



GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

UNDP KYRGYZSTAN

2023-2027

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender equality is not just a fundamental human right, but core value and necessary foundation for peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable society. Women and girls remain disadvantaged and have limited access to rights or opportunities as men or boys. UNDP, in its role as the SDGs' integrator, is positioned to address gender inequality and promote women empowerment. Gender equality and social inclusion is the primary commitment of UNDP, and aspiration in every initiative, project and programme implemented and managed by UNDP. UNDP leverage partnerships with national and local stakeholders in all sectors to address gender inequality, gender-based violence, discrimination, stigma and stereotypes in all development areas.

The Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2027 sets out a vision and actions to make concrete progress on gender equality in Kyrgyzstan towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Our goal is to

support the country to fulfil its commitments towards achieving of gender equality and women empowerment in all development areas; to support women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, to be free to pursue their chosen path in life, have equal opportunities to thrive, and be able to equally participate in and lead our society.

The key objectives are ending gender-based violence; challenging gender stereotypes; closing gender gaps in the labour market; achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy; achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics. While the Strategy focuses on actions within the UNDP, it is coherent with the national policy on gender equality and women's empowerment.

This strategy outlines an ambitious agenda toward a country with equal opportunity for all people.

I. National context

In 2023, UNDP in Kyrgyzstan begins a new chapter with the new Country Programme Document¹ (CPD) for the period 2023-2027 based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework or UNSDCF) 2023-2027. The CPD 2023-2027 is in line with the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025², which provides the vision for how UNDP globally delivers programmes and projects and UNDP's new Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025³, which builds gender equality as one of the most powerful development solutions. This Gender Equality Strategy of the UNDP in Kyrgyzstan for the period 2023-2027 is built and operationalized on the following guiding documents, as well as on the accomplishments and lessons of the previous strategy:

- UNDP's global Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025
- UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025
- CPD for Kyrgyz Republic 2023-2027
- UNSDCF for Kyrgyz Republic 2023-2027
- National Strategy on Gender Equality until 2030 and National action plan on Gender Equality 2022-2024.

Many paths to achieving gender equality have been defined and agreed by United Nations. These include commitments in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995⁴, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)⁵, as well as Security Council resolutions on women, peace, and security⁶. Gender equality is an explicit goal of

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which further states that all goals and targets depend on gender equality and the empowerment of women. All such commitments reference the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁷, which sets forth in its first lines that equal rights are the “foundation of freedom, justice and peace”—for the entire world. This strategy is guided by those normative frameworks.

The Kyrgyz Republic has ratified several key international human rights and gender equality conventions and occupies a leading position in the CIS region in developing national legal framework on women's rights in compliance with international standards. These include the CEDAW, and the Optional Protocol of CEDAW (OP-CEDAW)⁸; the Law “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women”⁹. However, despite of progressive national legislation and active women's CSOs, there are problems with law enforcement, budgeting of gender strategic documents and monitoring of implementation of legislation. According to many analyses, such as Country Gender Assessments (ADB, WB, DFID)¹⁰, periodic poverty assessments (WB), and National Voluntary Report (VNR)¹¹, women constitute one of the most vulnerable groups in Kyrgyzstan due to unfair distribution of resources, economic crisis and rising unemployment, gender segregation in the labor market, weak system of social protection and public service delivery and increasing influence of patriarchal traditions and religion in social and family relationships.

¹ Kyrgyzstan Country Programme Document 2023-2027

² UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025

³ Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025

⁴ Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

⁵ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

⁶ Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security

⁷ Universal Declaration of Human Rights

⁸ Optional Protocol to the CEDAW

⁹ The Law of the KR on State guarantees of the equal rights and opportunities for men and women

¹⁰ Kyrgyz Republic: Country Gender Assessment, ADB

¹¹ National Voluntary Report

The Kyrgyz Republic has achieved near gender parity in education enrolment and literacy rates. However, it fares poorly in the key global indicators of women's labor force participation, women's leadership, and maternal mortality ratio. Women's economic participation remains low at 48% compared to 75% for men. Women's political empowerment is also low with only 20% of seats in the Parliament in 2021¹². The maternal mortality ratio is extremely high at 76 deaths per 100,000 live births. These persistent areas of gender inequality resulted in a ranking of 87 in a total of 189 countries in the 2021 gender inequality index (GII)¹³. The country has an overall composite score of 0.370 based on its progress in the key indicators on maternal mortality, adolescent birth rate, gender parity in secondary education, and political representation. This puts the country behind all countries in the region: for example, Kazakhstan is 41st in the GII, Turkmenistan 43rd, Uzbekistan is 56th, and Tajikistan 68th.

Challenges and Obstacles.

