies on barriers to formal employment/entrepreneurship and through awareness building campaigns. The output has clearly defined employers and employees as 'rights holders', while relevant state service providers are considered as 'duty bearers' and aims as resolving issues related to 'rights holders' realising their rights and 'duty bearers' implementing their responsibilities.
Output 2. Informal jobs in the care economy that hinder women's empowerment are transitioned into the formal sector at an accelerated pace	2	This output significantly contributes to the human rights realization as it addresses **3 out of 6** elements of the Human Rights Marker. The output targets the existing patterns of discrimination, inequality and marginalisation through facilitating formalisation of women's engagement into care economy, where currently domestic work and care responsibilities remain largely unrecognized and unpaid. Besides, women are actively engaged into the proposed activities through conducting a comprehensive needs assessment. Finally, the proposed examination of the reason for informal domestic work will be conducted through a clear gender perspective and establish issues to be addressed through relevant capacity building.
Output 3. Gender sensitive social insurance schemes are expanded, and coverage is extended to informal and migrant workers	2	This output significantly contributes to the human rights realization as it addresses **3 out of 6** elements of the Human Rights Marker. The output activities imply conducting a comparative analysis between the forthcoming national social insurance law and the ILO Conventions No 102 and No 183, to facilitate their ratification by Uzbekistan. The output also implies actively engage stakeholders through conducting consultations with representatives of workers and – where available – employers on policy options for the extension of coverage and the progressive formalisation of enterprises and employment. Finally, the

		output implies a costing analysis of various scenarios of broader packages of social benefits as per international social protection standards, as well as identify international best practices to extend coverage, in particular for low-income workers, informal economy workers and other vulnerable groups, implying strong human rights focus.
Output 4. Gender sensitive social assistance schemes are extended, and coverage is extended among vulnerable groups to support the just transition to formality	2	This output significantly contributes to the human rights realization as it addresses **3 out of 6** elements of the Human Rights Marker. The output targets patterns of discrimination, inequality or marginalization through developing of effective and innovative measures to support inclusion of the vulnerable groups (women, youth, returning migrants, people with disabilities, families living in remote areas and ethnic minorities) into social protection programs. Participation and meaningful engagement of relevant stakeholders are ensured through comprehensive analysis of poorest population groups through surveys and focus group discussions. Finally, the analysis will be undertaken trough a human rights perspective due to to its main focus on extending inclusion of social protection programmes, i.e. realisation of rights of the most vulnerable people to access social protection.

ANNEX 7: Overview of the Learning and capacity building plan for the main stakeholders, including social partners and civil society.

Key skills and competences
To sustain a transformative focus, PUNOs will prioritise the continuous development of key skills and competences across various stakeholders, including UNCT, government, social partners, civil society, and other partners. This plan emphasises three main sets of skills and competences: system change and strategic foresight/planning, convening and partnership development, and cultural change and thought leadership. In particular, UNDP and government entities will focus on strategic planning, foresight methodologies, and system thinking, ensuring they are well-equipped to drive long-term, sustainable change.

The Joint Programme will also contribute to strengthening NASP's capacity to generate evidence and knowledge products through undertaking primary surveys and focus group discussions and using evidence and knowledge products in designing policy interventions.

Throughout its engagement on decent work creation and social security extension, the JP (in particular ILO) will engage with and further strengthen institutional, organisational and technical capacities of workers' organisations at the national and sectoral levels to attract, organise, integrate, protect, service and represent informal workers. UNICEF's supported interventions will contribute to increasing awareness among parents on the problems caused by child labour to children's wellbeing and development.

the JP will support both the GA country team and the UNCT to further advance the objective of decent work creation and the extension of social protection to groups previously uncovered both through sharing lessons learned, coordinating with other development partners involved in this work and capturing knowledge from the integrated approach advanced by the JP's theory of change. The experience of Uzbekistan will also be shared in

national, regional and global fora, most importantly as it is related to the GA's implementation for south-south knowledge and experience sharing.

All partners will work towards promoting cultural change, influencing social norms, and driving community-based initiatives. This comprehensive approach will both addresses attitudes, practices, and behaviour patterns as well as encourage the thought-leadership required to facilitate the joint programme's transformative impact.

Objectives and main activities

UNDP's interventions will focus on addressing the main groups of skills and capabilities through targeted activities. First, enhancing capacities for system change and strategic foresight/planning involves training on strategic planning and foresight methodologies, system thinking workshops, and supporting strategic initiatives. Second, strengthening convening and partnership development skills includes stakeholder engagement training, coalition-building workshops, and facilitation skills development. Third, promoting cultural change and thought leadership entails innovation and policy advocacy training, community-based change initiatives, and promoting innovative solutions. Interventions aim to provide targeted communications and learning opportunities that are relevant and timely for different audiences. Learning will be focused on implementation rather than compliance, providing practical and applied skills. It will go beyond the policies and strengthen risk identification, data collection and informed decision-making. Further training will be adapted to respond to specific challenges in the regional and/or country context and emphasise risk mitigation efforts throughout the project cycle. They also aim to facilitate more peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange. Each activity will be led by designated responsible parties, such as UNDP, civil society organisations, and social partners, with progress monitored through regular evaluations, participant feedback, and impact assessments. These efforts will ensure the joint programme can adapt and thrive, fostering a sustainable and transformative impact.

UNICEF will strengthen stakeholders' capacities to maintain an effective and participatory dialogue through undertaking thematic focus group discussions and surveys. The Government's capacity on fostering digital solutions for the interagency coordination in social protection will also be strengthened through the joint development of the relevant solutions for the systems' integration and interoperability.

ILO's interventions on social insurance will contribute to further supporting capacity building at scale of the National Social Protection Agency in particular including in terms of actuarial modelling, financial sustainability and the design of new schemes catering to specific vulnerable groups, in particular workers in the informal economy, including women, youth, people with disabilities and children. Not only NASP's staff and other relevant stakeholders will be trained to understand and update the newly developed actuarial models, but they should have progressively be able to run and adapt the model to various scenarios of reforms.

ANNEX 8: Overview of the Communications and visibility plan

Overall narrative

The UNJP brings together the complementary expertise of four UN agencies, namely ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, and UNWomen, under the leadership and guidance of Uzbekistan's National Coordination Council for the Global Accelerator, to tackle the enduring problem of pervasive informality in the country's economy. In Uzbekistan, 6 in 10 workers are employed in the informal economy, which means they cannot fully enjoy their labour rights, suffer from suboptimal labour conditions, miss out on skill development opportunities matched with labour demand, and do not have comprehensive access to the social protection

system. The problem of informality is even more pronounced in certain sectors, such as the construction and care sectors, and for certain populations, such as women, the youth, migrant workers, and people with disabilities, who face increased barriers to decent work and social protection.

The UNJP has the ultimate ambition of accelerating the creation of new decent, productive, formal jobs, aiding the transition of previously informal enterprises and workers into the formal sector, and extending social protection towards previously uncovered groups in particular workers in the informal economy, with special attention given to targeted sectors and social groups. Through an integrated approach, comprised of targeted interventions at all levels of interventions, from legal/policy to the reality of enterprises, the UNJP aims at building a solid evidence and analytical basis, strengthening capacities of relevant stakeholders, raising awareness around rights and responsibilities, and developing and implementing innovative solutions for the transition to formality, decent job creation, and social protection extension.

