

Closure Stage Quality Assurance Report

Form Status: Approved

Overall Rating:	Satisfactory
Decision:	
Portfolio/Project Number:	00090254
Portfolio/Project Title:	Employment in Small Towns
Portfolio/Project Date:	2016-09-01 / 2020-04-30

Strategic**Quality Rating: Exemplary**

1. Did the project pro-actively identified changes to the external environment and incorporated them into the project strategy?

- 3: *The project team identified relevant changes in the external environment that may present new opportunities or threats to the project's ability to achieve its objectives, assumptions were tested to determine if the project's strategy was valid. There is some evidence that the project board considered the implications, and documented the changes needed to the project in response. (all must be true)*
- 2: The project team identified relevant changes in the external environment that may present new opportunities or threats to the project's ability to achieve its objectives. There is some evidence that the project board discussed this, but relevant changes did not fully integrate in the project. (both must be true)
- 1: The project team considered relevant changes in the external environment since implementation began, but there is no evidence that the project team considered these changes to the project as a result.

Evidence:

The project team has identified relevant changes in the external environment. All changes, threats and opportunities have been discussed at the Project Board meetings, corrective measures were taken whenever needed. In addition to the initially planned activities the project managed to mobilize US\$48,600 funding from private sector - Visa Inc. This new initiative helped to contribute to capacity building of women entrepreneurs residing in regional Belarus to start and successfully scale up business applying modern technologies and business solutions. Outreach media campaign to display successful women entrepreneurs ran in November 2019-March 2020. Hackathons and contests of business ideas at the local level proved to be very effective tools for spotting promising and perspective local initiatives. These initiatives have been supported under the project. Joint educational activities with Development Bank in the pilot towns increased awareness of entrepreneurs about financial opportunities for SMEs and available credit products; this contributed to the increase of the Development Bank loans in Mogilev and Vitebsk regions. 141 projects of small and medium-sized businesses operating on the territory of medium and small towns, rural areas of the Vitebsk and Mogilev regions were supported with the total \$ 5,808,770 of loans. The loans were provided within the project by the program "Support to Regions and Women's Entrepreneurship" from the funds of the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus. The Project Board met regularly to discuss project's progress, threats and opportunities as well as allocation of funds for business incubators. In general, 16 Project Board meetings took place during the project implementation (including two in Y2020). In March 2020 due to COVID-19 the final international conference was cancelled and the Project Board approved reallocation of the savings to equip business incubators and help them better address the needs for distance consultations and learning.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	ПротоколКСП15ruen_5361_301 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/ПротоколКСП15ruen_5361_301.pdf)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/15/2020 4:42:00 PM
2	ПротоколКСП16ruen_5361_301 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/ПротоколКСП16ruen_5361_301.pdf)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/15/2020 4:42:00 PM

2. Was the project aligned with the thematic focus of the Strategic Plan?

- 3: The project responded to at least one of the development settings as specified in the Strategic Plan (SP) and adopted at least one Signature Solution .The project's RRF included all the relevant SP output indicators. (all must be true)
- 2: *The project responded to at least one of the developments settings1 as specified in the Strategic Plan. The project's RRF included at least one SP output indicator, if relevant. (both must be true)*
- 1: While the project may have responded to a partner's identified need, this need falls outside of the UNDP Strategic Plan. Also select this option if none of the relevant SP indicators are included in the RRF.

Evidence:

The project responds to the following areas of development work: Eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions (Signature solutions - Poverty (Output 1.1.2) and Governance (Output 1.2.1); Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development (Signature solution - Gender (Output 2.6.1). The project RRF includes the following indicators: Small and medium enterprises established due to the measures to support entrepreneurship and industrial cooperation in the pilot towns (30 achieved throughout the project implementation) and Total value of dedicated loans issued to SMEs established with the support of the project (\$ 5,808,770 loans issued, 141 project supported). Those indicators contribute to the SP indicator 1.1.2.2 Number and proportion of additional people accessing financial services and non-financial assets. Further, the project's RRF includes indicators, that contribute to indicator 1.1.2.3. Number of additional countries with an improved enabling environment for expansion of decent work and livelihoods (6 business incubators established). Working together with Visa Inc. the project built partnerships promoting women's empowerment through the support to women entrepreneurs and as a result contributing to the SP indicator 2.6.1.2 Number of additional partnerships across the whole-of-society raising awareness to eliminate discriminatory gender and social norms.