After numerous national consultations with various sectors to set out a five-year plan, the following priority areas and challenges were identified in advancing gender equality:

Lack of institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in sectoral strategies and policies;

Poor gender-oriented and -responsive budgeting;

Low representation and women at decision-making levels;

Gender stereotypes and polarization of public opinion regarding issues of women's rights and gender equality;

Low level of political participation of women and leadership (women access to resources and opportunities);

Weak women's economic activity;

Violence against women and girls through legislative and policy measures, provision public services, access to justice and financial support;

Poor quality education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls;

Empowerment of girls and enable them to enter male-dominated areas and fields (STEM and other non-traditional subjects that are in demand and well paid to increase their employment opportunities);

Negative social norms, harmful practices and gender stereotypes;

Weak political will, capacity and coordination to implement existing laws and policies on gender equality;

Make state institutions accountable for their failure to address gender-based violence. Monitoring and oversight mechanism;

Raising awareness on gender equality and women empowerment, gender-based violence (including sexual violence);

Social support of victims and survivors of gender-based violence;

Improve the data gaps on gender, gender-based violence;

Support women resilience to external shocks (like climate change and environmental degradation);

Support capacity and support the women's organizations and women's movements; Poor gender-responsive public institutions.

¹² WB data: Women in parliament

¹³ Gender Inequality Index

II. UNDP and Gender equality

UNDP has been operational in the Kyrgyzstan since 1993 working closely in partnership with the government, parliament, civil society, development agencies, UN in areas that include socio-economic development, rule of law and justice, social cohesion and peace building, environment and natural resources management, climate change and disaster risk management, HIV/TB. UNDP takes gender-integrated approach to all its work across all pillars, to ensure programme and projects meet the needs of both women and men and contribute towards the achievement of gender equality goals. UNDP

recognizes gender equality as an essential development goal on its own and vital to accelerating sustainable development overall. Promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women are central to the mandate of UNDP and its development approach, as it is again confirmed in the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025.

In the next programme cycle, 2023-2027, across its programmes, and driven by national development choices, UNDP pursues three directions of change, which reinforce each other and are fundamental to gender equality:

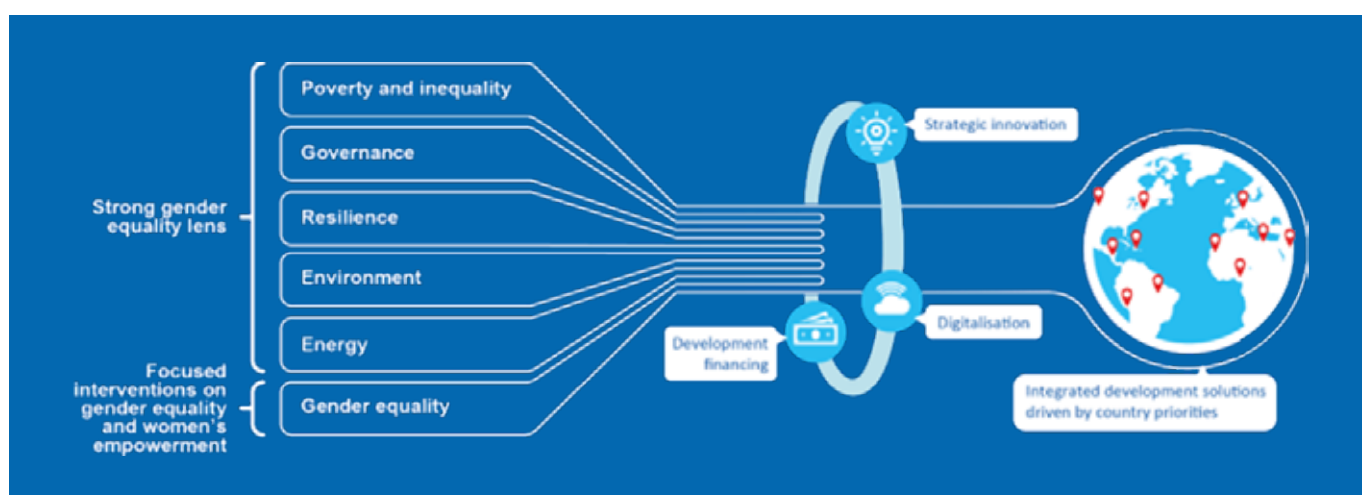
Structural transformation

Leaving no one behind

Building resilience

UNDP recognizes three enablers that are critical for advancing gender equality. These enablers serve as foundational elements for promoting gender equality across all areas of development. These enablers are interconnected and mutually reinforcing:

- Strategic innovation
- Digitalization
- Development financing



Also, UNDP will pursue gender mainstreaming across the five signature solutions reflected in the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, which are in line with the five outcomes of the National Action plan on Gender equality: (i) Women's economic empowerment; (ii) Cultural policy and Education; (iii) Protection from gender discrimination and access to justice; (iv) Advancement of gender parity in decision-making and political representation of women; (v) Regulatory policy and norms.

Signature solution 1:

Poverty and inequality.

Through the Gender Equality Strategy, UNDP will continue contributing to women's economic empowerment and employment, women's financial inclusion, equality in digitalization and innovation, women's political empowerment, building social protection, access to resources (health care, water, clean energy, etc.) for women, etc.