Ultimately, through the mobilisation of domestic and international revenues, through the establishment of virtuous cycles of decent formal employment, skill development, entrepreneurship, and social protection expansion, and through increase policy coherence and coordination, the UNJP will act as impetus for impact at scale and the acceleration of the SDG transitions in Uzbekistan.

Objectives and main activities

The main objective of the communications strategy for the joint programme are:

1. Ensuring visibility of key milestones, activities, and events of the joint programme, and more broadly of the programme's outputs, results, and impact over its lifecycle.

Primary audience: all JP's stakeholders, and importantly the members of the National Coordination Council under the leadership of NASP and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, social partners and civil society

Secondary audience: population of working age in particular workers in the informal economy, enterprises and the population at large

Activities under objective 1 include:

- Producing informational material about the joint programme, and ensuring dissemination through relevant channels (websites, social media), in alignment with the Global Accelerator communication strategy and activities at the global level.
- Organising events, webinars, and other participatory formats to inform and engage relevant audiences around the achievements and lessons of the joint programme.
- Engage in national, regional and/or global fora and events on the GA, social justice, the creation of decent work and the extension of universal social protection as relevant.

2. Informing relevant audiences, in a clear, accurate, and tailored way, of implemented solutions, including benefits and services made available as a result of the JP.

Primary audience: identified target groups, with particular emphasis on informal workers and vulnerable populations: **Secondary audience:** the population at large.

Activities under objective 2 include:

- Organising awareness raising campaigns around the practical improvements, and particularly around positive changes in existing processes, the expansion of rights, benefits, and services, etc.

3. Ensuring visibility of the work that the government, PUNOs, and other stakeholders of the JP are doing in terms of transition to formality, the creation of decent jobs and social protection extension, so that entry points for further collaboration, alignment of efforts, and acceleration of progress can be easily identified.

Primary audience: prospective funding and financing partners
Secondary audience: all development partners

Activities under objective 3 include:

- Communicating strategically, through the production of a diverse set of media assets and products, around the joint programme and how it connects with broader development efforts in Uzbekistan, around the ambitions of the Global Accelerator, and the potential for leveraging synergies.
- Identifying opportunities for engagement and visibility with prospective funding and financing and development partners (dedicated events, forums, etc.) and ensuring representation of the Global Accelerator and the join programme

ANNEX 9: Detailed Joint Programme Results

Result 1: Workers have access to decent and productive formal employment opportunities and the transition of previously informal enterprises and jobs (in particular in the care and construction sectors) is accelerated.

Output 1: New decent and productive formal entrepreneurship and employment opportunities are created tailored to the needs of men and women.

UNDP Activity 1.1: Identify factors that hinder the conduct of formal business activities and develop proposals.

Background and justification: Uzbekistan's economy is characterised by high levels of informality. It undermines revenue collections, stunts productivity, hinders investment, and traps some of the most vulnerable workers in low-paying, unproductive employment. As much as 34.5% percent of the working population was employed informally in 2022[2], and 42.4% of the adult population is deprived of having a bank account[3], leading to the emergence of a predominantly cash-based economy. A growing private sector is essential for future growth and formal job creation. This underpins a solid tax base that can support financing the transition from a state-dominated economy to one driven by the private sector. Firms report that complex application procedures and high collateral requirements are the second and third most important reasons for not using formal finance[4]. Commercial banks and other lenders generally view Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) as high-risk borrowers. Consequently, small companies often face high interest rates and collateral requirements that they are unable to meet. Financial inclusion is therefore constrained on the supply side. Because of this high borrowing cost most households and firms, rather than using formal finance, save and borrow informally, and few use digital finance products. Accessing business finance is particularly challenging for women, young people, and individuals in Tashkent and southern Uzbekistan. Additionally, more than 90% of adults in Uzbekistan lack access to formal credit channels[5].

Underdeveloped financial systems have often been identified as a potential cause of informality but the direction of causality has been difficult to pin down. Financial development can influence the benefits and costs of informal economic activity undertaken by firms and households. Firms in the informal economy are typically characterised by small scale, low capital-to-labour ratios, lack of investment, low productivity, a low propensity to implement new technologies, and unskilled managers. By influencing firms' investment strategies, financial development promotes the transition of informal firms into the formal sector and, ultimately, encourages capital accumulation and productivity improvements. Financial development reduces the cost of accessing external financing and thus incentivizes investment in higher-productivity projects that allow firms to expand to the scale needed to operate in the formal economy. It also encourages participants of the informal economy to join the formal sector to gain access to credit and financial services. The higher access to credit supply, as a proxy of financial development, decreases the tendency toward the shadow economy[6], even when both formal and informal economies provide the same profit in terms of expected value.
Description of intervention: Conducting a study to identify businesses' regulatory compliance challenges, leading to the development of a streamlined compliance assistance program with online tools and resources. Assessing the availability of financial products will reveal the gaps. Researching credit accessibility will inform the development of new products which are currently missing in the market.

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2 4. Composition and regulatory set-up of Uzbekistan's financial sector | Financing Uzbekistan's Green Transition: Capital Market Development and Opportunities for Green Bond Issuance | OECD library (oecd-ilibrary.org)

3 Uzbekistan Pilot Multidimensional Poverty Index Report 2023 | United Nations Development Programme (undp.org)

4 https://www.undp.org/uzbekistan/publications/development-finance-assessment-republic-uzbekistan

5 Over 90% of Uzbekistan's adults lack formal credit access. DARYO

6 Shrinking the shadow economy: Experimental insights into the role of financial development, Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics, Volume 107, 2023

Relevant SDG target(s): 1, 8, 17

Intended impact: Conducting a comprehensive study to identify regulatory compliance challenges will lead to the development of a streamlined compliance assistance program. This program, equipped with online tools and resources, is expected to reduce the time and cost burden on businesses, facilitating easier compliance and encouraging formalisation. By assessing the availability of financial products and identifying gaps, the initiative will lead to the creation of tailored financial products that better meet the needs of small businesses. This can increase access to finance for small and informal businesses, enabling them to grow and create more jobs. Increased access to finance and formalisation will lift many business owners and their employees out of informality by providing a stable business environment.

Low-hanging fruit: Public awareness campaigns highlighting the benefits of formalisation and available banking support can be launched, with marketing materials distributed through various media channels.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: N/A

Sustainability and exit strategy: By enhancing service levels and expanding its offerings (including for SMEs and Social Enterprises), the banks empower communities. This can lead to accelerated formal business activity and decent job creation. Streamlining processes (management, operational) and leveraging technology can result in reduced costs and improved profitability, more efficient allocation of resources for strategic initiatives. Stronger partnerships with state development banks, commercial banks and SMEs will be established, resulting in SMEs becoming bankable.

ILO Activity 1.1b: Streamlined procedures required for companies to obtain a construction permit.

The World Bank's Doing Business report 2020 ranked Uzbekistan at 69th of 190 economies. Of the components of this indicator, "dealing with construction permits" performed poorly, taking the 132nd place in the world. According to the report, it takes 246 days to obtain a construction permit, which is far longer than the regional average of 170.1 days (Europe and Central Asia). Indeed, the same process takes 102.5 days in Kazakhstan and 167 days in the Kyrgyz Republic. In light of expanding the formal economy and accelerating the creation of formal jobs, improving business climate and inducing more investment are vital. A review of the issuance process of construction permits and shortening the duration are necessary.