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No documents available.

Relevant**Quality Rating: Satisfactory**

3. Were the project's targeted groups systematically identified and engaged, with a priority focus on the discriminated and marginalized, to ensure the project remained relevant for them?

- 3: Systematic and structured feedback was collected over the project duration from a representative sample of beneficiaries, with a priority focus on the discriminated and marginalized, as part of the project's monitoring system. Representatives from the targeted groups were active members of the project's governance mechanism (i.e., the project board or equivalent) and there is credible evidence that their feedback informs project decision making. (all must be true)
- 2: *Targeted groups were engaged in implementation and monitoring, with a priority focus on the discriminated and marginalized. Beneficiary feedback, which may be anecdotal, was collected regularly to ensure the project addressed local priorities. This information was used to inform project decision making. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 1: Some beneficiary feedback may have been collected, but this information did not inform project decision making. This option should also be selected if no beneficiary feedback was collected
- Not Applicable

Evidence:

The project team actively engaged local authorities and local citizens of the pilot sites. Special focus was on empowerment of women. The project regularly collected feedback from participants of all capacity building activities. This helped to identify the lessons learned, assess the relevance of the project activities, needs and priorities of local beneficiaries and inform the decision-making and planning of future activities.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	АнкетаМинск-Витебск-Горки-Могилев-Полоцк27-02-2020безлд_5361_303 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/АнкетаМинск-Витебск-Горки-Могилев-Полоцк27-02-2020безлд_5361_303.xlsx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:07:00 PM
2	1.Опросслушателейсеминаровпоосновампредпринимательства2018Адказы1_5361_303 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/1.Опросслушателейсеминаровпоосновампредпринимательства2018Адказы1_5361_303.xlsx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:36:00 PM
3	2.Опросслушателейсеминаров2.7проекта2018Ответы1_5361_303 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/2.Опросслушателейсеминаров2.7проекта2018Ответы1_5361_303.xlsx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:36:00 PM
4	Exploretopicsofinterest_2018_5361_303 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/Exploretopicsofinterest_2018_5361_303.xlsx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:36:00 PM
5	ЛысенкоОтчетКрасноярск_5361_303 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/ЛысенкоОтчетКрасноярск_5361_303.pdf)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:37:00 PM

4. Did the project generate knowledge, and lessons learned (i.e., what has worked and what has not) and has this knowledge informed management decisions to ensure the continued relevance of the project towards its stated objectives, the quality of its outputs and the management of risk?

- 3: Knowledge and lessons learned from internal or external sources (gained, for example, from Peer Assists, After Action Reviews or Lessons Learned Workshops) backed by credible evidence from evaluation, corporate policies/strategies, analysis and monitoring were discussed in project board meetings and reflected in the minutes. There is clear evidence that changes were made to the project to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true)
- 2: *Knowledge and lessons learned backed by relatively limited evidence, drawn mainly from within the project, were considered by the project team. There is some evidence that changes were made to the project as a result to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true)*
- 1: There is limited or no evidence that knowledge and lessons learned were collected by the project team. There is little or no evidence that this informed project decision making.