UNDP will work with national partners to support economic policies that recognize, reduce, or eliminate the barriers, often invisible to women's economic empowerment. This includes addressing the burden of unpaid labor; promoting women's decent work, supporting educational reform that updates the curriculum, skills programmes, etc; supporting policy and legislative reforms to ensure women's equal access to and control over productive assets, including land and credit; and incorporating gender perspectives into public finance management and promoting gender-responsive budgeting (including tax related). Supporting the promotion of new forms of data collection and statistical reporting, especially in the field of gender equality in the distribution of produced welfare and gender ownership of property.

UNDP will support national partners to integrate gender considerations into social protection measures to enable women as well as men to participate in economy and manage their households. These measures include social insurance to protect against unemployment, ill health and disability; subsidized agricultural inputs; and employment guarantee schemes. Promoting concept of decent work for all through piloting practices involving women from vulnerable groups in active economic activities (e.g., women living with disabilities, migrants - through special support measures - a mechanism of social order).

UNDP will support the Government to create enabling environment for private investments into (i) green economy and green jobs for women economic empowerment and employment pathways, (ii) acceleration of digital entrepreneurship for women and girls, (iii) exploration of new technical solutions and innovations by and for women and girls.

Signature solution 2:

Governance.

Ensuring women's and men's equal participation in governance processes, including leadership and decision-making, and their equal benefits from governance services, are preconditions for the achievement of inclusive and effective democratic governance. The democratic governance area of UNDP's work provides an opportunity to advance women's rights, strengthen access to services justice and promote their equal participation in

decision-making across all sectors and at all levels of governance. Identify and actively support female role models who can inspire other women to run for posts in local or national government. Provide leadership training for girls and young women to help them build their confidence and skills needed for political involvement, and challenge the perception that men make better leaders than women.

Effective delivery of HIV services requires targeted interventions by and for women infected and affected by HIV. UNDP will work with partners in the Global Fund to support national policy frameworks for HIV prevention and response to ensure that gender dimensions are fully integrated in national action. UNDP will also partner with HIV positive women's groups to engage in policy dialogue and service delivery, including psychological and social care. It will be supported by measures to raise awareness among youth, women and men about HIV/AIDS, existing support programs for HIV-infected.

UNDP will support advocacy, policy and legal reforms to accelerate women's equal participation in decision-making across all governance institutions at national and local levels. This includes promoting women's participation as voters and candidates in electoral processes, supporting women's representation in governance institutions such as constitutional committees, in Parliament, local councils, public administrations and the judiciary. It will be supported the promotion of gender indicators and criteria in the standards and practices of personnel policy (in hiring, promotion patterns, conferring awards, etc.) Promotion of institutionalization (outside) party mechanisms to promote women in the public/municipal services.

UNDP will support national efforts to strengthen women's access to justice. This includes increasing the gender-responsiveness of the judicial, security and legal sectors, including through training and increasing the proportion of women in these sectors; promoting legal literacy, advocacy and training for women, communities, religious and traditional leaders on women's rights; and promoting best practices such as one-stop shops. UNDP will support the development of a network of social advocacy to improve access to justice, including support for gender training and social advocates, and creating a network of social advocates and national legal aid center as a specialized institution of legal aid to women. UNDP will support the emergence of a new

generation of leaders, accountable non-governmental organizations as partners in the national development processes at all levels, especially investing in women and youth.

Democracy, civic participation

One of the primary objectives of the UNDP in Kyrgyzstan is to foster an inclusive and participatory democracy by strengthening women's voice and representation in decision-making bodies at all levels. To achieve this, the UNDP will employ various strategies and interventions including capacity building to enhance the knowledge and skills of women in leadership and decision-making, build confidence, strengthen communication abilities, and promote political advocacy among women. UNDP will support mentorship programs and networking opportunities for aspiring women leaders. UNDP will work with electoral management bodies to promote gender-responsive electoral processes and implement reforms that encourage women's representation. UNDP will collaborate with government agencies and civil society organizations to advocate for policies and legal frameworks that promote women's participation in politics and public life, eliminate discriminatory practices and create an enabling environment for women to engage in decision-making processes.

The UNDP will continue working towards fostering gender-responsive governance by promoting gender mainstreaming in public institutions. This involves providing technical assistance to enhance the capacity of government officials in integrating gender perspectives into policy formulation, planning, and budgeting processes. Recognizing the importance of engaging men and boys in advancing gender equality, UNDP will support initiatives that challenge harmful gender norms, and encourage men's active participation in supporting women's civic engagement (UNiTE movement)

Signature solution 3:

Resilience.

UNDP will support legal and policy reforms to eliminate discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence. This includes supporting national institutions in fulfilling international human rights obligations, including national implementation of CEDAW, as well as providing technical and policy support in relation to constitutions, laws on gender equality, domestic violence, property, inheritance and citizenship and supporting legal literacy, advocacy and training for women, communities and religious and traditional leaders on women's rights.