The project forms a team consisting of experts on local government administration and business process innovation, relevant government representatives, and business representatives. The team benchmarks Uzbekistan's practices against comparator countries, reviews the whole process of construction permit issuance, identifies processes that can be shortened or streamlined. Policy recommendations and new streamlined standard operating procedures (SOP) are submitted to the government for consideration and implementation. Practical tools such as templates, forms, and workflows, as well as a rough design of IT systems where appropriate, are also developed to help improve the efficiency of local government administration processes.

Relevant SDG target(s): 8.2 and 8.3

Intended impact: By reducing the number of days required to obtain construction permits, the business environment will be improved, leading to a recognition of Uzbekistan as a favourable destination of investment. Therefore, Uzbekistan would be able to attract more investment and stimulate businesses, which help expand the formal economy and create more formal jobs with social protection coverage.

Low-hanging fruit: N/A

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: Uzbekistan foreign direct investment (FDI) for 2022 was USD 2.5 billion. Thanks to improvement in the business environment, FDI increases by at least 0.2%,

which brings an annual increment in FDI inflow to Uzbekistan by USD 5 million.

Sustainability and exit strategy: Implementation of the new SOP does not require external funding or a substantial budget allocation by the government. The new SOP and tools will be used beyond the life of the project.

ILO Activity 1.2: Develop a commentary of the newly adopted Labor Code and make it accessible to all employers and employees.

The revised Labour Code entered into force in April 2023. The government of Uzbekistan requested the ILO to help generate a new Labour Code commentary which explains interpretations of the new Labour Code and disseminate it. The project engages a reputable institution that develops a Labour Code Commentary and organises peer-reviews before finalising the document. It disseminates the Commentary through networks of labour administration, social partners, legal professionals, and academic institutions.

Relevant SDG target(s): 8.8

Intended impact: A Labour Code Commentary helps forge standardised understanding of the Code and promotes the application of labour protection to workers who may not have been previously covered by the labour regulations due to informality. It can also serve to emphasise the importance and influence of international labour standards in shaping domestic labour legislation, rights and responsibilities.

Low-hanging fruit: N/A

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: N/A

Sustainability and exit strategy: The Labour Code Commentary will be used by many professionals beyond the life of the project.

UNDP Activity 1.3: Promote formalisation through Comprehensive Support, Training Programs, and Business Environment Improvement.

Background and justification: Women's leadership pays economic dividends. For example, McKinsey Global Institute[7] found that promoting gender diversity in government and the private sector would add $12 trillion to global GDP over ten years. Companies that are in the top quartile are 21% more likely to become leaders in profitability. A study by the Peterson Institute for International Economics[8], covering 22,000 public companies in 91 countries, found that increasing the proportion of women in management from 0 to 30% led to an average increase in net profit margins of 15%.
At the end of 2022, there were 39,078 small and micro-firms led by women in Uzbekistan, or 7.5% of operating small enterprises. Over the past three years, this figure has grown more slowly than the total number of firms. Because of this, the share of such women's businesses even decreased slightly - from 8.8 to 7.5%[9].
The average annual net revenue in the "female" company is 620 million soums versus 928 million soums in the "male" company, a gap of 49% (2021 data). The annual volume of investment in fixed capital for an enterprise is half that of men for women (97.2 million against 198.3 million soums, 2022). In other words, "female" firms earn less and have a lower base for development and modernization. The sectoral structure of women's small businesses also indicates a gender imbalance. Women executives are overrepresented in trade and services and underrepresented in industry.

[7] mgi power of parity_full report_september.pdf (mckinsey.com)
[8] Is Gender Diversity Profitable? Evidence from a Global Survey | PIIE
[9] Женское лидерство в бизнесе Узбекистана что надо знать (kursiv. media)

Youth and entrepreneurship are integral to fostering inclusive growth in the region. The market assessment highlights the significance of the youth demographic, with a focus on Central Asians in the 18-34 age range. Notably, the number of young Central Asians temporarily leaving their countries annually is a crucial factor, emphasising the need for initiatives like YiB.

Description of intervention: Empower women and youth aspiring to entrepreneurship through comprehensive technical support, including capacity building, incubation, and acceleration programs. This initiative aims to facilitate women and youth's access to essential financial resources such as grants, loans, and other supportive services, thereby enabling them to launch and sustain their business ventures effectively. The main goal of this program is to promote women and youth's entrepreneurship and decent employment through the expansion of entrepreneurial opportunities and skills. The program will be aimed at developing successful entrepreneurship skills and improving the ability to create effective products and services by providing effective tools and mechanisms for entrepreneurship development. The training participants will develop business plans using the acquired skills for further consideration and identification of the best business ideas/projects aimed at sustainable development goals by the selection committee. Successful business ideas/projects will receive grants according to the rules and conditions of the UNDP small grants programme. Mandatory indicators of success are the number of new sustainable jobs created for women, youth, and people with disabilities, increase in financial indicators in terms of profitability by 40-70%, in terms of production volume by at least 50%, increase in the number of indirect beneficiaries by 50%.

Relevant SDG target(s): 1, 8, 5

Intended impact: By supporting women and youth in starting and growing their businesses, this initiative can lead to the creation of new jobs both directly within these enterprises and indirectly in the broader economy through increased demand for goods and services. Capacity building and access to finance can help informal enterprises transition into the formal sector. Women and young entrepreneurs are more likely to reinvest their earnings in their families and communities compared to their male counterparts, amplifying the social returns.

Low-hanging fruit: Women-led and youth-led SMEs are projected to generate significant employment opportunities, with an expectation of creating 50 direct new jobs across 10 enterprises, averaging 5 jobs per SME. Additionally, the broader impact includes the creation of over 1,000 indirect new jobs among SMEs that have received training but were not selected for direct program participation.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: Co-financing: 150,000. 30 women accessing loans worth ca. 5,000 each amounts to 150,000 USD. The piloting/methodology can potentially leverage future loans for women entrepreneurs (e.g. under the President's Decree #122 [10] "In order to increase the economic activity of women, to provide vocational training and employment, and to attract them to entrepreneurship, a total of 100 million US dollars equivalent to 14 percent annual rate for a period of seven years with a three-year grace period from the Fund for Recovery and Development, of which Allocation of credit resources in the amount of 35 million US dollars to AT "Khalq Bank", 35 million US dollars to ADB "Business Development Bank" and 30 million US dollars to ADB "Microkreditbank"."
The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is improving access to finance for young entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan by providing funds to privately owned financial institution, Davr Bank. Davr Bank will join the EBRD's Youth in Business (YiB) programme, which was launched in 2023. The EBRD's senior loan of up to US$ 15 million (€13.8 million), extended to Davr Bank under the YiB programme, will boost youth entrepreneurship and employment in Uzbekistan. In addition to financial support, eligible small firms, owned or led by young entrepreneurs, will be able to develop business skills through training, advisory services and networking opportunities provided by the EBRD's Advice for Small Businesses programme.