Evidence:

The project relied on the knowledge and lessons learned from the past project implementation periods to ensure smooth implementation and perform timely measures to make changes to the scope of activities and introduce new ones to contribute to continued relevance of the project. Partnership with the Development Bank of Belarus was successfully developed at various levels, from signing of MoU to implementing common educational and info outreach events. Engaging the Development Bank experts in the project trainings allowed for participants receive first-hand information, advice and consultancy. This has also helped to reduce the costs and allowed for more training to be delivered than initially planned. Thus, project activities contributed to the increase of the SMEs financed by the Development Bank in Vitebsk and Mogilev regions, resulting in 141 projects supported, \$ 5,808,770 loans issued.

Events organized to enhance cooperation between the project partners and beneficiaries proved to be very productive. This is confirmed by the participants of the study tours and other project events, by the reports of the mentors who provided expert advice and monitored implementation of the development plans of the pilot business incubators.

Timely and regular communication with the responsible managers in the pilot towns and local executive committees have been maintained in order to seek support and expedite decision making for any activities in the regions.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	АнкетаМинск-Витебск-Горки-Могилев-Полоцк27-02-2020безлд_5361_304 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/АнкетаМинск-Витебск-Горки-Могилев-Полоцк27-02-2020безлд_5361_304.xlsx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:08:00 PM
2	ЛысенкоОтчетКрасноярск_5361_304 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/ЛысенкоОтчетКрасноярск_5361_304.pdf)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:37:00 PM
3	1.Опросслушателейсеминаровпоосновампредпринимательства2018Адказы1_5361_304 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/1.Опросслушателейсеминаровпоосновампредпринимательства2018Адказы1_5361_304.xlsx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:37:00 PM
4	2.Опросслушателейсеминаров2.7проекта2018Ответы1_5361_304 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/2.Опросслушателейсеминаров2.7проекта2018Ответы1_5361_304.xlsx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:37:00 PM
5	96107_FinalLessonsLearnedSmallTowns_5361_304 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/96107_FinalLessonsLearnedSmallTowns_5361_304.doc)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	6/1/2020 9:19:00 AM
6	SmallTowns-FinalEvaluationReport_RUS_5361_304 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/SmallTowns-FinalEvaluationReport_RUS_5361_304.docx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	6/24/2020 11:01:00 AM

5. Was the project sufficiently at scale, or is there potential to scale up in the future, to meaningfully contribute to development change?

- 3: *There was credible evidence that the project reached sufficient number of beneficiaries (either directly through significant coverage of target groups, or indirectly, through policy change) to meaningfully contribute to development change.*
- 2: While the project was not considered at scale, there are explicit plans in place to scale up the project in the future (e.g. by extending its coverage or using project results to advocate for policy change).
- 1: The project was not at scale, and there are no plans to scale up the project in the future.

Evidence:

The project has reached a sufficient number of beneficiaries. Support measures provided to new SMEs by the 6 business incubators expanded due to the project support (free consultations and trainings, equipment for implementation of business ideas etc). 18 individual entrepreneurs and 12 business organizations were registered, 29 self-employed (artisans, private farmers) began work and 5 new jobs were created due to the direct support provided. The project contributed to the development of business partnerships between Belarusian and Russian businesses – holding business matching sessions for entrepreneurs from the pilot towns, organizing study tour to Krasnoyarsk, Russia for the project partners and organizing visits for 81 Belarusian SMEs to business exhibitions in Moscow. All this resulted in 35 cooperation agreements after business matching sessions and study tours and 14 signed contracts after the business exhibitions. Cooperation between local authorities, businesses and NGOs has increased and spurred on new multilateral initiatives developed with the project's support. 3100 entrepreneurs, experts and other beneficiaries participated in the trainings, business matching sessions, study and business visits organized by the project. All in all, since the project start 6900 people received support from the project and pilot business incubators. Additional funding has been mobilized from the leading donor (US\$151,200) and from the private sector (US\$48,600). 714 publications about the project events and results were published in national and regional media.

List of Uploaded Documents

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No documents available.			

Principled

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

6. Were the project's measures (through outputs, activities, indicators) to address gender inequalities and empower women relevant and produced the intended effect? If not, evidence-based adjustments and changes were made.