UNDP will also support national partners to provide victims of sexual and gender-based violence with multi-sectoral support and services (justice, security, psycho-social, economic) and will support public awareness and community mobilization campaigns on the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. The special focus will be provided to standardization of services to victims of sexual and GBV and establishing of referral mechanisms. It will be supported the development and implementation of operating procedures standards for responsible state bodies to deal with cases of gender violence and provide services to victims. The collection of reliable statistics in violence against women, including family and work on harmonization of approaches to data collection in the state bodies responsible for violence against women will be also in the focus of UNDP work in this area.

In crisis and post-conflict contexts, UNDP will pay particular attention to ensuring women's participation in decision-making. It will be supported training women's groups of CSOs, including the number of activists of youth centers and local women's organizations of needs analysis and identification of needs for services, and

monitoring access of men and women and quality of service.

To ensure that women are both participants in and beneficiaries of post-conflict restoration and development processes, UNDP will work to ensure that the restoration of core government functions will both be delivered by women and men and will be responsive to the particular needs of both women and men. Support will be provided to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are budgetary and policy priorities in post-conflict contexts and that all budget allocations are gender responsive.

UNDP will support the mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment in disaster and climate risk reduction policies and plans, as well as in the budgetary frameworks of key sectors (e.g. water, agriculture, health and education). This includes supporting national capacities to collect and analyze sex- and age-disaggregated data and analyze climate and disaster risk assessments from a gender perspective.

UNDP will facilitate women's equal participation in and contributions to conflict mitigation, mediation, and peacebuilding processes at the local, national and regional levels. This will include building negotiation capacities of women to contribute to gender-responsive peace building interventions; supporting coalition building of women's networks to enable them to raise women's voices in decision-making; and supporting the National Action Plan on implementation of UN SC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

UNDP will promote socio-economic youth and women empowerment for inclusive local development and increased community resilience.

Signature solution 4:

Environment.

This signature solution aims to put nature and the environment at the heart of national economy and development. Accelerating climate action and nature-based solutions for protecting fragile ecosystem, UNDP will work with governments, non-governmental organizations, communities and the private sector to integrate gender considerations and expand women's participation in the development and implementation of environmental plans and policies, including in climate change adaptation and mitigation policies and actions.

UNDP will support partners to ensure gender-responsive governance of natural resource management. This includes ensuring women's full participation in decision making on the optimal use, management and protection of natural resources. Women's equal ownership and access to those resources for domestic and productive purposes will also be a key component of this work.

UNDP will increase women's access, ownership and management of environmental goods and services, including climate finance. This will include working on policies and programmes to create equal opportunities to and remove structural barriers for women in green business and in upcoming climate adaptation and mitigation industries. UNDP will build the capacities of female entrepreneurs, workers and worker's organizations to start businesses and scale up small and medium green businesses. UNDP will support women innovators of technology to address climate change, mitigation and adaptation efforts.

UNDP will support partners to ensure gender-responsive governance of natural resource management. This includes support to implementation of the National Development Strategy 2040¹⁴, introducing gender dimension to the National Climate Profile, ensuring women's full participation in decision-making on the optimal use, management and protection of natural resources. Women's equal ownership and access to those resources for domestic and productive purposes will also be a key component of this work.

UNDP will strengthen the participation of women in decision making processes on climate adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction. This includes building capacities of women's organizations to negotiate and voice their priorities in the formulation and implementation of policies, programmes and strategies. UNDP will promote equal participation of women and their taking a leading role in local user groups, organizations producers focused on sustainable practices; organizations in resource management and service delivery.

UNDP's disaster reduction, climate mitigation and adaptation programmes will specifically focus on ensuring women have greater access to climate and disaster early warning information and that disaster reduction, climate mitigation and adaptation programmes specifically support women in having access to clean energy and alternative livelihoods.

Signature solution 5:

Energy.

The primary objective of UNDP is increasing energy access for those furthest behind, as some of the people in Kyrgyzstan still lack access to electricity. UNDP will work to accelerate the transition to renewable energy through systems changes supporting green economies, clean energy innovations and new business models in the energy sector.

UNDP will support governments to ensure that

women can access affordable and clean energy and will support capacity building of women to participate in the development of policy and institutional frameworks. This will include supporting mentoring, training and the establishment of incentive mechanisms to enable women to become energy entrepreneurs and to participate in public private partnerships and enterprise development

Signature solution 6:

Gender equality.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the fragility of country progress towards gender equality and women empowerment. UNDP will continue putting equality at the center of dialogue with national partners to strengthen progress towards gender equality.

UNDP will support the Government with the national commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as an integral part of the government's development agenda, with gender equality integrated across laws, policies, and programs, and support to allocate adequate financial resources for the effective implementation of the National Gender Strategy and its Action plan.

UNDP will provide technical assistance to strengthen mechanisms to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in governance processes. This includes direct support for national gender mechanism, women's caucuses in the Parliament, and institutionalization of gender mainstreaming capacity development for public servants through academic institutions and the State Personnel Service. Support will be provided to improve the

legal framework, strengthening gender expertise and analytical framework of government agencies.