[10] PQ-122-сон 07.03.2024. Xotin-qizlarning tadbifocal person for JP and will mobilise rkorligini yo'lga qo'yish va rivojlantirishni qo'llab-quvvatlashga oid qo'shimcha chora-tadbirlar to'g'risida (lex.uz)

Sustainability and exit strategy: Focusing on education and skill-building not just for women and young entrepreneurs but also for members of the community, helping to create a knowledgeable base that can continue to foster local economic development. Encouraging participants to create business models that generate their own revenues and profits, which can be reinvested into the business and the community. Building robust partnerships with government agencies, educational institutions, NGOs, and the private sector can provide ongoing support and resources.

UNDP Activity 1.4 Introduction of services for consulting business entities on formal activities at the Business Development Bank.

Background and Justification: On September 4, the presidential decree [PD-292][11] was adopted "On measures to implement the tasks set in the open dialogue of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan with entrepreneurs in 2023". The Business Development Bank (BDB) and the following were established under decree:

- A small business development fund;
- 14 small business assistance centres in the regions.

As part of family entrepreneurship programs, the Business Development Bank (BDB) allocates loans for small business projects for a period of up to 7 years. For entrepreneurs with a positive credit and tax history, the collateral requirement will be reduced by 50%. Accordingly, loans will be allocated for up to 10 years at an annual rate of 4% in foreign currency and 10% in national currency to finance the projects of entrepreneurs included in this program.

Description of intervention: UNDP will support in enhancing the quality benchmarks of the BDB by elevating service levels, securing a leadership position, and streamlining management and operational processes; broadening the spectrum of banking services through the development of an information technology system tailored to contemporary needs, fostering an exemplary corporate culture, and boosting labor productivity; Strengthening the resilience of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and social enterprises by devising robust financial instruments and equitable financing mechanisms; Offering technical assistance to state development banks and commercial banks to evaluate and improve the capabilities and services of their Consulting Centers, thereby improving support to SMEs.
Relevant SDG target:1, 5 and 8

Intended impact. Increased access to finance can lead to increased business growth and expansion, creating decent new jobs. Easier access to and more effective applications could encourage more entrepreneurship, leading to job creation and /or expansion of jobs in new businesses. By simplifying the application process, more businesses may be incentivized to formalise to be eligible for financing. Formalization brings benefits to enterprises and society alike such as better access to markets, improved working conditions and greater tax compliance. Increased job creation can lead to higher incomes for employees, improving their access to social services and protections. SDG-related social returns: Increased business activity can contribute to poverty reduction by creating jobs and raising incomes; Easier access to finance can empower women entrepreneurs, promoting gender equality; By supporting small businesses, the initiative can contribute to reducing income inequality and thus poverty.

Low-hanging fruit. The BDB is the 1st stop for all SMEs applying for state subsidised finance. Through this targeted and rapidly implementable initiative, a significant increase in quality and success rate can be expected, resulting in a longer and better pipeline development and leads to new/expanded businesses and new/protected jobs.
Co-financing: 75 million USD. Cabinet of Ministers #37 decision "The National Agency for Prospective Projects, together with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, received funds of 75 million US dollars allocated by the Recovery and Development Fund to increase the capital of the "Business Development

[11] Biznesni rivojlantirish banki (brb.uz)

Bank" (BDB) to allocate to entrepreneurs. Since it is a new institution, the BDB is concerned about the capacities of its staff to process the funds, the efficiency of the process and therefore whether it will be awarded future funding for this activity.All 120 staff trained to enhance process loans applications for entrepreneurs worth up to 75 million USD through application of a targeted and efficient methodology in 2024. This is a new activity for BDB and the piloting will help BDB to prove itself and thus be in a position to receive further funds expected to be worth ca. 75 million during the second year of the project.
Sustainability. By enhancing service levels and expanding its offerings (including for SMEs and Social Enterprises), the bank empowers communities. This can lead to accelerated formal business activity and decent job creation. Streamlining processes (management, operational) and leveraging technology can result in reduced costs and improved profitability, more efficient allocation of resources for strategic initiatives. Stronger partnerships with state development banks, commercial banks and SMES.

UNDP & UN Women **Activity 1.5:** Conduct information campaigns to raise awareness of employers (entrepreneurs) and citizens about labour and social rights and responsibilities.

Background and justification: SMEs' awareness is essential for sustainable economic growth and development, therefore, receiving more professional assistance, information, knowledge, etc. could be crucial to their success. SMEs may know different terms and concepts related to digitalization and formality but are unaware of how to put them into practice, showing that they have theoretical knowledge, but not practical knowledge.
SMEs represent a key win-win strategy and are one of the main drivers of formalisation. Taken together, SMEs have a greater impact on the economy and the shadow economy than large companies, since they typically represent 95-99% of all enterprises. Thus the dynamics of formality highly depend on how small businesses can integrate sustainable practices into their business activities.

Description of intervention: Awareness-raising campaign to educate a wider audience of SMEs about formality generally and the importance and benefits of formalisation. This campaign will disseminate information through knowledge products, and digital content, aiming to foster a widespread cultural shift towards sustainability and responsible business practices within the SME community.

Relevant SDG target(s): 1, 4, 8, 17

Intended impact: Knowledge products can offer guidelines and standards that businesses need to meet to be considered compliant within formal transitions. This can streamline processes and encourage businesses to adopt formal structures to meet these standards.

Low-hanging fruit: These resources can be directly applied to enhance current projects or strategies, fostering quicker transition to formality.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: N/A

Sustainability and exit strategy: Advocating the integration of support for green and digital transitions into local and national policies.

UNWOMEN **Activity 1.6** Increasing women's entrepreneurship through skills development.

Background and justification: Women's entrepreneurship is crucial for social and economic development, but gender inequalities continue to create significant disparities in opportunities for women to initiate and expand their businesses. Women-owned businesses tend to be smaller and operate in sectors with limited growth potential and are often found in the informal economy. To increase women's labour force participation by providing necessary skill sets for them will not only contribute economic growth but also to national prosperity.

Description of intervention: Main intervention steps include 'ensuring a more supportive environment for

women', 'providing digital and financial literacy skill sets to women' and 'increasing entrepreneurial skills as well as e-commerce'. In line with these efforts to equalise demand and supply, the public and private sector mapping process will be led simultaneously.

Relevant SDG target(s): 5, 8, 10, 17

Intended impact: Skilled women, increased labour force participation, sustained equal opportunities for market entry and growth.

Low-hanging fruit: Increased productivity, employability and contribution to economic growth.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: N/A

Sustainability and exit strategy: More role models, more success stories, equal market conditions will enable the system to run by itself without extra interventions.

UN WOMEN **Activity 1.7** Ensure gender equality and non-discrimination at work. Preparing legislative and practical proposals that covers both public and private sectors.

Description of intervention: Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others because of characteristics that are not related to the person's competencies or the inherent requirements of the job. It is well known that women face discrimination at all levels starting even before hiring, on the job or upon leaving. All workers and job seekers have the right to be treated equally, regardless of any attributes other than their ability to do the job. Freedom from discrimination is a fundamental human right. It is essential for workers but especially for women to be able to choose their employment freely, to develop their potential to the full and to be rewarded based on merit. With this activity, legislative scanning accompanied by its interpretation to practice will be assessed and accordingly legislative and implementation related proposals will be developed.