- 3: The project team gathered data and evidence through project monitoring on the relevance of the measures to address gender inequalities and empower women. Analysis of data and evidence were used to inform adjustments and changes, as appropriate. (both must be true)
- 2: *The project team had some data and evidence on the relevance of the measures to address gender inequalities and empower women. There is evidence that at least some adjustments were made, as appropriate. (both must be true)*
- 1: The project team had limited or no evidence on the relevance of measures to address gender inequalities and empowering women. No evidence of adjustments and/or changes made. This option should also be selected if the project has no measures to address gender inequalities and empower women relevant to the project results and activities.

Evidence:

The project has a dedicated component on empowerment of women. 5 two-day business schools for women were held in Minsk, Vitebsk, Gorki, Mogilev and Polotsk From November 2019 to February 2020. In total, 340 women from all regions of Belarus took part in the business schools. 70% of the participants noted that the business school helped them to develop their business project, 30% of the participants were entrepreneurs, 50% of the participants plan to start their own business. In general, participants rated the effectiveness of business schools at 4.8 out of 5 points. Publicity and media campaign to raise the profile of women entrepreneurs ran in November 2019-March 2020. The final event of the campaign was the big festival of women led business “Я CAMA”. The event took place in March 2020 in Minsk. 350 women from all regions of Belarus learned from leading experts about financing, marketing, branding, soft skills etc. and expanded their business contacts network. The project team continuously monitored sex disaggregated data to ensure equal opportunities are provided for men and women within the project activities.

List of Uploaded Documents

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No documents available.			

7. Were social and environmental impacts and risks successfully managed and monitored?

- 3: Social and environmental risks were tracked in the risk log. Appropriate assessments conducted where required (i.e., Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for Substantial and High risk projects and some level of social and environmental assessment for Moderate risk projects as identified through SESP). Relevant management plan(s) developed for identified risks through consultative process and implemented, resourced, and monitored. Risks effectively managed or mitigated. If there is a substantive change to the project or change in context that affects risk levels, the SESP was updated to reflect these changes. (all must be true)
- 2: *Social and environmental risks were tracked in the risk log. Appropriate assessments conducted where required (i.e., Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for Substantial and High risk projects and some level of social and environmental assessment for Moderate risk projects as identified through SESP). Relevant management plan(s) developed, implemented and monitored for identified risks. OR project was categorized as Low risk through the SESP.*
- 1: Social and environmental risks were tracked in the risk log. For projects categorized as High, Substantial, or Moderate Risk, there was no evidence that social and environmental assessments completed and/or management plans or measures development, implemented or monitored. There are substantive changes to the project or changes in the context but SESP was not updated. (any may be true)

Evidence:

Project is categorized as Low risk through the SESP (Annex 1 of the Prodoc).

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	SmallTowns_Prodoc_Annex2_SESP_5361_307 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/SmallTowns_Prodoc_Annex2_SESP_5361_307.pdf)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/4/2020 9:49:00 AM

8. Were grievance mechanisms available to project-affected people and were grievances (if any) addressed to ensure any perceived harm was effectively mitigated?

- 3: Project-affected people actively informed of UNDP's Corporate Accountability Mechanism (SRM/SECU) and how to access it. If the project was categorized as High, Substantial, or Moderate Risk through the SESP, a project-level grievance mechanism was in place and project affected people informed. If grievances were received, they were effectively addressed in accordance with SRM Guidance. (all must be true)
- 2: *Project-affected people informed of UNDP's Corporate Accountability Mechanism and how to access it. If the project was categorized as Substantial or High Risk through the SESP, a project -level grievance mechanism was in place and project affected people informed. If grievances were received, they were responded to but faced challenges in arriving at a resolution.*
- 1: Project-affected people was not informed of UNDP's Corporate Accountability Mechanism. If grievances were received, they were not responded to. (any may be true)

Evidence:

N/A so far. Project is categorized as Low risk through the SESP (Annex 1 of the Prodoc). If project-affected people raise concerns and/or grievances regarding the Project's social and/or environmental performance during and after project implementation, project-level and/or national grievance mechanisms will be utilized first. If requested, UNDP's Stakeholder Response Mechanism or the Social and Environmental Compliance might be used.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
No documents available.			