UNDP will support women's networks and civil society movements to bring gender equality perspectives into policy making and legal reforms (development of the concept of legal policy, including the components of legislation reforms, judiciary, law enforcement, legal education and legal science). UNDP will leverage its partnerships with governance authorities, public administrations and other key policy making bodies to provide opportunities for civil society engagement when national policies and laws are being debated.

III. Institutional Effectiveness for Gender mainstreaming

Accountability

UNDP will maintain its solid chain of accountability for gender equality. CO Gender and Inclusion Task Force chaired by DRR will be accountable for regular monitoring of implementation of this strategy with support of Regional Bureau and HQ relevant units.

- UNDP demonstrates a clear accountability to gender equality throughout its Gender Strategy, relevant policies, organizational culture, and integration gender equality considerations into all aspects of its work. This also includes gender-responsive governance structure, which is Gender and Inclusion Task force (GITF).

- UNDP ensures project Annual work plans contain and articulate specific gender-sensitive goals, targets and indicators to measure progress and outcomes. Accountability lies in ensuring that these goals are regularly monitored, evaluated, and reported on, and that actions are taken to address any gaps or challenges identified.

- UNDP will conduct the evaluation of its Gender portfolio (thematic evaluation) and its Gender Equality Strategy by the end of 2026 to assess its effectiveness, identify strengths and weaknesses and learn from the implementation process. Evaluation findings should inform future programming and contribute to institutional learning. Also, all project evaluations will be designed and implemented in accordance with gender standards for evaluation in the United Nations system.

- UNDP will foster partnership and collaboration with other organizations, government, and stakeholders working towards gender equality. These partnerships

enhance accountability by promoting shared responsibility, resource sharing and coordination efforts.

- UNDP introduced one of the performance assessment criteria related to gender equality to all senior managers and GITF members.

Gender Architecture and Parity

- The United Nations Secretary-General has made clear that achieving gender parity is a top priority. UNDP looks for a culture where every person is respected and valued, and everyone is safe, feels included and has access to opportunities. UNDP provides a work environment that reflects the values of gender equality, teamwork, respect for diversity, integrity and a healthy balance of work and life. UNDP is committed to maintaining a balanced gender distribution and women are now in majority at all staffing levels. UNDP will strive for balance in the next programme cycle, 2023-2027.

- At the country level, the programming on gender and rights is often undertaken by clusters' Team leaders who are serving as Gender Focal points in their respective clusters. Team leaders are responsible for integration of gender perspective and allocation of sufficient budget for ensuring equal programme development result for women and men and responding to specific needs of women and girls in all thematic areas. Due to UNDP's mandate, many professional staff members who are working in the areas of gender equality, women empowerment and human rights, and other development issues are highly conversant in gender equality issues without being formally identified as gender experts or focal points.

UNDP is going to recruit the Gender Advisor (NPSA 10) to help adequate impact of gender mainstreaming throughout the country programme and consolidate an enabling environment for institutional effectiveness to deliver gender responsive and sustainable results, as well as to assist the CO meet the expected benchmarks within the recommendations from the UNDP Gender Seal Certification. The Gender Advisor will work closely with all relevant stakeholders within the UNDP system including the programme and project teams, in the identification, design, and implementation of critical gender interventions for UNDP in Kyrgyzstan, while maintaining a strong contribution to resource mobilization. Additionally, the position will also require extensive engagement, networking, and partnership building with international and national partners, including other UN agencies, government counterparts, civil society and non-governmental organizations, women's organizations and networks, bilateral and multilateral donors, and private sector actors.

- UNDP will try to engage men fully in achieving gender equality through voluntarily established Gender club for reflection and collective action towards gender equality.

- UNDP upholds a policy of zero tolerance towards sexual harassment. This policy reflects the commitment of the UNDP to creating a safe and respectful work environment for all employees, partners, and beneficiaries. The UNDP implements awareness measures to foster a culture of respect and prevent sexual harassment. This includes training programs, awareness-raising initiatives, and promoting a work environment that promotes gender equality and dignity for all. The UNDP Resident Representative holds himself/herself accountable for addressing sexual harassment and awareness and preventive measures to prevent and respond to such incidents.

Capacity Building.

In order to build strong and sustainable internal gender capacity 10% of learning budget will be allocated to gender learning activities. There are two mandatory UNDP trainings on gender equality for UNDP personnel: (i) Gender equality and (ii) Gender Journey: Thinking outside the box. Apart of that, there are trainings on Sexual harassment and abuse, mandatory for personnel. The Gender brief for newcomers is included to the standard Induction Course. UNDP will continue to build staff capacity through the implementation of the trainings on gender equality and women empowerment using internal and external resources. Opportunities to provide additional training for managers will be explored, including additional gender equality training for senior management, sectoral trainings (gender and climate/energy, gender and social protection, etc.). The enhanced capacity of senior managers to champion gender equality and achieve results at this level to advance gender equality will be strategic for UNDP.