Relevant SDG target(s): 5, 8, 10, 17

Intended impact: Improved legislation and practice in line with non-discrimination and gender equality principle.

Low-hanging fruit: Decreased inequalities at workplace stemmed from gender in the country.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: N/A

Sustainability and exit strategy: Advocating expansion of the implementation and documenting best practices both from public and private sectors.

UN WOMEN **Activity 1.8** Increasing implementation of Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) for private sector and increase women's labour force participation.

Description of intervention: The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) are a set of Principles offering guidance to business on how to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. Established by UN Women and UN Global Compact, the WEPs are informed by international labour and human rights standards and grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment.

WEPs are a primary vehicle for corporate delivery on gender equality dimensions of the 2030 agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. By joining the WEPs community, the CEO signals commitment to this agenda at the highest levels of the company and to work collaboratively in multi-

stakeholder networks to foster business practices that empower women. These include equal pay for work of equal value, gender-responsive supply chain practices and zero tolerance against sexual harassment in the workplace.

Relevant SDG target(s): 5, 8, 10, 17

Intended impact: WEPs offer a great platform for change by triggering the private sector. Private sector is a main drive to generate innovation, employment and financing that will bridge the gender gap in the world of work and also advance SGDs. With that companies will invest in women and support women's leadership and decision making, and commit to gender equality typically to outperform their competitors.

Low-hanging fruit: Increased women's leadership and decision making in addition to increase women's labour force participation

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: N/A

Sustainability and exit strategy: WEP is a self-paced programme that will create great added value to the companies who are part of which will incentivize others automatically to enhance fair market economy without any gender based discriminations.

ILO Activity 1.9: Innovative approaches to formalise informal construction enterprises and workers.

The construction sector accounted for 6.2% of the GDP in 2023 and employs about 1.3 million people. Uzbekistan is currently experiencing a construction boom thanks to high demand in the housing market. This trend is expected to stay given the demographic trend and urbanisation. High informality of the construction sector, however, is a matter of policymakers' concern. In fact, 73% of construction workers are estimated to be in informal employment, according to the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction. Informal construction workers are exposed to various forms of vulnerabilities due to a lack of social protection coverage despite a high likelihood of occupational injuries associated with construction work, insufficient compliance with occupational safety and health standards, and absence of labour protection due to informality.

The project in cooperation with the government and social partners runs awareness raising campaigns to promote formalisation of informal construction companies and workers. It also pilots integration of labour conditionalities in large public construction contracts, obliging contractors to promote formalisation of construction workers who work on the construction sites. To enhance monitoring and enforcement, the project relied on third-party monitoring by trade unions given the moratorium placed on labour inspection. It builds the capacity of trade union inspectors who specialise in the construction sector.

Relevant SDG target(s): 8.8

Intended impact: Thanks to project interventions, at least 8,000 informal construction workers are formalised.

Low-hanging fruit: Awareness raising campaigns on the rights and obligations of enterprises and workers will be launched targeting informal construction enterprises and workers. Behavioural changes are expected to be observed within nine months.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: If 8,000 informal workers start paying social tax, the government raises tax revenue. Assuming that each formalised worker pays UZS 330,000 per year, the government raises UZS 2.64 billion (approximately USD 209 thousand per year. In ten years, the increment to the public revenue exceeds USD 2 million.

Sustainability and exit strategy: The initiative increases the public revenue. The initiative can be sustained through public tenders for large construction works.

Output 2: Informal jobs in the care economy that hinder women's employment are transitioned into the formal sector at an accelerated pace.

UNDP & UN WOMEN Activity 2.1 Researching the mechanisms of recognition and formalisation of work of those employed in paid and unpaid domestic and care work.

Background and justification: One specific sector significantly impacted by informality is domestic work, particularly among women. Domestic workers are doing critical work to ensure that our economy functions and our families and communities thrive. Yet while care for households, children, people with disabilities, and older adults is invaluable, domestic workers - who are disproportionately women, immigrant women and, depending on the job, too often work in precarious conditions without formalised employment arrangements. Families employing domestic workers may have little experience as employers and may not understand their legal responsibilities, their employees' rights, and best practices for maintaining a high-quality, healthy and safe employment environment. Around 81% are in informal employment, which is twice the share of informal employment among other employees. They also face some of the most strenuous working conditions[12]. Of the 75.6 million domestic workers worldwide, 76.2% are women[13].

Articles 514-520 of the new version of the Labor Code of Uzbekistan[14] legally strengthen this issue. In particular, article 514 of the Code defines domestic workers and states that an indefinite or fixed-term employment contract can be concluded with a domestic worker who is being recruited, if the parties have reached an agreement on providing the domestic worker with food and housing, this condition is part of the content of the employment contract. If the social tax is paid, the length of service of domestic workers is included in the length of service of the employee. Calculation of the length of service of a domestic worker is carried out on the basis of information on the payment of social tax.

Despite significant improvements in the Labor code, most of the population are not aware of existing legislation which is actually favourable for them, so there is a need for awareness raising and information dissemination campaigns. Also there is a need for a simplified digital agreement that both employers and domestic workers can choose to use as a starting point to facilitate an open discussion about and create a shared understanding of the terms of employment. UN Women will lead the analysis focusing on the costing of unpaid care work and its impact on the national economy as in Uzbekistan, women do the vast majority of the unpaid work, including child care, house chores and farming. This unpaid work is essential for households and economies to function, but it is also valued less than paid work.

Description of intervention: A comprehensive initiative is planned to address the challenges faced by domestic workers, starting with a needs assessment to determine their specific requirements. This includes analysing the existing legislative framework to understand the legal backdrop and assessing gender-specific aspects of informal domestic work. Additionally, the project will support the development of sample digital employment agreements for cleaners, home care workers, and nannies, providing clear guidelines for both employers and employees. To enhance the impact of these measures, awareness-raising campaigns will be conducted, particularly targeting domestic workers who are women and youth, to ensure they are informed about their rights and the resources available to them. UN Women will focus

[12] Who are domestic workers | International Labour Organization (ilo.org)
[13] Who are domestic workers | International Labour Organization (ilo.org)
[14] 28.10.2022. O'zbekiston Respublikasining Mehnat kodeksi (lex.uz)

on investing in infrastructure, social services and data collection. Time-use surveys and sex-disaggregated data will help determine the monetary value of unpaid work and inform policy in Uzbekistan.

Relevant SDG target(s): 1, 5, 8, 17

Intended impact: The implementation of sample employment agreements can help transition many domestic workers from informal to formal employment. Standardised employment contracts can ensure that domestic workers have access to fair working hours, rest periods and recourse in case of grievances, which contributes to their overall well-being.

Low-hanging fruit: Initiating awareness campaigns can quickly reach a large audience of domestic workers, particularly women and youth. These campaigns can effectively inform them about their rights, available resources, and new employment standards, potentially leading to immediate improvements in their knowledge and self-advocacy.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: Co-financing: 200,000 USD. Discussions with the President´s Office indicated a strong willingness to cofinance this initiative.

Sustainability and exit strategy: Sharing success stories within the community to increase visibility and support for the initiatives. This not only builds pride but also encourages broader community involvement and buy-in. Revenue-generating activities that can support themselves financially while fulfilling social goals are possible. Establishing long-term partnerships with educational and training institutions to continually update and integrate relevant training programs that support the initiatives.