Management & Monitoring**Quality Rating: Satisfactory**

9. Was the project's M&E Plan adequately implemented?

- 3: The project had a comprehensive and costed M&E plan. Baselines, targets and milestones were fully populated. Progress data against indicators in the project's RRF was reported regularly using credible data sources and collected according to the frequency stated in the Plan, including sex disaggregated data as relevant. Any evaluations conducted, if relevant, fully meet decentralized evaluation standards, including gender UNEG standards. Lessons learned, included during evaluations and/or After-Action Reviews, were used to take corrective actions when necessary. (all must be true)
- 2: *The project costed M&E Plan, and most baselines and targets were populated. Progress data against indicators in the project's RRF was collected on a regular basis, although there was may be some slippage in following the frequency stated in the Plan and data sources was not always reliable. Any evaluations conducted, if relevant, met most decentralized evaluation standards. Lessons learned were captured but were used to take corrective actions. (all must be true)*
- 1: The project had M&E Plan, but costs were not clearly planned and budgeted for, or were unrealistic. Progress data was not regularly collected against the indicators in the project's RRF. Evaluations did not meet decentralized evaluation standards. Lessons learned were rarely captured and used. Select this option also if the project did not have an M&E plan.

Evidence:

The project has been implemented in line with the plan and in full agreement with the implementing partner, costs and activities are clearly planned and budgeted. RRF is regularly assessed in APRs. Lessons learned have been also captured regularly through the APR and have been taken into account for corrective actions.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	SmallTowns_FinalRRF_5361_309 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/SmallTowns_FinalRRF_5361_309.docx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 3:57:00 PM

10. Was the project's governance mechanism (i.e., the project board or equivalent) function as intended?

- 3: *The project's governance mechanism operated well, and was a model for other projects. It met in the agreed frequency stated in the project document and the minutes of the meetings were all on file. There was regular (at least annual) progress reporting to the project board or equivalent on results, risks and opportunities. It is clear that the project board explicitly reviewed and used evidence, including progress data, knowledge, lessons and evaluations, as the basis for informing management decisions (e.g., change in strategy, approach, work plan.) (all must be true to select this option)*
- 2: The project's governance mechanism met in the agreed frequency and minutes of the meeting are on file. A project progress report was submitted to the project board or equivalent at least once per year, covering results, risks and opportunities. (both must be true to select this option)
- 1: The project's governance mechanism did not meet in the frequency stated in the project document over the past year and/or the project board or equivalent was not functioning as a decision-making body for the project as intended.

Evidence:

PB met 16 times throughout project implementation. All minutes are in file. There was regular progress reporting to the project board on results, risks and opportunities. The analysis of the results, lessons and risks informed the decision making.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	SmallTowns_PBminutes1-16_5361_310 (http://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/SmallTowns_PBminutes1-16_5361_310.zip)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 4:03:00 PM

11. Were risks to the project adequately monitored and managed?

- 3: The project monitored risks every quarter and consulted with the key stakeholders, security advisors, to identify continuing and emerging risks to assess if the main assumptions remained valid. There is clear evidence that relevant management plans and mitigating measures were fully implemented to address each key project risk and were updated to reflect the latest risk assessment. (all must be true)
- 2: *The project monitored risks every year, as evidenced by an updated risk log. Some updates were made to management plans and mitigation measures.*
- 1: The risk log was not updated as required. There was may be some evidence that the project monitored risks that may affected the project's achievement of results, but there is no explicit evidence that management actions were taken to mitigate risks.