Communication for advocacy.

The special emphasis will be put on gender mainstreaming of CO's communications and capacity development. Gender will be integrated in all communication, targeting larger numbers in key audiences, including Government and civil society. UNDP will communicate results/impact, enhance resource mobilization and build strategic partnerships. Messages about gender equality and the rights of women and girls are mainstreamed throughout the organization's messaging as a corporate priority. This will continue to be critical to advocacy efforts that support changing attitudes, beliefs, norms and practices against gender discrimination and will build on the existing and upcoming evidence-based engagement with relevant audiences. Strong emphasis will be placed on sharing knowledge and best practices that advance gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, focusing especially on results

and lessons learned. UNDP continues to support global, regional and nationally-led advocacy initiatives and campaigns through opportunities such as International Women's Day and 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based violence. To support the principle of programming on intersectionality or for those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, UNDP will also continue to engage in advocacy on gender-related issues during other key commemorative days such as International Day of Persons with Disabilities and International Youth Day.

Financial resources.

Implementation of the new Strategy requires adequate financial resources. This includes resourcing the core functions for global advocacy, technical guidance, coordination and reporting of gender mainstreaming and thematic programmes. Each development project is obliged to allocate from 30% to 50% of the project budget to gender mainstreaming. These can be resources complemented by non-core resources, as indicated by commitments and contributions from donors. UNDP will annually assess the proportion of expenditures on the gender equality initiatives at the country level. In addition to these resources which are dedicated to initiatives where the promotion of gender equality is the principal objective, other resources will also be tracked through the gender marker system, gauging where activities have mainstreamed gender across the other Outcomes of the Strategic Plan.

The UNDP Gender Marker is a mandated aspect of UNDP's work plan creation and consequent programme monitoring of all programme funds. It is one of the attributes in UNDP's financial resources planning and disbursements and is mandatory for all programmed funds. Financial reporting on the gender marker is included in UNDP's annual report (ROAR). UNDP has been using such a marker since 2012 to track and monitor the gender-responsiveness of all financial allocations and expenditures. UNDP will improve

programming for gender equality results by tracking and reporting on expenditure using gender markers validated by a quality assurance process. The analysis of results will be further developed and more widely shared with UNDP personnel to inform programming and accountability for results; in addition, best practices will be shared with other UN entities and partners. UNDP will aim to improve gender related indicators and targets and will progressively achieve allocation to advance gender equality and women empowerment (GEN 2 and GEN 3).

Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation.

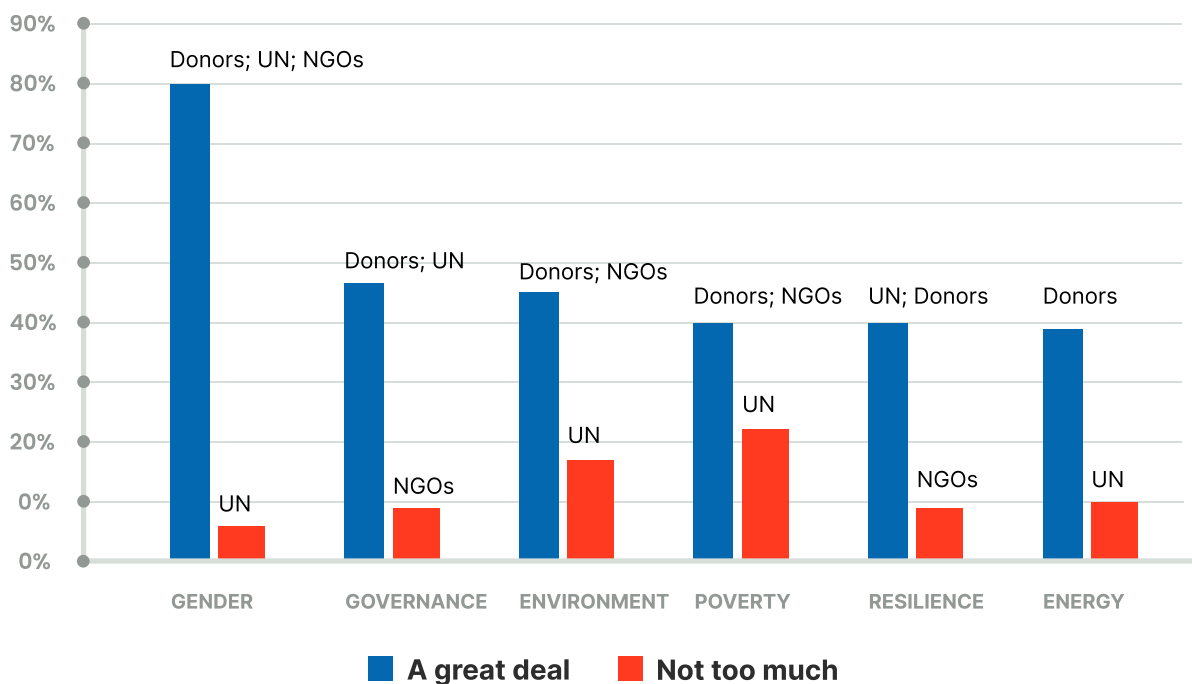
Monitoring of gender equality results starts from project design stage and ends at the time of project evaluation and follows up. Project documents' results and resources frameworks (RRF) contain gender-disaggregated indicators and targets which are monitored and reported on in project progress reports and ROAR. Gender marker is another instrument of making the CO accountable for gender results and the office strives to decrease the number of projects with ratings of "0" and "1", by helping them "graduate" to "2" and "3". Annual review of gender marker occurs closer to a year end with broad involvement of programme staff. The process of progress reporting and revalidation of Gender Equality Seal is also tool for monitoring of implementation of CO's commitments on gender equality goals in programme and operational activity.