ILO **Activity 2.2:** Formalisation and organisation of informal care workers through Social and Solidarity Economy.

There is a growing need for care globally, however, proper recognition of the contribution of care providers still lags behind, whether at the level of enhancing professionalisation of care services or acknowledgment of unpaid care work performed by household members, usually women. Among paid care workers (which include nurses, teachers, doctors, or personal care workers), domestic workers provide direct and indirect care services to private households. Domestic workers play an integral role in care provision. Even when counting only those employed directly by households, domestic workers account for 25 per cent of all care workers, with that proportion becoming much higher when also considering those employed by or through service providers.

By all estimates, the care economy, including employment in domestic work, is expected to grow in line with the demand for childcare and care for the elderly, which is increasing in all regions, with the potential of creating millions of jobs in the coming years. However, care work, and particularly domestic work, remains characterised by insufficient or inadequate labour and social protection and domestic workers often do not have access to labour rights and social protection and lack access to care rights and services for themselves and their families. Domestic work is still invisible and not recognised, thus remains one the sectors with the highest share of informal employment The informal nature of service provision of home-based care and domestic work, where formalisation is vital so that workers can be fully covered by labour and social protection legislations, both in law and practice. Recognizing domestic workers as care workers, including them as care providers within national care policies and social security systems, and ensuring they too have access to labour and social security rights and care services can contribute to ensuring a sufficient supply of domestic workers qualified to meet the care needs of the future, while ensuring decent work for domestic workers.

On the other hand, given the growing demand on care services, as people-centred, member-owned businesses, cooperatives and other entities within the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) have emerged as an innovative form of care provision, particularly in the absence of other viable public or

private options. Around the world, SSE entities have formed to meet the needs of care recipients, including children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities with care needs. Research suggests that these enterprises provide better working conditions, such as regularised hours, formal employment, access to benefits, and bargaining power, particularly for women workers, compared to other forms of enterprises.

The proposal aims at structuring a response to care work needs in Uzbekistan by exploring cooperatives as entry points and bringing international experience in recognizing the added value of and formalising domestic workers in different countries. This intervention will adopt a context-specific approach to assess the possibility of establishing a care cooperative that caters for care needs and will investigate new ways of organising informal care workers under workers' organisation and represent their interest in social dialogue platforms (including national, sectoral and regional Tripartite Councils). UN Women will focus on increasing the capacity and quality of care workers and improve their contribution to formal economy.

Relevant SDG target(s): 8.8

Intended impact: The overall impact of the intervention is to facilitate formalisation of informal care workers through new solutions under social and solidarity economy, improve national policies to integrate decent working conditions for care workers and increase representation of informal care workers in trade unions and social dialogue mechanisms.

Low-hanging fruit: Increased capacity of the constituents through adaptation of ILO's global tools into national context.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: N/A

Sustainability and exit strategy: Availability of ILO's global tools adapted to the national context would lead to an institution's sustainability through capacity building in the long run.

Result 2: The extension of inclusive social protection coverage to workers in the informal economy, and those currently outside of the labour force with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, is accelerated.

Output 3: Gender sensitive social insurance schemes are extended, and coverage is extended to informal and migrant workers.

ILO Activity 3.1. Improving the social insurance system based on actuarial analyses.

As part of the formalisation process, the Government of Uzbekistan has set among its national priorities the development and adoption of a social insurance law. The participation of workers and employers would be crucial for the successful implementation of the law, as they will be the main contributors. It is therefore important to have a comprehensive law, which both encompass all social protection branches as per international labour standards and cover all types of employment to avoid any legal exclusion, including vulnerable and informal economy workers. The Government of Uzbekistan committed to ratify the ILO Convention No 102 on social security (minimum standards) and the ILO Convention No 183 on Maternity protection by 2030. The new Social Insurance Law should comply with the relevant conventions. A comparative analysis between the forthcoming social insurance law and the Conventions No 102 and No 183 could be undertaken to facilitate the ratification by the GoU. The implementation of the law, in particular of the branches that are most relevant to women, youth, persons with disabilities and workers in the informal economy will require the preparation of feasibility studies, drafting executive regulations and operationalisation of the schemes.

As per good governance practices included in the social protection conventions mentioned above, actuarial studies are requested to guarantee the financial sustainability of the schemes. Social protection schemes are subject to variation in their resources and expenditures. Actuarial valuations intend to support policy-decision makers by generating evidence-based information with the comparison of these resources and expenditures to assess the long-term financial equilibrium, providing analysis for advocacy and policy options for reforms by relevant stakeholders. Actuarial models need to be tailored-made to the provisions and parameters of each scheme. While the development of actuarial models requires specific expertise, national social protection institutions also need to be able to run these models on a regular basis. The ILO plans to strengthen actuarial capacity of NASP and other national social protection partners with the objective of a transfer of the actuarial models towards a full ownership by national institutions, as well as the interpretation of the models for the preparation of actuarial reports.

Relevant SDG target(s): 1.3 and 10.1

Intended impact: The adoption of a social insurance law and its progressive implementation should enable it to establish a more comprehensive social protection system, with improved benefit adequacy.

Low-hanging fruit: The technical support to the Government of Uzbekistan should enable the adoption of the Social Insurance law in 2024, and progressive implementation of the law via the executive regulations should enable it to extend social protection coverage.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: N/A

ILO Activity 3.2 . Extending the types of benefits paid from the Social Insurance Fund.

The Government of Uzbekistan is planning to adopt its social insurance law by 2024 covering three main contingencies, namely work injury, unemployment insurance and maternity benefits which are expected to be implemented between 2025 and 2027. The law will enable to extend the population coverage, between which the principles of collective financing and risk pooling will apply. The social insurance law needs to identify sources of funding for these 3 contingencies, which will enable the social protection system to be financially sustainable. Fiscal space analysis and actuarial valuation will measure various scenarii, for at least one contingency targeted at workers in the informal economy, balancing the financial expenditures and resources (which would increase with formalisation) to the contributory capacities of the different types of workers, especially workers in the informal economy.

With the support of actuarial models, social protection institutions will be able to assess the cost of different scenarios of extension of at least one contingency, as well as support policy decision makers. At the request of the Government of Uzbekistan, the ILO will undertake costing analysis of various scenarios of at least one social benefit as per international social protection standards, as well as identify international best practices to extend coverage, in particular for low income workers, informal economy workers and other vulnerable groups. This would be done in close coordination with the Government, social partners, as well as other relevant stakeholders and development partners and in particular the World Bank with which the ILO will partner to develop a social insurance implementation roadmap as well as assess additional contingencies.

Relevant SDG target(s): 1.3

Intended impact: Evidence-based analysis will support the Government of Uzbekistan to choose between different scenarios of social protection extension.

Low-hanging fruit: A more comprehensive package of social protection schemes is identified.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: The scope of this activity would be larger depending on whether Uzbekistan is selected for the M-GA track, in collaboration with the World Bank.

ILO Activity 3.3 Development of social insurance models that take into account the needs of the population groups employed in the informal economy, households, seasonal, temporary and one-time workers and others.