Evidence:

Risk log has been regularly updated in Atlas. APRs also capture the risks and management responses/ treatments. Risks have been also analyzed and presented in the donor's reports (progress and final).

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	2019SMALLTOWNSMidyearReportTFDfin_5361_311 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/2019SMALLTOWNSMidyearReportTFDfin_5361_311.docx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 4:10:00 PM
2	SmallTownsAPR2018_5361_311 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/SmallTownsAPR2018_5361_311.pdf)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 4:13:00 PM
3	2018SMALLTOWNSAnnualReportTFD_finalsent_5361_311 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/2018SMALLTOWNSAnnualReportTFD_finalsent_5361_311.docx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 4:10:00 PM
4	2020SMALLTOWNSAnnualReport_Final_sent7May2020_5361_311 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/2020SMALLTOWNSAnnualReport_Final_sent7May2020_5361_311.docx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 4:10:00 PM

Efficient**Quality Rating: Satisfactory**

12. Adequate resources were mobilized to achieve intended results. If not, management decisions were taken to adjust expected results in the project's results framework.

- Yes
 No

Evidence:

Adequate resources have been mobilized to achieve intended results. Resources are fully mobilized. Additional funding is attracted from the initial donor (US\$151,200) and from the private sector partnership with Visa Inc. (US\$48,600).

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
No documents available.			

13. Were project inputs procured and delivered on time to efficiently contribute to results?

- 3: The project had a procurement plan and kept it updated. The project quarterly reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addressed them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true)
- 2: *The project had updated procurement plan. The project annually reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addressed them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true)*
- 1: The project did not have an updated procurement plan. The project team may or may not have reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs regularly, however management actions were not taken to address them.

Evidence:

The procurement plan has been maintained through the PROMPT online system. It has been updated on a regular basis.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	ProjectProcurementPlanDetailedReport_2018_5361_313 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/ProjectProcurementPlanDetailedReport_2018_5361_313.pdf)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 4:24:00 PM
2	ProjectProcurementPlanDetailedReport_2019_5361_313 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/ProjectProcurementPlanDetailedReport_2019_5361_313.pdf)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 4:24:00 PM
3	ProjectProcurementPlanDetailedReport_2020_5361_313 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/ProjectProcurementPlanDetailedReport_2020_5361_313.pdf)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 4:24:00 PM

14. Was there regular monitoring and recording of cost efficiencies, taking into account the expected quality of results?

- 3: There is evidence that the project regularly reviewed costs against relevant comparators (e.g., other projects or country offices) or industry benchmarks to ensure the project maximized results delivered with given resources. The project actively coordinated with other relevant ongoing projects and initiatives (UNDP or other) to ensure complementarity and sought efficiencies wherever possible (e.g. joint activities.) (both must be true)
- 2: *The project monitored its own costs and gave anecdotal examples of cost efficiencies (e.g., spending less to get the same result,) but there was no systematic analysis of costs and no link to the expected quality of results delivered. The project coordinated activities with other projects to achieve cost efficiency gains.*
- 1: There is little or no evidence that the project monitored its own costs and considered ways to save money beyond following standard procurement rules.

Evidence:

The project regularly monitored its costs versus planned targets through the APR reporting, donor reporting and on-going monitoring of budget balance. Value for money principle was always respected in any procurement case. All savings have been redirected to additional activities upon IP approval. For example, due to COVID-19 and epidemiological situation in the country the final conference has been canceled and the associated costs have been redirected for additional procurement activities based on the requests of the pilot entrepreneurship support centers.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	ПротоколКСП15ruen_5361_314 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/ПротоколКСП15ruen_5361_314.pdf)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 4:29:00 PM

Effective

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

15. Was the project on track and delivered its expected outputs?

- Yes
- No

Evidence:

Expected project delivery is 99.9%. All project activities are fully implemented. All targets to date are achieved as per planned RRF.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	ПротоколКСП16ruen_5361_315 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/ПротоколКСП16ruen_5361_315.pdf)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 4:33:00 PM
2	SmallTowns_FinalRRF_5361_315 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/SmallTowns_FinalRRF_5361_315.docx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 4:33:00 PM

16. Were there regular reviews of the work plan to ensure that the project was on track to achieve the desired results, and to inform course corrections if needed?