The progress towards achieving development results will be measured against the CPD and project relevant outcomes, outputs and indicators. Furthermore, progress will be measured against the indicators of UN-SWAP, thereby giving UNDP a comprehensive results and monitoring matrix for the Strategy. Progress in implementing the Strategy will be under the oversight of the Gender Task Force in collaboration with the IRH Regional Office (Gender team) and HQ Gender team. The annual report (ROAR) will include examples of good practice at the global, regional and country

levels in highlighting, results from the priority outputs on gender equality and an analysis of global, regional and country level results from the gender marker. The report will be based on the targets and indicators in the results and monitoring framework.

In 2021, the UNDP CO commissioned an independent decentralized country programme evaluation (DCPE) which identified that UNDP has a strategic approach towards Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in the Kyrgyzstan and made notable contributions in promoting and scaling up gender issues in line with the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender equality. It was noted that the UNDP co-leads the UN Gender Thematic Group (GTG), contributes to strengthening the strategic partnership, sharing of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned between the actors of the national women machinery involved in the implementation of the country commitments in gender equality area.

CO’s efforts to mainstream gender and support to women empowerment in its programming and operations are consistent and comprehensive. National and international development partners, as well as public authorities, acknowledged the contributions of UNDP to gender equality in Kyrgyzstan, both through its projects as well as through cross-cutting advocacy work for women’s rights and gender equality and joint initiatives. Overall, UNDP has found a good balance between upstream and downstream work in promoting gender equality in Kyrgyzstan. Results and positive contribution towards the advancement of the gender equality in the country during the previous cycle, 2018-2022 were also attested by the national and international partners in the 2020 Partnership survey. The Figure 4 illustrates that in perception of the absolute majority (80%) of the surveyed key (sub)national and international stakeholders, UNDP had a great contribution towards the mainstreaming of the gender equality issues in Kyrgyzstan.



UNDP is planning to undertake an independent thematic evaluation by 2027 of UNDP contribution to the gender equality and women empowerment across all three priority areas of the current CPD. The evaluation will be conducted by the independent evaluation experts. Also, overall CPD independent evaluation is planning to be conducted by the end of 2027 on overall UNDP work including gender equality and women empowerment. This evaluation will be conducted by UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO).

UNDP has identified and assessed corporate risks that may impact on the fulfillment of the Strategic Plan and therefore Gender Equality Strategy. Risk assessment is continuously updated to incorporate new and emerging risks. UNDP is guided by the UNDP Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Policy in its risk assessment and management of risks.

The risks to achieving expected results on gender equality and empowerment of women include:

- persistence of social instability/conflicts/crises
- continued rise of violent extremism
- unfavorable political environment
- shrinking civil society space
- higher national human resources turnover and restructuring
- reduced national ownership of the programme

The mitigation strategies that can be used to reduce the risks to achieving expected results on gender equality and empowerment of women include:

- Work to strengthen preparedness and resilience to mitigate risks in the aftermath of instability/conflict/crises/natural disasters.
- Proactive approach to resource mobilization and partnerships at all levels.
- Use gender sensitivity approach across the CO portfolio.
- Women and youth empowerment for inclusive local development.
- Increase capacity of the government to effectively implement the joint activities.

IV. Strategic Partnership for Results

UNDP demonstrates a strong organizational commitment to working in partnership. Over the next 5 years, UNDP will pursue new partnership for gender equality and women empowerment and deepen existing partnerships to advance existing initiatives and advocacy. Strategic partnership will contribute to the achievement of expected results, mentioned above in favour of Gender equality and empowerment of women. Following the good practices and recommendations from the Decentralized Country Programme Evaluation (DCPE) conducted in 2021, UNDP will continue using broader engagement approach and build a wide range of activities jointly with partners, which includes knowledge development, advocacy, shared analysis and research. Effective strategic partnerships are critical to UNDP's future ability to leverage transformational changes, address underlying causes and work with marginalized groups.