An in-depth informality analysis would be requested to identify the challenges for workers currently in the informal economy to participate in contributory social protection schemes, and consider possible ways of overcoming such barriers, including legal, financial, administrative and awareness barriers. These workers include workers in the formal sector without a proper employment contract, in particular in workers in SMEs; self-employed workers in the informal economy with limited contributory capacities and often volatile earnings; workers in specific sectors or occupations with high levels of informality, including workers in agriculture (especially seasonal workers), construction, taxi drivers, domestic workers, and workers on digital platforms. In consultation with representatives of these workers and – where available - employers, policy options for the extension of coverage and the progressive formalisation of enterprises and employment could be discussed to ensure adequacy, adaptability, and participation. These options will consider the contributory capacities of these groups as well as challenges for these groups to access benefits. More research/surveys are needed to identify these barriers and develop policy options through an inclusive social dialogue. This activity will also contribute to result 1 by increasing domestic resources, enhancing the government scope of action including for investments in formal job creation and by increasing productivity as well as to result 2, by supporting formalisation directly in the case of the formalisation of employees affiliated with contributory social security, which means as well their registration as workers and their coverage by adequate labour protection; and indirectly by reducing vulnerabilities and in particular income insecurity and enabling workers to seize opportunities and engage in formalisation in a sustainable way.

Some workers in the informal economy may have very limited or no contributory capacities, for example women involved in subsistence agriculture. Special attention should be given to these economically vulnerable and sometimes marginalised groups, for which social protection benefits need to be provided in combination with graduation, active labour market policies. Updating a package of interventions integrating employment and social protection to respond to their specific needs would require a national social dialogue from the design phase.

This is in particular focused on informal workers employed in agriculture as well as those performing one-time and seasonal work which tend to have low incomes, are vulnerable and are likely to have very limited contributory capacity. For such informal workers, it is proposed to combine employment and protection services through an integrated programme. A design study of such a programme may include a combination of labour market programmes (LMPs) and unemployment benefits, and/or combining labour market programmes and employment security guarantees in particular for informal workers involved in agriculture to be provided with temporary employment for a certain number of days per year (off-season period in agriculture in Uzbekistan) and a minimum guaranteed income for the same period; and/or combining temporary employment guarantees with access to a package of social services. The design of such a package of services would rely on some forms of subsidisation for this population and could be subject to a national dialogue. To increase the effectiveness of such interventions, the integration of all databases containing lists of vulnerable categories would allow to identify recipients according to the extent and cause of their vulnerability; avoid administrative function duplication; and avoid duplication in the provision of the same social services. This is to be further explored depending on available resources and planned projects by other development partners including the WB. Moreover, the design study of such a programme would also include a detailed budget analysis (social protection budget review) and would also include avenues for funding reallocation, as part of a fiscal space analysis.

Relevant SDG target(s): 1.3

Intended impact: A social protection schemes adapted to the needs of the vulnerable groups is designed.

Low-hanging fruit: A broader number of vulnerable persons and workers in the informal economy

participate in social protection schemes increasing their income security and well-being.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: N/A

ILO Activity 3.4 Development and implementation of the information strategy of social insurance coverage of employees in the informal economy.

Due to increasing informality level and system design, the majority of the working age population does not have adequate security when they face life cycle risks, which poses a threat for the future sustainability of the pension system. The Government has shown a strong commitment to increase social protection of these vulnerable groups in the recently adopted National Strategy for Social Protection of the Population of Uzbekistan until 2030. There are plans to introduce maternity, temporary disability and unemployment benefits under a strengthened social insurance system, with possible extension of these benefits to informal economy workers.

However, implementing such policy changes requires a strengthened social dialogue and public effective participation. Considering the local context, it would be necessary to develop an information strategy focused on addressing changes in the social insurance legal basis in the country for the working-age population. The JP will support this strategy, in close collaboration with social partners, to promote the national formalisation, employment promotion and extension of coverage by social protection priorities as announced by the Government with tripartite involvement of the government, social partners, NGOs involvement.. The communication strategy should contribute to an increased number of formalised workers and the extension of social protection coverage.

Relevant SDG target(s): 1.3, 8.3, 10.2 and 10.4

Intended impact: Social protection benefits extension for workers in informal economy and their family members.

Low-hanging fruit: strengthened social dialogue and social partners' capacity to engage on policy level discussions related to the extension of social protection to informal workers.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: N/A

Output 4: Gender sensitive social assistance schemes' coverage is extended, including to vulnerable groups to support a just transition to formality.

UNICEF Activity 4.1 Undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of existing social protection programmes, identifying vulnerable groups who are currently out of the social protection system, assessing the magnitude of their exclusion, and identifying barriers to inclusion.

Background and justification: despite the recent overall increase in the number of beneficiaries and state funding for the social assistance benefits in Uzbekistan, there are substantial groups of vulnerable population, which are still excluded from the social protection system. For example, coverage of the social assistance benefits for low-income families is 40% in the lowest income quintile. Despite nearly 1 mln babies born in Uzbekistan every year, in 2023 there were fewer than 16,000 beneficiaries of the maternity benefits for women working in a private sector. The eligibility requirements for the social benefits still exclude those families that have members of working age and without a (proven) disability, but for some reasons are engaged in the informal economy or cannot be economically active at all. These features significantly limit the programmes' transformative potential and exclude many families from the social protection system despite their needs for support.

Description of intervention(s): the activity implies undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of existing social cash transfers in protecting vulnerable groups and promoting their

economic activation. It also involves identifying vulnerable groups who are currently out of the social protection system, assessing the magnitude of their exclusion, and identifying barriers to inclusion. The activity will examine the existing procedures, eligibility rules and delivery mechanisms in identifying possible barriers for inclusion. The analysis will also evaluate the design, adequacy, and coverage of social protection programmes in enabling and incentivizing vulnerable groups to engage in economic activities and employment. The study aims to identify barriers, inform policy adjustments, and enhance the reach and effectiveness of social welfare investments. Key inquiries include evaluating the efficacy of social transfers for eligible populations, understanding underutilization of services, identifying barriers to entitlement access, assessing unmet needs, and gauging beneficiary satisfaction with service quality and cash transfers. The study will target the poorest 40% of the population based on the Household Budget Survey by the National Statistics Office of Uzbekistan. Key barriers to be explored encompass bureaucratic hurdles, geographical accessibility, social stigma, financial constraints, informational gaps, beneficiary perceptions, and documentation challenges.

Relevant SDG target(s): 1.3 and 10.4

Intended impact: the proposed analysis will inform the development of effective and innovative measures on improving inclusion of vulnerable groups into social protection. The generated knowledge and evidence will be key in ensuring that the proposed measures will be effective, relevant and sustainable.

Low-hanging fruit: the proposed study will be based on recent similar studies, allowing to utilise existing partnerships and agreements to arrange data collection and analysis as well as accessing the existing survey and administrative data.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: N/A

Sustainability and exit strategy: the study will be implemented jointly with national think tanks, and it will ensure that the study findings will be used in national policy making and advocacy.

UNICEF **Activity 4.2** Development of effective and innovative measures to support inclusion of the vulnerable groups (women, youth, returning migrants, people with disabilities, families living in remote areas and ethnic minorities) into social protection programs.

Background and justification: Activity 4.2 is based on the outcomes of Activity 4.1.