- 3: Quarterly progress data informed regular reviews of the project work plan to ensure that the activities implemented were most likely to achieve the desired results. There is evidence that data and lessons learned (including from evaluations /or After-Action Reviews) were used to inform course corrections, as needed. Any necessary budget revisions were made. (both must be true)
- 2: *There was at least one review of the work plan per year with a view to assessing if project activities were on track to achieving the desired development results (i.e., outputs.) There may or may not be evidence that data or lessons learned were used to inform the review(s). Any necessary budget revisions have been made.*
- 1: While the project team may have reviewed the work plan at least once over the past year to ensure outputs were delivered on time, no link was made to the delivery of desired development results. Select this option also if no review of the work plan by management took place.

Evidence:

Project progress have been regularly discussed during the Project Board meetings. 16 Project Board meetings took place during the project implementation (including two in Y2020). Course corrections and budget reallocation have been made whenever the need has been identified.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	SmallTowns_PBminutes1-16_5361_316 (http://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/SmallTowns_PBminutes1-16_5361_316.zip)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 4:37:00 PM

17. Were the targeted groups systematically identified and engaged, prioritizing the marginalized and excluded, to ensure results were achieved as expected?

- 3: The project targeted specific groups and/or geographic areas, identified by using credible data sources on their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. There is clear evidence that the targeted groups were reached as intended. The project engaged regularly with targeted groups over the past year to assess whether they benefited as expected and adjustments were made if necessary, to refine targeting. (all must be true)
- 2: The project targeted specific groups and/or geographic areas, based on some evidence of their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. Some evidence is provided to confirm that project beneficiaries are members of the targeted groups. There was some engagement with beneficiaries in the past year to assess whether they were benefiting as expected. (all must be true)
- 1: *The project did not report on specific targeted groups. There is no evidence to confirm that project beneficiaries are populations have capacity needs or are deprived and/or excluded from development opportunities relevant to the project area of work. There is some engagement with beneficiaries to assess whether they benefited as expected, but it was limited or did not occurred in the past year.*
- Not Applicable

Evidence:

The project targeted small and medium towns of Vitebsk and Mogilev regions. The assessment has been performed to formulate the list of works, goods and services needed to equip the pilot sites. The list has been regularly updated according to actual needs. All adjustments and list of goods/services/works have been approved by the Project Board. Study tours' agenda and other capacity building activities have been also always formulated based on needs and areas of interest of the beneficiaries. Special focus within the project is made on empowerment of women. The project regularly collected feedback from participants of all capacity building activities that helped to identify the lessons learned, relevance of the activities, needs and priorities of local beneficiaries and inform the decision-making and planning of future activities.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	АнкетаМинск-Витебск-Горки-Могилев-Полоцк27-02-2020безлд_5361_317 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/АнкетаМинск-Витебск-Горки-Могилев-Полоцк27-02-2020безлд_5361_317.xlsx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:09:00 PM
2	1.Опросслушателейсеминаровпоосновампредпринимательства2018Адказы1_5361_317 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/1.Опросслушателейсеминаровпоосновампредпринимательства2018Адказы1_5361_317.xlsx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:38:00 PM
3	2.Опросслушателейсеминаров2.7проекта2018Ответы1_5361_317 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/2.Опросслушателейсеминаров2.7проекта2018Ответы1_5361_317.xlsx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:38:00 PM
4	Exploretopicsofinterest_2018_5361_317 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/Exploretopicsofinterest_2018_5361_317.xlsx)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:38:00 PM
5	ЛысенкоОтчетКрасноярск_5361_317 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/ЛысенкоОтчетКрасноярск_5361_317.pdf)	anna.trubchik@undp.org	5/18/2020 5:38:00 PM

Sustainability & National Ownership

Quality Rating: **Satisfactory**

18. Were stakeholders and national partners fully engaged in the decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the project?