The main partners to cooperate are:

- ▶ Ministry of Trade, Social provision and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic and across the Parliament, Government and local self-government to ensure that gender equality issues are centrally addressed in the implementation of the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; to implement the National strategy until 2040 and National action plan on gender equality 2022-2025; to ensure all women and girls participate in and benefit from its implementation, so that “no one is left behind”.
- ▶ UN Women and across the UN system to support the national gender machinery and support UNCT to set the global standards for achieving gender equality and women empowerment and integrate the gender equality in all common country analyses, UNSDCF and joint programmes.
- ▶ Civil society and specifically women-led organizations to support advocating for rights, mobilize for the full and effective participation and leadership for women and girls.
- ▶ Private sector to work on gender inequality and women's economic inclusion, women's participation, and leadership. Private sector will help to foster a business culture without gender stereotypes.
- ▶ Think tanks/Academia to support fostering more equitable and inclusive societies and advocate for evidence-based research on gender equality. In addition, think tanks can enhance their existing capacities to research and engage on gender theory, policy and practice.

- ▶ Development partners/International organizations to improve their development results through a better integration of gender equality into all areas of development cooperation.
- ▶ Religious communities to build a unique approach of combining gender equality and faith-based principles to boost the implementation of SDGs. It will convene faith-based organizations and civil society groups, bringing together religious leaders and development experts to find ways to effectively pursue the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
- ▶ Mass media, as influential actors to advocate for gender equality and women rights. Media can play a transformative role in achieving gender equality and women empowerment, by creating gender-sensitive and gender-transformative content and breaking gender stereotypes, challenging traditional social and cultural norms and attitudes regarding gender perceptions, showing women as leaders and experts on a diversity of topics.
- ▶ New partners including young women influencers and activists and other external respected voices and experts who can support gender capacity development.

V. Gender Seal

Institutionalization of gender mainstreaming and in-house gender capacity allowed UNDP Kyrgyzstan gain recognition both in the country and in the region. The Country Office was awarded Gold Gender Equality Seal twice, in 2012 during the programme cycle 2012-2017 being one of the three offices receiving a high-level certification, and in 2019 during the programme cycle 2018-2022, the CO revalidated its gold status, and was recognized as a gender champion among other COs regionally and globally.



The CO is able to move to the next level of gender mainstreaming and target gender-transformative results in all its programmes. UNDP is focused on expanding the potential of the current CPD, strengthen the strategies and the capacities already in place and bridging the gaps identified during the Gender seal. There are four areas for strategic interventions, UNDP is focusing on:

Leading a new scenario for gender-transformative agenda

Strengthening gender mainstreaming programming and capacities

Keep innovating in internal processes

Leading and partnering for gender equality.

UNDP created a dynamic partnership with CSOs, Academia, development partners, private sector and Government, to foster constructive dialogue, and invite the partners to go from commitment to action to tackle the most pressing gender inequalities. In cooperation with the partners, UNDP will continue contributing towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (in particular, SDGs 5, 8, 10 and 17) by reducing gender gaps and promoting gender equality and competitiveness, for fair, inclusive and sustainable growth.

VI. Gender and Inclusion Task Force (GITF)

UNDP Kyrgyzstan Executive Team ensures implementation of the UNDP Global Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025 and UNDP Kyrgyzstan Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2027 to ensure successful accomplishment of development and operational activities. UNDP Kyrgyzstan Gender and Inclusion Task Force (GITF) headed by the Deputy Resident Representative is responsible for implementing annual Gender Equality Action Plan.

The Gender Task Force (GTF) was first introduced in 2012 after the CO's participation at the 1st pilot Gender Equality Seal and aimed to raise awareness and strengthen the internal staff capacity on gender issues so that they can make sure that at all levels that gender issues are adequately integrated in UNDP programme development and implementation and allow UNDP to deliver on its core corporate areas/agenda and strengthen the impact of UNDP's programmes on gender.

In 2023, the GTF is re-named as follows Gender and Inclusion Task Force and included inclusion issues into its ToR. The separate Inclusion policy will be developed. The GITF provides coordinated technical guidance and support on integration of gender and inclusion in the programming and operational processes of the CO. The detailed duties and responsibilities are specified in the Terms of reference of the GITF.

The GITF membership is multidisciplinary, and gender balanced. Led by a Senior manager (Deputy Resident Representative), who ensures gender issues are considered in all policy, programme, administration and financial decision-making in the office, the GITF consists of (1) Portfolio team leaders, acting as Gender focal points in their respective clusters; (2) Representative of the Operations Unit: Operations manager, HR, Procurement to coordinate implementation of gender responsive operational policy, (3) Gender Specialist and Inclusion

Specialist to ensure overall implementation of the Gender equality and Inclusion strategies and facilitation the work of the CO on gender mainstreaming, gender equality activities and inclusion issues, (4) Global Staff Survey Review (GSS) and Staff Association Committee members, and (5) Communications specialists to promote and advocate for gender equality, inclusion and women empowerment.

Senior managers and GITF will constantly advocate for gender equality, inclusion and women's empowerment in public speeches, statements and advocacy, and ensure gender parity, disability inclusion in meetings and UNDP-hosted events.