Description of intervention(s): the activity will focus on designing policy recommendations on revising design, procedures and delivery mechanisms to substantially improve access for the vulnerable groups to the social protection programmes. For example, the activity will develop recommendations on revising procedures and delivery mechanisms to substantially improve access of women working in the private sector to maternity benefits. Improved access to social benefits strengthens opportunities and incentives for the vulnerable groups to benefit from the accelerated job creation and employment formalisation. For example, enhancing mechanisms for working women to exercise their entitlements for the maternity benefits undoubtedly raises women's incentives in getting formal employment. Child benefits in low-income families provide additional protection for children from being engaged in economic activities or chores to the extent above their age-specific threshold.
Specific attention will be paid into ensuring that the proposed policy recommendations will result in such designs, procedures and delivery mechanisms that can be effectively extended in the case of emergencies and shocks. The policy recommendations will also include provisions for inclusion into the national emergency response framework, whenever relevant.
The development of the policy recommendations will be coupled with a strong advocacy campaign on their implementation. The activity will be implemented in close collaboration with relevant partners including social partners.

Relevant SDG target(s): 1.3, 10.1 and 10.4

Intended impact: the policy recommendations should result in national decrees and resolutions, which should pave a clear path on inclusion of vulnerable groups into the national social protection system.

Low-hanging fruit: the National Agency of Social Protection is looking for measures to increase effectiveness of the social assistance programmes, which offers a conducive environment to design and implement such measures as intended in Activity 4.2.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: in May 2024 the total number of families receiving child benefits for low-income families was 1.3 mln. The ongoing discussions with the National Agency of Social Protection indicate that in the presence of effective measures to increase coverage among the lowest income quantiles, as implied by Activity 4.2, the agency is ready to commit to increase the total number of the programme's beneficiaries to 1.5 mln families in 2024-2025 and to 1.8 million in 2025-2026. This should result in the increase in the overall state expenditures to this programme by 1.19 trln. UZS (94 mln USD) in 2025 and 1.87 trln. UZS (148 mln. USD) in 2026.

Sustainability and exit strategy: Under the leadership of the National Agency of Social Protection, an interagency working group will be established to support the development of the policy recommendations. The recommendations will be discussed and validated by the working group. The Joint Programme will also support the development of the relevant legal documents for the implementation of the policy recommendations.

UNICEF **Activity 4.3** Introduction of comprehensive social protection programmes to reduce engagement of minors in the informal economy, specifically in economic activities and household chores that are exceeding age-appropriate thresholds.

Background and justification: since 2020 Uzbekistan eradicated systematic use of child labour, in particular, in cotton fields. However, the analysis of UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey data collected in Uzbekistan in 2021-2022, reveals that 29.7% of children in Uzbekistan are in harmful working conditions and 15.4% are engaged in hazardous works. The analysis has also established that low income, unfavourable living conditions, and limited access to information in households are associated with the increased likelihood of their children to be engaged in works above their age threshold. Harmful practices, e.g. violent upbringing and acceptance to domestic violence, were also strongly positively correlated with children's working. Finally, the households with the main source of income in agriculture, livestock caring, and home production tended to make their children engaged in harmful works. It was also established that the child labour resulted in school dropouts, was positively associated with children feeling anxious, nervous, and worried at home. International evidence also demonstrates that strengthening family-level employment and entrepreneurship is often associated with increased use of child labour. Therefore, any programmes and interventions implying the development of family-level employment and entrepreneurship should be accompanied by effective mechanisms to safeguard children from the engagement into economic activities and household chores above their age-appropriate thresholds.

Description of intervention(s): the activity will focus on undertaking a comprehensive analysis of causes of child labour.
The activity will also undertake a comprehensive review of the national legislation on child labour and identify potential loopholes in its implementation and examine the strength and adequacy of the relevant enforcement mechanisms. Specifically, the activity will check whether the national poverty reduction interventions and programmes contain effective safeguarding mechanisms for children from being engaged into economic activities or household chores to the extent exceeding their age-appropriate thresholds.
The knowledge and evidence generation will then transform into the development of the drafts of legal documents enhancing protection of children in Uzbekistan from labour as well as the design of cash transfers, which would reduce incentives to engage children into labour.

Relevant SDG target(s): 1.3 and 10.4

Intended impact: the activity will result in the reduction of the number of children engaged into economic activities or household chores to the extent exceeding their age-appropriate thresholds.

Low-hanging fruit: N/A

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: N/A

Sustainability and exit strategy: under the leadership of the National Agency of Social Protection, an interagency working group will be established to support the development of the policy recommendations. The recommendations will be discussed and validated by the working group. The Joint Programme will also support the development of the relevant legal documents for the implementation of the policy recommendations.

UNICEF **Activity 4.4** Establishing appropriate interagency coordination mechanisms through digitalization in delivery of multifaceted, comprehensive social protection for the vulnerable groups (women, youth, returning migrants, people with disabilities, families living in remote areas and ethnic minorities).

Background and justification: there is substantial international evidence on digitalization lowering inclusion barriers for the vulnerable groups and thus facilitating improvement of accessibility of social protection programmes. Besides, delivery of multifaceted and comprehensive social protection requires effective interagency coordination, which could be enabled through establishing effective integration and interoperability of the digital databases and systems used by various social protection providers.

Description of intervention(s): Establishing appropriate interagency coordination mechanisms in delivery of multifaceted, comprehensive social protection for the vulnerable groups. The mechanisms imply identification of the needs, establishing individual social support plans and facilitation to the inclusion into relevant social protection programmes. The activity will focus on designing digital solutions on improving connectedness between the social protection providers, enhancing their abilities to refer and direct beneficiaries to each other, where community level (makhalla 7) workforce implements overall coordination in provision of social protection. The activity will focus on the development of the technical and functional requirements for the integration of the Single Registry and Social Protection Platform with the Interagency Platform “Single National Employment System” and other relevant databases and systems. The development of the technical and functional requirements will be coupled with the technical analysis of the existing database and systems relevant to social protection delivery.
The activity will result into a costed and timed action plan on integrating the Single Registry and Social Protection Platform with the Interagency Platform “Single National Employment System” and other relevant databases/systems, establishing necessary interoperability and information exchange to enable the interagency coordination necessary for the delivery of multifaceted, comprehensive social protection for the vulnerable groups.

Relevant SDG target(s): 1.3 and 10.4

Intended impact: the activity will result in a costed and timed action plan implying provision of the integration and interoperability among the digital databases and systems, which are necessary for the delivery of multifaceted, comprehensive social protection for the vulnerable groups.

Low-hanging fruit: given the close involvement of UNICEF into the development of Single Registry, The Joint Programme is well placed in utilising the existing partnerships and agreements on implementing Activity 4.4.

Potential for leveraging of funding and financing: over 2018-2023 Single Registry was a key enabling factor

in the 8-fold growth of the total state funding for the child benefits for low-income families from 1,555.1 bln UZS (187 mln USD) in 2018 to 12,337.5 bln UZS (1.07 bln USD) in 2023 with the number of families receiving the benefits growing from 496,447 in 2018 to 2,198,965 in 2023.

Sustainability and exit strategy: a national technical working group will be established, which will be responsible for the provision of the consultations and validation of the proposed technical solutions as well as the costed/timed action plan on their implementation.