- 3: Only national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) were used to fully implement and monitor the project. All relevant stakeholders and partners were fully and actively engaged in the process, playing a lead role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (both must be true)
- 2: *National systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) were used to implement and monitor the project (such as country office support or project systems) were also used, if necessary. All relevant stakeholders and partners were actively engaged in the process, playing an active role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (both must be true)*
- 1: There was relatively limited or no engagement with national stakeholders and partners in the decision-making, implementation and/or monitoring of the project.
- Not Applicable

Evidence:

The project is being implemented with UNDP in Belarus Country Office Support, using UNDP's procurement, financial and monitoring system. However, the national counterparts are fully and actively engaged in the process through regular consultations, Project Board meetings. National monitoring and evaluation tools are also exploited (reporting to the Ministry of Economy).

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#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
No documents available.			

19. Were there regular monitoring of changes in capacities and performance of institutions and systems relevant to the project, as needed, and were the implementation [arrangements](#)⁸ adjusted according to changes in partner capacities?

- 3: Changes in capacities and performance of national institutions and systems were assessed/monitored using clear indicators, rigorous methods of data collection and credible data sources including relevant HACT assurance activities. Implementation arrangements were formally reviewed and adjusted, if needed, in agreement with partners according to changes in partner capacities. (all must be true)
- 2: Aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems were monitored by the project using indicators and reasonably credible data sources including relevant HACT assurance activities. Some adjustment was made to implementation arrangements if needed to reflect changes in partner capacities. (all must be true)
- 1: Some aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems may have been monitored by the project, however changes to implementation arrangements have not been considered. Also select this option if changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems have not been monitored by the project.
- Not Applicable*

Evidence:

The project implemented with UNDP in Belarus Country Office Support (NIMCO).

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No documents available.			

20. Were the transition and phase-out arrangements were reviewed and adjusted according to progress (including financial commitment and capacity).

- 3: The project's governance mechanism regularly reviewed the project's sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project remained on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan. The plan was implemented as planned by the end of the project, taking into account any adjustments made during implementation. (both must be true)
- 2: *There was a review of the project's sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project remained on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan.*
- 1: The project may have had a sustainability plan but there was no review of this strategy after it was developed. Also select this option if the project did not have a sustainability strategy.

Evidence:

The sustainability of the project results is ensured through the continuous interest of the government in development SMEs sector of national economy. Over the past 2 years, a number of laws and regulations aimed at developing entrepreneurship initiative, fostering business activities and eliminating excessive administration barriers have been introduced by the Government of Belarus. Thanks to the project support to 6 pilot business incubators in Gorki, Mstislavl, Glubokoe, Baran, Krichev and Chausy, an expanded range of services to entrepreneurs including free trainings, consultations, business visits as well as material support for realization of business projects (premises or equipment free of charge or at discounted rate) has been put out. The educational materials (handbooks) developed within the project are freely available through on-line resources (QR codes).

The pilot business incubators continue to operate while the needed adjustments are being introduced with regard to the current epidemiological situation: most consultations and trainings are offered online. The business incubators continue close cooperation with the local authorities and also rely on new partnerships established during the project. New projects developed with the project support under Activity 3.5 are planned by the business incubators to be implemented through 2020-2021.

However, it would be beneficial to develop phase-out plans for each incubator and monitor their activities for a longer period after the project's support ends.

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No documents available.			

QA Summary/Final Project Board Comments

To take into account the final narrative report on the implementation of the project, including the quality evaluation and budget utilization. To approve the costs and results of the project for 2020 and for the entire implementation period, taking into account the data provided as of the date of the meeting of the Project Board (23 April 2020).